Hephzibah High School

AP Literature & Composition 2025-2026

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**AP Exam: May 6th @ Hephzibah High School 8 AM**

**Course Description**

AP English Literature and Composition is a college-level course which involves students in the reading and analysis of literature. A primary focus of the class is guiding students in attaining an understanding of the techniques used by writers to inform and delight their audience. As they read, students will analyze such techniques as theme, style, tone, and structure, as well as diction, syntax, figurative language, imagery, and symbolism. Much of this literary analysis will involve intense writing as students respond to a variety of prompts. All writing assignments will be based on the reading passages or interpretations of literary pieces focusing on textual details, the social and/or historical values of the work, figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone. In addition, since this is a college-level class as opposed to a college-prep class traditionally offered at the high school level, a greater maturity is expected of the students in terms of commitment to the class and expectations toward the material.

**Materials**

* School issued computer
* 1.5 inch three ring binder with folder pockets
* Lined note paper
* 4 colored pens, (1 blue, 1 black, 1 red, 1 other color of choice)
* Pencils

**Unit Pacing**

1. Short Fiction I
2. Poetry I
3. Longer Fiction or Drama I
4. Short Fiction II
5. Poetry II
6. Longer Fiction or Drama II
7. Short Fiction III
8. Poetry III
9. Longer Fiction or Drama III

**Reading Assignments**

Reading assignments will be split into several thematic units. During the first semester the study of fiction, poetry, and drama will focus on reviewing and enforcing what students already understand about the basic elements of these genres and relating these understandings to an analysis of theme in the works studied. Students will also begin a year-long examination of literary criticism, with an introduction to six of the common critical lenses and the assumptions and strategies employed when interpreting through these lenses. Second semester students will hone their knowledge and analytical skills with a study of lesser known, more complex literary technique, and will practice synthesizing analysis through various literary techniques to elicit deeper understandings of themes. Students are expected to maintain a rigorous reading schedule so that they do not fall behind as we examine the various elements of literature and theme throughout the year. Plays are treated as works of literature which are meant to be heard aloud; because of this, the students encounter drama through a variety of audio and video formats and through oral reading, focusing on the dramatic qualities as well as the literary aspects of plays. Other works will be read in and out of class depending on the schedule and length of each. While we will use a variety of supplemental texts in the classroom, the primary textbook for the class will be used as the main source for the short stories, poetry, and much of the drama we will study. It is:

Shea, Renee, et al. *Literature & Composition: Essential Voices, Essential Skills for the AP Course, 3rd Edition*. BFW Publishers: New York, 2020.

**Writing Assignments**

Students’ written analysis of what they have read will be an integral part of the course. Students will be required to write both in-class timed essays and out-of-class essays. Both these formal, extended essays and timed in-class writings will occur on a nearly-weekly basis and will frequently be peer-edited and revised.Students will also complete a series of creative writings assigned according to the genre or theme being studied at the time. This will allow students to become not just literary analysts but creators as well, a role necessary to a deeper understanding of the structure, form, and content of literature. Topics for essays will include analyses of prose and poetry passages and of book-length works, with such analyses focusing on textual details, the social and historical values of the work, figurative language, symbolism, imagery, and the examination of relevant literary criticism.

Students will complete an in-class essay on each major reading assignment. These will be comprised of past AP literary arguments and will count as test grades. These will be closely timed and graded on the 6-point rubric used by the AP scoring committee in order to approximate the AP test-taking experience both in form and grading. In addition, students will also complete regularly scheduled in-class practice essays on prose and poetry analysis for the AP exam. These will also be timed and graded on the 6-point rubric in keeping with the guidelines for the actual AP exam. Previously released AP exam topics will provide the poems and prose pieces for these assignments. In assessing these writings, students will analyze sample essays and rubrics provided by the College Board. They will also critique each other’s essays in peer-critiquing sessions, modeling examples of what fellow students have done well and what needs revision and polish. The class will discuss these essays with the plan of using them to improve on their quality for the next essay. Emphasis will be placed on sentence structure, logical organization, and effective use of rhetoric (including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure).

The students will also complete various at-home papers during each unit, some analyzing the treatment of theme in works we’ve read; others more informal character analyses, and still others personal essays relevant to universal themes studied throughout the year. Toward the end of the year, students will compile an annotated bibliography relevant to an assigned critical lens and several of the works we have read.

