



August 15, 2011

Dear Parents and Students,

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition is a rigorous college-level course for highly motivated students in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade and emphasizes critical reading, analytical and persuasive writing, and shared inquiry discussion. Of primary importance is a focus on rhetoric and argumentation through the study of various forms of discourse—primarily nonfiction, but also including some prose fiction, drama, poetry, photography, and film. This course requires a commitment from the parent, student, and teacher in order to meet the goals and objectives outlined by the College Board; therefore, students are expected to be thoroughly prepared each day and to satisfactorily complete any assignment within the given time frame. I am positive that all students in this class will achieve the optimal learning experience and pass the AP Language exam on May 13 if they put forth the maximum effort. Please visit the College Board's Website ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)) to learn more about AP Language and to familiarize yourself with the other AP Programs offered at Dorman High School.

If you have concerns or questions, please contact me by email through the web-based program **PowerSchool**, which can be accessed by visiting the Dorman High website at [www.dormanhigh.org](http://www.dormanhigh.org). Any parent can sign up for this program with a photo ID through the guidance office. At this site, parents can view student grades, attendance, course history, and discipline records. Parents and students may also reach me through e-mail ([CastonKG@spart6.org](mailto:CastonKG@spart6.org)) or by phone (**582-4347**).

### EXPECTATIONS

- ◆ Students should be familiar with and observe the various rules and policies in the student handbook regarding absenteeism, tardiness, discipline, cheating, food and drink.
- ◆ Students should schedule their time carefully to help them meet the demands of the course. All work should reflect careful thought and should be completed neatly or it will not be graded. You should take pride in your work.
- ◆ Students should be in seats ready to begin work when the tardy bell rings. **Please see the tardy policy on page 20 in the student handbook.**
- ◆ Students should bring proper materials (notebook, textbook, homework, pencil, etc.) to class every day.
- ◆ Students are responsible for work missed from absences or school-related activities. The student handbook details the rules for make-up privileges. Students who are absent the day a paper is due or a test is given should have the paper ready to turn in or be prepared to take the test the day they return to school. **All missed assignments must be completed and submitted within five days of an absence. Check the green crate for AP Language at the back of the room for missed work, handouts, etc.**
- ◆ Homework that is checked at the beginning of class will not be accepted late.
- ◆ Grades on essays, projects, and other major assignments will be **TEN** points for each day late.
- ◆ **Students are responsible for ensuring that they have a working printer ahead of time for typed assignments.** Malfunctioning printers do not excuse late work. Check ahead of time to make sure your printer works properly. Otherwise, you may hand-write assignments or print documents via a USB flash drive in the Media Center. Papers not turned in on time because of printing errors are still considered late. Assignments should not be submitted electronically.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Three ring binder (1 ½ or 2 inches) with 5 dividers for Rhetorical Analysis, Argumentation, Synthesis, Exam Prompts/Multiple Choice/Scoring, and Journals/Mini Essays.
- Loose leaf paper
- Pens (blue or black) and pencils
- Highlighters and post-it note flags to annotate text as you read

### TEXTS TO PURCHASE

- ✓ *50 Essays (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*—Samuel Cohen, ed. (summer reading)
- ✓ *Brave New World*—Aldous Huxley (summer reading)
- ✓ *Othello*—William Shakespeare (Folger Shakespeare Library paperback)
- ✓ **Two independent reading selections (list TBA)**

### TEXTS PROVIDED (may be an incomplete list)

- ✓ *The Language of Composition*—Shea, Scanlon, and Aufses
- ✓ *Readings for Writers*—McCuen and Winkler, eds.
- ✓ *The Conscious Reader*—Chrodes, Fineston, and Shugrue, eds.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:****Students will be able to...**

- ❖ **Analyze and interpret** samples of effective writing, identifying and explaining an author's use of rhetorical strategies and techniques.
- ❖ **Apply** effective strategies and techniques in their own writing.
- ❖ **Create and sustain** arguments based on readings, research, and/or personal experience.
- ❖ **Demonstrate understanding and mastery** of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity in their own writings.
- ❖ **Produce** expository and argumentative compositions that introduce a complex central idea and develop it with appropriate, specific evidence, cogent explanations, and clear transitions.
- ❖ **Move effectively** through the stages of the writing process, with careful attention to inquiry and research, drafting, revising, editing and review.

