

DESCRIPTION OF A.P. COURSE

The Advanced Placement Literature and Composition course prepares the students for the A.P. exam in May. They read, discuss and analyze poetry, plays and novels beginning in the Anglo-Saxon time period to the present. They learn to discover meaning in literature by being attentive to language through character, setting, point of view, tone and other techniques and strategies used by the authors to evoke emotional responses from the reader. A.P. students will develop a sophisticated style of writing characterized by elevated diction and syntax. Much emphasis is placed on revision and editing. Parenthetical documentation is required for all papers dealing with critical analysis.

Unit Information

Unit 1 (Approximately two weeks)

"Action and Morals": The past as it relates to the present

BEOWULF

THE CANTERBURY TALES

We begin the year not only with the oldest pieces of literature (Anglo-Saxon and Medieval) but also with some of the most creative pieces they will read this year. Oral recitation is emphasized with the epic poem, and morals presented in the tales together with a comparison and contrast discussion and writing assignment is required. A creative piece is mandatory for BEOWULF and the choices are endless. They may include art work, poetry, prose (as in a newspaper or feature article), oral recitation, musical interpretation and/or any other creative idea the student may have. Interpretive writing is stressed and nuances of meaning, especially in BEOWULF are reinforced. Cultural ideas related to life and death and man's mortality are labeled and debated.

Unit 2 (Approximately eight weeks)

"Why the 'play's the thing' still works"

HAMLET

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE or KING LEAR

This unit concentrates not only on the meticulous language of Shakespeare, but also on the students' command of critical analysis. Together with our media specialist, students will learn to refine their skills dealing with research, especially when using online sources. They are encouraged to visit two local colleges and/or universities for their hard copy research. Topics are suggested for the major papers but students must be able to formulate their own thesis. In addition, timed in-class essays (45 minutes) are given after each Act. Students may use notes and the text during the first semester to prove a thesis in this expository activity. By second semester, students will not be given the opportunity to use notes and/or the text in preparation for the A.P. exam. Concentration is focused on Shakespeare's use of the universal themes of love, hate, jealousy and pride. Memorization of one of the soliloquies is required and graded for intonation and delivery.

Unit 3 (Approximately ten weeks)

"A Woman's Choice"

JANE EYRE

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

THE AWAKENING

THE COLOR PURPLE

Although some might consider this semester focused on female characters, there are such vivid male roles that students soon realize that this is not accurate. Setting, especially as it relates to time period is especially relevant in this unit of study because it clouds most of the preconceived opinions of a woman's place in society. Discussion and research regarding roles and expectations of women in varied time periods are lively and opinionated. A variety of writing assignments (thematic, analytical, etc.) are utilized when discussing the choices that were available to women at each different time period. Differences in British and American ideals regarding a woman's place in society provide the background for discussion and writing assignments.

Unit 4 (Approximately eight weeks)

"Death and Dying"

CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY

A LESSON BEFORE DYING

AS I LAY DYING

Covered in such different ways, death is seen as salvation for some and punishment for others. The absurdity of the last novel lends lightness to the discussions. Once again, setting and language play vivid roles in each novel. Creative writing assignments both timed and un-timed regarding the author's voice and use of personification, personal narrative and point of view are stressed. Social and historical values play a vital role in each of these novels.

If time permits, classics that have not been read during their high school years are also read as homework assignments.

During the year, the Cliffs A.P. ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION workbook is used. In addition, selections from THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY are used to interpret structure, style and tone. The last four weeks are devoted to completing the sample A.P. exams in the Cliffs book, and a practice exam is given under the same time restraints as the actual exam. An approximation of what they would have received if this was the actual exam is discussed individually with the each student.

In addition, each student will receive a packet which gives helpful hints when writing their college essays. Sample essays are included so that students may understand the myriad ways in which to tackle this important part of their college portfolio.