

**Advanced Placement Language and Composition Syllabus  
Takoma Academy  
2012-2013**

**Monday-Thursday 11:15-12:05  
Office Hours M-Th 3:30-4:00**

**Instructor Information**

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**Course Description**

This advanced placement English class is open to those students who are interested in taking a college level course and who are looking to improve their overall effective use of verbal and written language through rigorous study of language. This course focuses on reading a wide range of print and visual texts through the lens of understanding and creating argument and looking at authorial purpose. This class studies rhetorical devices and asks students to analyze the effective use of argument in text. Students make personal, literary, historical, political, social, and spiritual connections to themes, ideas, and arguments they study in text. The texts selected for study include a wide variety of perspectives and an emphasis on representation from a range of literary periods. The primary emphasis will be on non-fiction writing, although students will have an opportunity to study a few fictional pieces over the course of the year. Each unit will build and progressively refine skills of writing, speaking and listening, close reading, intentional control of language, inference, making connections outside of the text, and finding application and relevancy of ideas studied.

Students will prepare for the AP Language and Composition exam offered by the College Board in May by practicing multiple choice exercises, looking at and creating effective language construction, writing essays, deconstructing arguments in text, and creating strong arguments in their own writing. On completion of this class, students will be able to thoughtfully respond to the arguments of writers and effectively communicate their own arguments and beliefs in both a written and verbal form. This course is designed to encourage personal enrichment, spiritual growth, intellectual curiosity, and a greater understanding of how to be a responsibly global citizen.

**Course Objectives** (taken from the Common Core Curriculum standards that are aligned with the College Board, Maryland State, and North American Division standards)

**Key Ideas and Details**

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

### **Craft and Structure**

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

### **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

### **Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

### **Text Types and Purposes**

11. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

12. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

13. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

### **Production and Distribution of Writing**

14. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

15. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

16. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

### **Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

17. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

18. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assessing the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrating the information while avoiding plagiarism.

19. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

### **Range of Writing**

20. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### **Comprehension and Collaboration**

21. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

22. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

23. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

### **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

24. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

25. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

26. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

### **Conventions of Standard English**

27. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

28. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

### **Knowledge of Language**

29. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

### **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

30. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

31. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

32. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

### **Texts**

Bernays, Edward L., and Mark Crispin. Miller. *Propaganda*. Brooklyn, NY: Ig Pub., 2005. Print.

Cohen, Samuel S. *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. Print.

Douglass, Frederick, Deborah E. McDowell, and John Charles. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: an American Slave*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.

Jackson, Brooks, and Kathleen Hall. Jamieson. *UnSpun: Finding Facts in a World of Disinformation*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2007. Print.

Postman, Neil, and Steve Powers. *How to Watch TV News*. New York, NY: Penguin, 2008. Print.

Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: the Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2005. Print.

Shakespeare, William, Burton Raffel, and Harold Bloom. *Hamlet*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2003. Print.

Shea, Michael, William and Mary Scanlon, and Arthur Aufses. *The Language of Composition: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric*. Boston, MA: Bedford / St. Martins, 2008. Print.

### **Additional Texts**

- Poems
- Short Stories
- Documentary Films
- Primary Source Documents
- Feature Films
- Newspaper Articles
- Sermons
- Essays
- Paintings

### **Required Materials**

- Appropriate course text(s)
- Three subject composition notebook
- Straight-edge lined paper notebook or filled paper in binder (no-spiral bound)
- Pencils (mechanical) and/or pens
- Highlighters (any color)
- Binder for handouts

## Teaching Strategies

### Summer Reading

Read *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*, by Eric Schlosser, AND five current events articles to broaden your perspective on important issues in society. Each article needs to be at least 300-500 words in length (one-two pages). You need to choose these articles from reputable news sources. The following sources are recommended:

- The New Yorker Magazine
- Newsweek
- Time Magazine
- The Economist
- Harper's
- CNN

The New York Times    Essay question for *Fast Food Nation*: What are the primary arguments made in this book and how do these arguments affect your own view of fast food consumption in America?