**AP EXPECTATIONS:**

Since AP Language and Composition is a college-level course, expectations are high and non-negotiable. If you are willing to work hard, follow instructions, accept criticism and get involved in classroom discussion and activities, mastery of this material should be manageable.

**Writing:** All out-of-class major writing assignments must be typed in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font and be double-spaced. In-class writing and mini essays will be handwritten on lined prompt paper that will be provided. Students should only turn in work that is their own. Any work found to be authored by anyone other than the student herself or himself will result in a grade of "0" for that assignment with **no chance of revision**.

**Reading:** Students are expected to keep up with daily reading assignments. There will be frequent quizzes on outside reading. Students are expected to read all material carefully and should NOT rely on Cliff's Notes or Sparks Notes in place of reading the assigned texts.

**Class Participation:** Students who are actively involved in class sharpen skills and help to facilitate the learning process of everyone in the class. Students are expected to participate in all activities and to become involved in class discussions and seminars.

**AP Examination:** The culmination of this AP course is the Advanced Placement Examination, given nationally each year in May. This year's AP Language exam will be held on **May 16**. All students are expected to take this exam which is paid for by the State Department of Education. By scoring a 3 or higher, students can gain college credit. In order to accomplish this goal, students must build skills by reading and completing assignments carefully and conscientiously. Students must also become familiar with the format of the AP exam itself. Therefore, there will be timed essays and multiple choice drills throughout the semester which should facilitate scoring well on the examination. **There will also be several AP review sessions to be scheduled in the spring which you should plan to attend.**

**Evaluation and Grades:**

The most important aspects of this course are reading, writing, critical thinking, and discussion. Grades for each term will be determined as indicated below. Instead of an exam, students will submit a portfolio of specified work.

**Compositions or Other Major Assignments (count three times)**—including timed, in-class essays as well as multi-draft compositions that have been revised after evaluations by peers and/or the teacher. The writing is evaluated with the use of analytical rubrics to help students develop effective and varied diction, syntax, organization, a balance of generalization and detail, and effective voice and tone.

**Class Work, Homework, and Participation (count once)**—including daily assignments, quizzes, orals, etc. Active, thoughtful participation is crucial for both individual and group inquiry. Socratic seminars will be held regularly, allowing students to lead their own discussions and engage in meaningful discourse.

**Quizzes, Tests, Journal Writing/Mini Essays (count twice)**—Texts for these quizzes and tests come from a variety of nonfiction in diverse styles and genres. The questions are designed to evaluate students' ability to recognize rhetorical strategies and devices and to infer meanings, purposes, attitudes, characterizations, etc. The journal entries will range widely from highly focused analyses of rhetoric and arguments (such as dialectical journals) to "freewriting" in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes. Students will receive a combined journal score each nine weeks grading period.

The following syllabus is subject to change. We will not read ALL of the sample texts, but we will read as many as possible. You may be required to read some texts independently and to write about them even if we do not have time to discuss each one in class.

## UNIT 1—Weeks 1-2

### COURSE OVERVIEW:

- ✍ **What is rhetoric?** (*The Language of Composition*-- Chapter 1)
- ✍ **Patterns of Development or Modes of Discourse** (*The Language of Composition*-- Chapter 1)
- ✍ **Close Reading** (*The Language of Composition*-- Chapter 2)

### The Individual—Identity

**Essential Question: How does language shape identity?**

#### Sample Texts

- “On Keeping a Notebook” Joan Didion
- “Learning to Read” Malcolm X
- “Aria: Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood” Richard Rodriguez
- “Me Talk Pretty One Day” David Sedaris
- “Mother Tongue” Amy Tan
- “Learning to Read and Write” Frederick Douglass
- *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* Jean-Dominique Bauby
- “Politics and the English Language” George Orwell
- “The Word Weavers/ The World Makers” Neil Postman (from *The End of Education*)
- “Decolonising the Mind” Ngugi wa Thiong’o
- “Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self” Alice Walker
- Various AP Prompts

## UNIT 2: Weeks 3-4

### The Individual—Education & Knowledge

**Essential Question: What is education and how do our schools serve the goals of a true education?**

#### Sample Texts

- “Theme for English B” Langston Hughes (poem)
- “Hear It Again” Ted Hughes (poem)
- “The Allegory of the Cave” Plato
- “Human Intelligence Isn’t What We Think It Is” Howard Gardner
- From *Education* Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “Superman and Me” Sherman Alexie
- “Best In Class” Margaret Talbot
- “School” Kyoko Mori
- “The Merits of Meritocracy” Kevin Finneran
- “I Just Wanna Be Average” Mike Rose
- “College: The End of the Golden” Louis Menand
- “The Dangerous Myth of Grade Inflation” Alfie Kohn
- “Who’s Educated? Who Knows?” Margo Kaufman
- “I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read” Francine Prose
- “The Law of Diversity” Neil Postman (from *The End of Education*)
- “How We Know What We Know” S.I. Hayakawa
- Various AP Prompts