**Quizzes, Tests, and Exams**

Students will complete weekly quizzes covering vocabulary, required reading, and literary elements relevant to the current unit. At the end of each major work, students will complete an essay test which requires response to an AP prompt. These prompts will be selected from past exams released by the College Board. They will be graded according to the 6-point rubric, also established and released by the College Board. The final exam will consist of past AP exam questions: a one-hour multiple-choice section and an essay prompt (so as to be administered during our school’s two-hour exam period). Students who meet the county requirements for exemption will be exempt from the second-semester exam.

**Grading**

Students in this class will be graded according to a points system. Each assignment will be given a specific point value. When graded, the score will appear as the number of points earned over the number of possible points. Additionally, the opportunity for essay and test corrections will occur on occasion for additional points after test item analysis. The following is the weighting and distribution of points for each type of assignment:

In determining averages for each 9-weeks grading period, the following will apply:

**40%** = Major Assessments (Tests, presentations, projects, in-class essays, research papers, MC exam practice, etc.)

**60%** = Minor Assessments (Classwork, journals, in-class assignments, Socratic Seminars, etc

The following system will be used to assign all grades in this course:

 100 points: all tests, essays, presentations, reading journals, and projects

 10-100 points: all quizzes and graded class assignments

**PER RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM’S UPDATED GRADING POLICY, EXTRA CREDIT IS NO LONGER OFFERED OR CONSIDERED FOR ANY COURSE.**

**Research writing:**

Students will write a research paper examining a chosen work through an assigned critical lens. Students will review and practice MLA writing format in submitting rough drafts. Final drafts will be scored according to format, grammar/style, and content.

**Technology in the Classroom – NEW DISTRICT POLICY**:

The RCSS Student Code of Conduct, Rule 16, states **that the use of cell phones, electronic communication devices, and/or accessories (including some tablets, smart watches, earbuds, and earphones) are prohibited for all students at all times during the instructional day**, defined as the time the student arrives on campus until the end of the school day. Penalties are described in more detail in the Code of Conduct, but they range from confiscation of the device to suspension, which would result in disciplinary action at Hephzibah High.

A large part of learning to effectively analyze literature is to use ONLY the resources we use in class (books, handouts, guides, your brain, etc.), and **a phone causes distraction** to the development and practice of honing this process. Anyone who does not respect and practice this rule will be subject to disciplinary action per the guidelines above.

**Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty**

The RCSS Student Code of Conduct, Rule 1(A)(t), states that no student shall cheat, alter records, plagiarize, receive unauthorized assistance (*including the use of AI when prohibited*) or assist another in any type of academic dishonesty. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty will be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher and a supervising administrator, taking into consideration any written materials, observation, or information from witnesses.

***Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will receive 3 hours of detention.****Additionally, the task will be entered as an incomplete and the student is required to re-do the assignment or re-take the assessment.*

**Expectations and Evaluation Guidelines**:

This is a college-level course. Think of the expectations your professors will have of you in college. Think of the reason you were placed in this course. Think of my time (which I value, as you do yours). **Therefore, all due dates are to be considered hard deadlines, adherence to them is imperative. Turning in work past the deadline is not indicative of mature, college-ready behavior.** That behavior will not be an option in college; therefore, it will not be an option in here. Learning to balance extracurricular activities, school, jobs, etc. is crucial to collegiate success, therefore, this is the start of your practice doing so. All late assignments and essays will be subject to critical evaluation in regards to work ethic and quality. **No work will be accepted after it is more than a school week late (5 days) without an excused absence (doctor’s note or school related function). No exceptions.**

**DISTRICT POLICY**: All work should be submitted on the **DUE DATE**as notified in class or online. *Each submission day after the due date will incur a****5% grade penalty****, up to a maximum 25% penalty.* Any grade penalty incurred will be indicated in Canvas and Infinite Campus. **Work that is not submitted after the 5-day window will be marked as “Missing” in Canvas and Infinite Campus and will earn zero points**.

**Relearn/Reassess Policy:**

**Relearn and Reassessment (R&R)** opportunities are offered to remediate unsatisfactory scores on **MAJOR** grades. These opportunities are offered **once** per assignment, but each R&R plan (including the reassessment itself) must be completed within **seven school days**of receipt of the original grade. The R&R form indicates the requirements that must be met to be eligible for the opportunity.

**Tutoring/After school help**

Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:15-3:00 PM by appointment only.

This syllabus adopts language from Katelyn Hamilton at Davidson Fine Arts (DFA)