

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION - SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will aim to give you tools for clear, intelligent, and structured writing in English and teach you how to be better readers of poetry, prose and drama. Our approach to reading will focus on both the meaning of the assigned texts (see below) and on the close analysis of forms and stylistic, rhetorical and literary devices used in the texts in question. Some of the authors we will be reading are Shakespeare, Donne, Pope, Keats, Browning, Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop in poetry; Dr Johnson, Charles Lamb, Francis Bacon, George Orwell, Joan Didion, Cynthia Ozick in non-fiction; George Eliot, Jane Austen, Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Toni Morrison in fiction. On the writing side, we will focus on the kinds of writing required for your college application but also on the writing you will have to do during your time in college. Our aim will be to keep a constant connection running between the reading and the writing side of the course.

ASSIGNMENTS

We will read poems, short stories, and extracts from novels and essays (or other non-fiction) every week. In addition, you will be expected to write an essay each week. I shall circulate the assigned texts, and essay topics, at the beginning of each week. We will also be reading one Shakespeare play, *The Winter's Tale*, through the course of four weeks. It is recommended that you acquire a good edition of the play – the New Arden Shakespeare is the one that we're going to follow in class – and read it before our course begins. In discussing your assignments, we will be following the workshop model in class, ie, you will all be reading each others' work and commenting on it in round-table conversations led by me.

TEXTBOOKS

1. *Cracking the AP English Literature & Composition Exam 2018 Edition*.
2. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* (New Arden series).
3. Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup, *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, eleventh edition (Pearson, 2014).
4. Strunk, White, and Angell, *The Elements of Style*, fourth edition (Pearson, 2014).

TENTATIVE OUTLINE

WEEK 1

We'll begin with a practice test to assess level. In this first week, we'll learn about how the AP exam is structured and how to prepare for it. This week of introduction to literary studies will start by looking at poems and excerpts from fiction and non-fiction and learning critical and rhetorical terms and the tools of close-reading and analysis.

WEEK 2

This week we will concentrate on poetry, mostly lyric and short narrative poems. We'll learn how to unlock a poem's meaning by analysing it closely and by looking at the ways it uses and organizes language. We'll focus on rhyme and rhythm, on the questions of form and content, on ambiguity in poetry, and continue to learn literary and rhetorical terms.

WEEK 3

This third week will be devoted to prose: mostly fiction (short stories and excerpts from novels) but also some non-fiction. We'll look at narration, plot, characterization, dialogue, voice, point of view

WEEK 4

In the final week, we'll concentrate on Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. We'll read the play in its entirety and learn about dramatic forms (tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, romance) and the rules governing each.

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