## UNIT 3: Weeks 5-8

### Society—Manipulation of Individuals and Groups

### Subtopics—satire and propaganda

**Essential Question: How does society shape the thoughts and actions of individuals and groups?**

#### Sample Texts

- “Shooting an Elephant” George Orwell
- “Why Don’t We Complain?” William F. Buckley
- “A Modest Proposal” Jonathan Swift
- Foreword to *Entertaining Ourselves to Death* Neil Postman
- *A Brave New World* Aldous Huxley
- *Othello* William Shakespeare
- Various articles from *The Onion*
- Various AP Prompts

### 1<sup>ST</sup> INDEPENDENT READING ASSIGNMENT DUE \_\_\_\_\_

#### UNIT 4: Weeks 9-10

#### Society—Freedom, Justice, and Human Dignity

**Essential Question: What is our responsibility to one another in society?**

#### Sample Texts

- “A Definition of Justice” Aristotle
- “The Origin of Civil Society” Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- “Civil Disobedience” Henry David Thoreau
- *The Declaration of Independence* Thomas Jefferson
- “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions” Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- *The Declaration on the Rights of Man* The French National Assembly
- “Letter from Birmingham Jail” Martin Luther King, Jr.
- “I Have a Dream” Martin Luther King, Jr.
- “Why We Can’t Wait” Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Presidential Inaugural Address John F. Kennedy, Jr.
- “The Mindless Menace of Violence” Robert F. Kennedy
- “Created Equal” Milton and Rose Friedman
- “I Am Tired of Fighting” Chief Joseph (speech)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. at a press conference in Birmingham, Alabama (1963) Ernst Haas (photo)
- *The Problem We Live With* Norman Rockwell (painting)
- *At the Time of the Louisville Flood* Margaret Bourke-White, 1937 (photo)
- Various AP Prompts

#### UNIT 5 : Weeks 11-12

#### Society—War and Violence

**Essential Question: How do violence and war shape society and shape our view of ourselves and others?**

#### Sample Texts

- “The Qualities of the Prince” Niccolo Machiavelli
- “Why War?” Sigmund Freud
- “The Melian Dialogue” Thucydides
- “Gettysburg Address” Abraham Lincoln
- Chapter 5 “Constructing Realities” in *Picturing Texts* (How may visual images convey truth or alter it?)
- Selected excerpts from *The Vietnam Reader*
  - From *The Things They Carried* Tim O’Brien
  - From *Dispatches* Michael Herr
  - “Born on the Fourth of July” Ron Kovic

- “The Names of the Dead” Stewart O’Nan
- *Dien Cai Dau* Yusef Komunyakaa (poems)
- Photograph of Buddhist Monk immolating himself by Dick Durrance
- Photograph of children fleeing napalm strike by Nick Ut
- Photograph of My Lai Massacre aftermath by Ron Haerberle
- Photograph of South Vietnamese General Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing a suspected Viet Cong by Eddie Adams
- *Guernica* Pablo Picasso, 1937 (painting)
- Various AP Prompts

## UNIT 6: Week 13

### Ethnicity

**Essential Question: How does ethnicity impact our personal identities and influence our interactions with others?**

#### Sample Texts

- “The Great White Myth” Anna Quindlen
- “Affirmative Action” Shelby Steele
- “On Being Black and Middle Class” Shelby Steele
- “Just Walk on By” Brent Staples
- “Notes of a Native Speaker” Eric Liu
- “How It Feels to Be Colored Me” Zora Neale Hurston
- “Talking Black” Henry Louis Gates
- “The Ethics of Jim Crow” Wright
- Chief Seattle’s Port Elliott speech
- “Crisis at Central High” Helen E. Starkweather
- Various AP Prompts

## UNIT 7: Weeks 14-16

### Nature & Technology

**Essential Questions: What is our responsibility to nature? How are advances in science and technology affecting the way we define our humanity?**