Personal responses to articles: For every article you read, write a 200-word response to the piece. This reaction needs to discuss the primary arguments made by the author and your evaluation of these arguments.

### Activators

Teacher will provide student-centered activities at the beginning of each major lesson that will activate prior knowledge. These activities will focus on connecting the students and their prior knowledge to themes, ideas, language concepts, vocabulary, rhetorical devices, and literary devices that will be studied in this class.

### Close Reading

Students will be repeatedly exposed to shorter selections of both visual and non-visual text and will be asked to perform close reading analysis of text. They will deconstruct these selections, analyzing effective use of rhetorical devices, literary devices, sentence construction, grammatical usage, word choice, and making connections to other texts and issues outside of the piece. Students will use different strategies

### Reaction Writing

Every week students will be given a prompt that asks them to construct personal arguments in response different ethical dilemmas. They will need to challenge, defend, or qualify a position presented by an author in an article, essay excerpt, editorial, poem, quote, cartoon, painting, film clip, or other text lending itself to the purpose of argument evaluation. These responses will be peer-edited and individually revised with the intention of strengthening student use of language and rhetorical devices. Students will provide responses in a personally preferred format

but will also write responses according to a précis model that focuses on intentional annotation and explication of authorial purpose.

### **Discussion**

Students will regularly participate in thoughtful small group and large class discussions on text and topics related to text. Both students and teacher will construct varying levels of questions that promote higher-level thinking. These questions will provide opportunities for layering analysis and will begin with basic comprehension and elevate in sophistication to questions relating to “big picture” significance outside the text. Discussions will serve as both formative and summative assessment of student understanding and strengthened ability.

### **Timed Writing**

Timed writing will be emphasized throughout the course as both summative and formative assessment tools for both the teacher and students. Scaffolding assignment will be provided throughout specific unit and lessons to prepare students for the intricacies of successful argument writing in timed situations. Students will focus on using intentional control of rhetorical devices, textual elements, language usage, and speed in order to make significant gains in advanced placement style writing. Rubrics developed by the College Board will be used to evaluate and provide feedback on student work.

### **Writing Revision**

Students will be given the opportunity to revise most writing assignments. The focus of revision activities will be to improve effective use of language and add to sophistication to student thinking and argument construction. The teacher will provide revision opportunities through written and verbal feedback, workshops targeting specific improvements in essay formatting, peer and personal editing. Students will have varying amounts of time for writing revision based on the nature of the project.

### **Research**

Students will be asked to work with primary and secondary print, web, and visual sources. They will evaluate the reliability and effectiveness of these sources in constructing and critiquing good argument. Students will be asked to use sources to support their own voice in writing. Research assignments and projects will aim to educate and promote awareness in students of contemporary social and political issues facing their community, nation, and world.

### **Multiple Choice Practice**

The teacher will routinely provide opportunities for students to advance their proficiency in dealing with questions modeled after the AP Language and Composition multiple choice exam. The teacher will provide scaffolding in this process by verbally demonstrating strategies for deconstructing and analyzing dense text. Students will be given a list of commonly used strategies for finding answers to multiple choice questions, they will decide which particular strategies are most useful in specific situations, and will work individually and in pairs to gain both speed and accuracy in finding the most suitable answers to multiple choice questions. Students will also be given the opportunity to correct answers and figure out stronger approaches to tackling challenging multiple-choice questions.

## **Sentence Composing**

Regularly students will be asked to improve their sentence composition. The focus will be on constructing sentences that consistently vary in syntax and complement the purpose of the arguments being presented in their writing. Students will be intentional with diction and purposeful in presenting voice. The teacher will present several lessons focusing on grammar such as using appositives, short simple sentences, avoiding fragments, parallel structure, pronouns, active verbs, concise diction, coordination in the compound sentence, modifiers, and subordination in the complex sentence. After each grammar lesson, students will be expected to incorporate situation appropriate suggestions into their sentences.

