

## **AP English Literature and Composition Syllabus**

**Mr. Lorenzo, B33**

**Contact:** [slorenzo@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:slorenzo@schools.nyc.gov)

**or**

[steven.lorenzo@petridesschool.com](mailto:steven.lorenzo@petridesschool.com)

### **Course Overview:**

Students in this college-level course will read and carefully analyze British literature written in a variety of time periods, from the 10th century through the postmodern era. This course will provide students with the intellectual challenges and workload consistent with a typical level 200 undergraduate English Literature class at any college or university. At the culmination of the course, the students **will** take the AP English Literature and Composition Exam given in May. Based on their scores, they may be granted advanced placement, college credit, or both at colleges and universities throughout the United States. In the course, you must read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form. In addition to considering a work's literary artistry, students reflect on the social and historical values it reflects and embodies. Careful attention to both textual detail and historical context provides a foundation for interpretation, whatever critical perspectives are brought to bear on the literary works studied.

### **Writing Assignments:**

Throughout the year students will write, demonstrating an understanding and mastery of standard, written English. They should have a broad vocabulary, which will indicate that they can use words appropriately to show denotative accuracy and connotative resourcefulness. AP Literature students write for a variety of reasons: 1) Students will write creatively to indicate knowledge of the organization, structure, and style techniques of poetry and prose. 2) Students will write to inform their reader that they understand passages from poetry, and longer works like novels and plays. 3) Students will write to explain complex ideas and issues that require research and development. 4) Students will write to analyze various pieces interpreting the author's meanings based on careful observation, use of extensive textual support, and an understanding of historical and social values. 5) Students will write under time constraints, producing papers that show both complexity and sophistication.

## Reading Assignments:

This course includes an intensive study of rich and representative works such as those authors cited in the *AP English Course Description*. The works selected require a careful, deliberative reading that yields multiple meanings. (Note: The College Board does not mandate any particular authors or reading list).

**However**, because this is a college-level course, expectations are appropriately high, and the reading workload is challenging. Students are expected to come to class with the works read and annotated. Because of the length of some pieces, careful planning and time management is essential to success in the class. Careful reading leads to in-class discussion, which reveals a student's in-depth understanding and evaluation of the piece and contributes towards the strengthening of his/her own composition ability.

## Primary Course Literature:

<i>Beowulf</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	Geoffrey Chaucer
<i>Hamlet</i>	William Shakespeare
<i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i>	Lewis Carroll
<i>Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There</i>	Lewis Carroll

**September-October: Close reading and annotation of text, evaluation of summer reading assignment, introduction to AP Literature and Composition exam, definition and expository essays. Introduction to first work of British Literature**

**Text:** *Beowulf*, Translated by Seamus Heaney

The course opens with an evaluation of the summer reading assignment as well as an introduction to Britain in the Dark Ages and what is regarded to be the most important work of epic poetry to come from that era. Students will perform a close reading for stylistic elements and theme. Students will also be introduced to the genesis of the English language that we currently speak and write today.

**Essential Question:** Epics provide a narrative demonstration of the most important values of the societies in which they were written. How does *Beowulf* promote the values of the Germanic Heroic Code of Honor?

**Scholarly Sources:** Students will group together and create a Prezi or Google Slides presentation on a *Beowulf* scholarly article. Articles will be assigned at this time.

**November - December: Continued close reading and annotating.**

**Text:** Selections from *The Canterbury Tales* by, Geoffrey Chaucer

The *Canterbury Tales* is a collection of stories written in Middle English by Geoffrey Chaucer at the end of the 14th century. The tales (mostly written in verse, although some are in prose) are presented as part of a story-telling contest by a group of pilgrims as they travel together on a journey from Southwark to the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. The prize for this contest is a free meal at the Tabard Inn at Southwark on their return.

**Essential Question:** As *Beowulf* reveals something about the culture in which it was written, so too “The Canterbury Tales” reveals information about the culture of its origin. What can be deduced about society in Chaucer’s England from the stories, prologues, and narration contained within the text?

**Scholarly Sources:** For this particular work of literature, Students will perform their own search on *Luminarium.org* for a scholarly article that will be presented orally before the class. There will be formal instructions and a rubric to follow.

**January - February: Continued close reading and annotating. Drama Unit continued. Re - Introduction to William Shakespeare**

**Text:** *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare

This unit will focus on reading and responding to Drama. The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is a tragedy by William Shakespeare. Set in the Kingdom of Denmark, the play dramatizes the revenge Prince Hamlet exacts on his uncle Claudius for murdering King Hamlet, Claudius's brother and Prince Hamlet's father, and then succeeding to the throne and taking as his wife Gertrude, the old king's widow and Prince Hamlet's mother. The play vividly portrays both true and feigned madness – from overwhelming grief to seething rage – and explores themes of treachery, revenge, incest, and moral corruption.