## **Vocabulary Development**

The teacher will choose vocabulary terms from the course reading for students to learn. Students will learn definitions to these vocabulary terms prior to reading them in text. Students will also learn to use context clues to figure out meaning to words they do not immediately know. Vocabulary terms will be assessed at the end of each unit. Students will be rewarded with extra credit for using vocabulary terms in appropriate ways in their own writing (2 extra credit points for each correctly used term in the homework section of the grade book for a maximum of 20 extra credit points per semester).

## **Web Portfolio**

At the end of the course students will create an online writing portfolio that features a strong selection of writing forms completed throughout the course. They will choose a poem, editorial piece, proposal, précis paragraph, and AP style essay that is a solid representation of their writing ability. Students will be graded on effective control of language, creativity in presentation, and overall quality of each selected piece.

## **Course Content**

### **Unit 1: Introduction Rhetoric**

*Essential Questions:* What does it mean to think critically? How can one approach reading with an analytical mind? What are the essentials of argument?

*Description:* Students are introduced to argument construction and analysis. They learn about rhetoric and how to use rhetoric to effectively creating strong argument. Students are also given comprehensive information and skills relating to college level reading.

### **Unit 2: Education**

*Essential Question:* To what extent do schools serve the goal of a true education?

*Description:* Students read about the strengths and challenges facing 21<sup>st</sup> century learners and educators. They analyze education from a socio economic and cultural perspective. Writing is focused on argumentation and synthesizing sources. Students build a working vocabulary of commonly used rhetorical devices and begin taking an intentional approach to appositive phrasing.

### **Unit 3: Work**

*Essential Question:* How does our work shape or influence our lives?

*Description:* This unit looks at the value of work and the influence work has over our lives. Students consider class, gender, race, and culture while contemplating the impact perspective has on shaping the expectations and perceptions of the individual and society. Unit 3 introduces the analytical essay and has students writing essays focused on analysis of style and purpose. Students continue building a vocabulary of commonly used rhetorical devices and begin taking an intentional approach to sentence construction.

### **Unit 4: Community**

*Essential Question:* What is the relationship of the individual to the community?

*Description:* Students look at the responsibility of the individual to society and also the responsibility of society to the individual. Again students consider factors of class, gender, race, and culture when reading about the relationship between the individual and society. The synthesis essay is practiced and the student approach to writing this style of essay is refined. Students look at parallel structure and incorporate parallelism in to their writing.

### **Unit 5: Gender**

*Essential Question:* What is the impact of the gender roles that society creates and reinforces?

*Description:* This unit focuses on the impact of gender roles and perceived gender roles in society. Students read perspectives and arguments surrounding gender bias and discrimination. They also consider how class, race, and culture play a role in individual and social perception. There is a focus on improving language control by studying and using pronouns effectively. Students are proficiently writing argument, analysis, and synthesis essays in preparation for college and the AP Language and Composition exam.

### **Unit 6: Sports and Fitness**

*Essential Question:* How do the values of sports affect the way we see ourselves?

*Description:* Students read about and analyze past, present, and projected future attitudes surrounding sports culture and the role of sports in society. This unit also looks at using and identifying precise, direct, and active verbs effectively in writing. Students write argument, analysis, and synthesis essays in preparation for college and the AP Language and Composition exam.

### **Unit 7: Language**

*Essential Question:* How does the language we use reveal who we are?

*Description:* This unit considers the history and contemporary views of language and the role language plays in creating individual image and social perception. Students look at common misconceptions relating to language use and study the positive and sometimes negative uses of language that often shape social perception. Students analyze and practice using concise diction and emphasize this in their writing. There is a continued focus on writing argument, analysis, and synthesis essays in preparation for college and the AP Language and Composition exam.

## **Unit 7: Science and Technology**

*Essential Question:* How are advances in science and technology affecting the way we define our humanity?

*Description:* Unit 7 studies the historical and contemporary evolution of science and technology and how this evolution impacts our working definition of humanity. Ethical dilemmas surrounding specific areas of science and technology are explored and considered through close readings of text and discussion. Students begin to expand sentence construction to follow a sophisticated, college level model. There is a continued focus on writing argument, analysis, and synthesis essays.

## **Unit 8: Popular Culture**

*Essential Question:* To what extent does pop culture reflect our society's values?

*Description:* This unit analyzes the impact and effect of popular culture on the individual and society. Students look at how pop culture reflects individual, community, national, and global values. Students study the use of modifiers and look to add precision to their writing through an intentional use of modifiers. There is a continued focus on writing argument, analysis, and synthesis essays.

## **Class Reading**

Most the reading required in this course will be completed outside of class. There will be a reading schedule handed out on a weekly or biweekly basis. This reading, and accompanying assignments, needs to be completed and you need to be ready to discuss the reading on Wednesdays (occasionally different weeks will have an alternative due date). There will be a variety of texts assigned each week and will be approximately 50-75 pages in length (combined).

## **Daily Emphasis**

The following schedule will guide the majority weekly routines, although the teacher may make adjustments as needed throughout various lessons or units. While the emphasis of each day will generally be consistent, other ideas or activities can and will be a component of each lesson.

Mondays:	Language/vocabulary
Tuesdays:	Close reading of text/multiple choice practice
Wednesdays:	Discussion of assigned reading/reading assessment
Thursdays:	Writing (typically essay)

## Course Requirements and Evaluation

- **Participation and Attendance** - Students are expected to attend class daily and be alert and attentive. Since this class is taught on a college-level, taking notes, adding to discussion, and listening to what's being presented is essential. Classroom absences will be dealt with according to the TA Attendance policy: three tardies=one unexcused absence; students arriving ten minutes or later to class will receive an unexcused absence.
  - ☞ If a student misses class for an excused absence because of a school-sponsored activity or because of illness, it is the **student's** responsibility to arrange to make up their work. As many school days as the student was absent will be given to turn in the homework for full credit. In the event of any other excused absence, students will need to turn in their work immediately upon return to class. *The teacher may ask students to turn in major assignments/projects or take tests before they leave.* Work not completed within the allowed time will be recorded as zero.
  - ☞ Students who are absent without a valid excuse will not be allowed to make up class assignments or tests for that day. They will receive a zero grade for their missed schoolwork.
  - ☞ Students choosing to sleep in class will be asked to leave and receive an absence for the day.
  
- **Notes** – make sure you have a notebook or binder with paper to keep and organize the information you glean. If you need help taking notes, please talk to the teacher. Please make a habit of taking and reviewing notes regularly.
  
- **Daily/Practice Work** - Although students may occasionally be given time near the end of class to begin their assignment, they are expected to find time outside of class to do practice work—reading, essays, journaling, worksheets, and various studying for quizzes and tests. Typed assignments are preferred and in some cases mandatory.
  
- **Assessments/Tests** – Students' learning will be assessed throughout the semester in a variety of ways—written papers, group/individual presentations, projects, objective exams, etc. A final, *comprehensive* exam will be given at the end of each semester and correspond with relevant standards.
  
- **Portfolio** - Students in this class will be asked to reflect on their learning throughout their high school experience and make connections to their current and post-secondary plans and goals. They will prepare a portfolio demonstrating, reflecting and assessing their growth throughout the course.

## Grade Evaluation

Grades are based on a point system (accumulation of points earned) per grading period. Points are awarded based on the quality and content of the work completed. To determine the percentage and letter grade each quarter, total points earned are divided by the total points possible and weighted by the following percentages:

<b>Writing</b>	35%
<b>Reading</b>	35%
<b>Speaking and Listening</b>	15%
<b>Language</b>	15%

**\*Note:** TA requires students to have at least a 2.0 GPA to be eligible to hold class/organization offices and to participate in varsity athletics.