**Essential Question:** How does fate and destiny play a role in the outcome of the tragic Prince Hamlet?

**Scholarly Sources:** *Resituating Freud’s Hamlet* – by David J. Gordon

## **March- May: Continued close reading and annotating. The Victorian Era**

**Text:** *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, by Lewis Carroll

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (commonly shortened to *Alice in Wonderland*) is an 1865 novel written by English mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll. It tells of a girl named Alice falling through a rabbit hole into a fantasy world populated by peculiar, creatures. The tale plays with logic, giving the story lasting popularity with adults as well as with children. It is considered to be one of the best examples of the literary nonsense genre. Its narrative course and structure, characters and imagery have been enormously influential in both popular culture and literature. Alice returns to a world of nonsense in a sequel, published 6 years later in 1871.

**Essential Question:** How might reading a children's novel as an adult allow us to examine our lives and how much we are willing to retain, accept, remember, and refute from our childhood?

**Scholarly Sources:** *Playing Around in Lewis Carroll's Alice Books* - by Jan Susina

*Alice's Vacillation between Childhood and Adolescence in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* – by Jenny Karlsson

*Alice in Wonderland: A Curious Child* - by Nina Auerbach

## **May - June: AP Test Review, the exam, and Post AP Test activities.**

During the final days before the exam, students work on quality AP works to review various aspects of literature.

## **Grading Policy**

**Formal Essays** - 35% of your grade

**Practice Free Response A.P. Literature Prompts** - 30 % of your grade

**Annotations of Scholarly Sources** - 10% of your grade

**Oral Presentations** - 10% of your grade

**Attendance and Tardiness** - 15% of your grade

## **F.A.Q.'s**

**Q: Do you accept late work?**

**A: It is the school's policy to accept work that is handed in beyond the due date; however, the teacher may decide how much the work will be penalized for tardiness. Typically, essays handed in late, regardless of absence, will suffer a deduction of at least 30%**

**Annotated articles that are late will be penalized 50%**

**Q: Is there any extra credit I can do?**

**A: No. All work on the course outline must be completed first before any extra credit is even considered.**

**Q: Is there any way I can boost my grade at all; I really need this class to graduate?**

**A: Sure. Invent, then build a Time Machine, travel back in time to September, then do everything you were supposed to do the first time. Then, since you have the ability to travel through time, rescue Abraham Lincoln.**

**Please note that there will be several occasions where we pause a work of literature for a day or two and turn our attention to AP multiple choice questions and AP Free Response prompts.**

**Mr. Lorenzo reserves the right to alter or modify this course outline at any time during the year and at his discretion.**

**AP English Literature and Composition**  
**Summer Reading Assignment (2021)**

The College Board requires very specific genres and time periods to be covered before they deem a student ready to take the A.P. test in May of their senior year. You have covered a number of these genres in the three years leading up to this class, and we will cover several more before May. However, there is simply not enough time before May to cover everything, which is why you will start by reading one of these works, all from different time periods in British History.

Please read and annotate **ONE** title from the following list:

**The Modern Period:** *Atonement*, by Ian McEwan

**The Prewar Period:** *Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley

**The Postwar Period:** *The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding

**The Horror Novel:** *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker

Once read and fully annotated, underlined and highlighted, consider the following prompt from the 2009 AP English Literature and Composition Exam:

**A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In literary works a symbol can express an idea, clarify meaning, or enlarge literal meaning.**

**[Using the] novel [you read during the Summer,] focus on one symbol, write an essay analyzing how that symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.**

This response WILL NOT be due the day we get back and meet each other for the first time, you will get time in class in September to compose your **HANDWRITTEN** response. Essentially, all you need to do is read and annotate over the summer and be prepared to write when we meet in person.

Additionally, at some point over the summer, you must email me and tell me which work of literature you read. I will then direct you to an online scholarly article on the novel that must be

printed, read, and annotated. Acceptable annotation includes several notes in the margins focusing on vocabulary, author's purpose, and general observations that prove you can engage in scholarly discussion with your academic peers. Failure to contact me will result in a zero for this particular part of the summer assignment. A grade of 100 will be earned in September when you are able to discuss the content of your article. Again, in these unsure times, we will save the writing component for face to face, but you must read and annotate over the summer. Showing up and not having read the book will make the written component virtually impossible.