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is knowingly or unknowingly taking words, phrases, ideas, or concepts from a source without giving proper credit this source. Cheating is a breach of academic integrity and involves one or more of the following actions:

- To use, copy, or turn in another person's work, in whole or in part, as if it was your own.
- To copy information from another person's test, quiz, examination, theme, report, or term paper whether the person is enrolled at Takoma Academy or not.
- To plagiarize – defined as, "to steal and use the ideas and/or writings of another as one's own," without giving credit to the original author.
- To prepare to cheat in advance by having possession of a quiz/test given by a teacher.
- Using any form of notes not permitted by a teacher during a test/quiz.
- Communicating in any way with another student during a quiz test.
- Failing to follow testing instructions given by the teacher.
- Assisting another student to cheat according to the above definitions
- Cheating may be proved against a student only under one of the following conditions
- A teacher or staff member personally observes or discovers an act of cheating.
- A student admits to a teacher or staff member that he/she cheated.
- The act of cheating is observed and reported to the teacher by at least two independent witnesses.

### Penalties for cheating

- First offense: One-day suspension from all classes with a zero for the assignment, test, or exam in question.
- Second offense: Loss of credit in the course, in which the second infraction occurred, for the grading period as well as possible suspension or expulsion.

Significant amount of time in class will be devoted to learning how to properly use source and avoid plagiarism. If in any doubt, please talk to your teacher and ask for clarification or additional guidance.

### **Classroom Guidelines**

1. **Respect everyone and everything** – all students have a right to learn. Ways to maintain a respectful classroom include (but are not limited to): remaining seated, listening while others speak, raising hand to indicate one's interest in sharing, and using a vocabulary that demonstrates that TA is a Christian environment. Negative comments about self, others, the teacher, or given directions are unacceptable. Students are expected to treat classroom fixtures (desks, shelves, etc.) with respect.
2. Bring required materials to class daily.
3. Be prepared to learn and participate – active and mature participation is crucial

to your success in this course.

4. Assignments are due at the **beginning** of class. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**
5. Keep all handouts, worksheets, etc. Students are responsible for their classroom handouts and the information provided on them.
6. Properly wear the required TA uniform to class. Those failing to do so will not be allowed in class until they are properly attired. Additional infractions will result in other consequences.
7. Food, candy, gum, and soda ARE NOT allowed in the classroom. **Only water will be allowed in the classroom.**
8. Electronics are not allowed in the classroom and may be confiscated.
9. For all daily assignments please include the following information in the left corner of each straight-edged page (**papers not in compliance will not be graded**):

Your Name Teacher's Name Class & Section Date	Assignment Title
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**NOTE:** All essays and projects should use the MLA spacing requirements for headings.

### **Additional References and Resources**

Barnet, Sylvan and William Cain. *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature*, Eighth ed. New York: Longman, 2000.

Bloy, Barbara. *English Literature: Close Reading and Analytic Writing*. Saddle Brook: Peoples Education, 2006.

- Brassil, John, Sandra Coker, and Carl Glover. *English Language and Composition: Analysis, Argument, and Synthesis*. Saddle Brook: Peoples Education, 2008.
- Clouse, Barbara Fine. *The Student Writer: Editor and Critic*, Sixth ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.
- College Board, *AP English Course Description, May 2009, May 2010*. New York: The College Board, 2008.
- Fox, Steven. *Advanced Composition Skills: 20 Lessons for AP\* Success*. Saddle Brook: Peoples Education, 2009.
- Scanland, Patrick. *Portfolio: Essays for Critical Thinking and Writing*. Palo Alto: T.H. Peek Publisher, 1998.
- Shea, Renee and Lawrence Scanlon. *Teaching Nonfiction in AP\* English: A Guide to Accompany 50 Essays*. Boston: Bedford/St.Martin's, 2005.

### **Special Acknowledgement**

I would like to say particular thanks to Mrs. Amy Soper, Commonweal Foundation, and Mr. Kevin Howard, AP Teacher Preparation course teacher and AP Language and Composition teacher at Langley High School, for lending materials and making suggestions for this AP Language and Composition course syllabus.

Mrs. Jennifer Howe  
AP Language and Composition

**Please sign below stating that you have read and understand the syllabus.**

Student Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name to Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Parents/Guardians,**

**Please take a moment to briefly answer the following questions so I am better prepared to teach your student.**

1. Briefly describe the strengths of your student.

2. Is there anything that I should be aware of as your student's teacher?