#### Sample Texts

- “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer” Walt Whitman (poem)
- “Design” Robert Frost (poem)
- “Fire and Ice” Robert Frost (poem)
- “Dover Beach” Matthew Arnold (poem)
- “Silent Spring” Rachel Carson
- “Nature Fights Back” Rachel Carson
- “Nature” Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “April in Paris” David Sedaris
- *2004 Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech* Wangari Muta Maathai
- “Against Nature” Joyce Carol Oates
- “The Death of the Moth” and “Street Haunting” Virginia Woolf
- “Death of the Moth” and “Seeing” Annie Dillard
- “The Four Idols” Francis Bacon
- “How to Kill an Ocean” Thor Heyerdahl
- *Inherit the Wind* Robert E. Lee and Jerome Lawrence
- *The Scopes Trial* PBS (film)
- *2001: A Space Odyssey* Stanley Kubrick (film)
- *Microcosmos* Claude Nuridsany (film)
- *The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour* (documentary)
- *An Inconvenient Truth* (documentary)

- *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley
- “By Means of the Visible” Mitchell Stephens
- *Detroit Industry* Diego M. Rivera (painting)
- Selected visuals from photography, cartoons, and film
- Various AP Prompts

## 2ND INDEPENDENT READING ASSIGNMENT DUE \_\_\_\_\_

### UNIT 8: Weeks 17-18

#### Gender

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

#### Sample Texts

- “Her Kind” Anne Sexton (poem)
- “Daddy” Sylvia Plath (poem)
- “Women’s Brains” Stephen Jay Gould
- “Professions for Women” and “Shakespeare’s Sister” Virginia Woolf
- “Ain’t I a Woman?” Sojourner Truth
- “There Is No Unmarked Woman” Deborah Tannen
- “About Men” Gretel Ehrlich
- “Lost in the Kitchen” Dave Barry
- “Being a Man” Paul Theroux
- “I Want a Wife” Judy Brady
- *Woman Conducts a Business Meeting* Loren Santow (photograph)
- Various AP Prompts

**PORTFOLIO DUE \_\_\_\_\_ (COUNTS AS FINAL EXAM GRADE FOR THE COURSE)**  
 (More information about the portfolio requirements will be given at a later date.)

**SPRING REVIEW SESSIONS WILL BE SCHEDULED 2<sup>ND</sup> SEMESTER. PLEASE LISTEN TO ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT WILL LET YOU KNOW WHEN YOU CAN COME BY MY ROOM TO PICK UP A SCHEDULE AND SIGN UP.**

**PRACTICE AP EXAMS WILL ALSO BE ADMINISTERED ON SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS IN MARCH AND APRIL. LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION IN THE SPRING IF YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE.**

**MAY 16: AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION EXAM**

### **AP Language and Composition Course Agreement**

AP courses are taught using college level materials and strategies that will prepare students to take the College Board Advanced Placement Examination. Language and Composition is no exception. Students, parents and teachers all need to be in agreement regarding what it takes to best prepare students for college and the AP examination. Please read the following statements and sign where indicated, showing that you agree to the responsibilities listed. Please contact me personally if you have any questions or concerns regarding these responsibilities.

#### **Student**

You have chosen to enroll in this AP course. By enrolling, you have agreed to:

- Invest the time and energy necessary to be successful.
- Organize your time.
- Take responsibility for all work, whether you are present in class or not.
- Participate in class in an active and productive manner.
- Do your own work.
- Follow the rules, guidelines and procedures outlined in the course description handout.
- Communicate with Ms. Caston regularly regarding problems and concerns throughout the semester.
- Make your best effort to attend review sessions in the spring.

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Class period \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Parent/Guardian**

Your son or daughter was responsible for acquiring your permission before enrolling in this course. By allowing your son or daughter to enroll, you have agreed to:

- Be familiar with the information in the course outline given to your son/daughter on the first day of class.
- Notify Ms. Caston by e-mail or telephone when you have questions or concerns.
- Help and encourage your son or daughter whenever possible.
- **Strongly encourage your son or daughter to attend review sessions in the spring. Students who take the AP Language course in the fall will be a little rusty in their writing and analysis skills, so review is crucial to prepare them to do their best on exam.**

Parent/Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Teacher**

I agree to teach AP Language and Composition at a college level and pace. I will respond to parent communication in a timely manner. Up-to-date student progress reports will be sent home mid-quarter, but I will also contact parents of students who are struggling to support those who need additional help. I agree to provide tutoring as needed, and to provide several review sessions in the spring before the exam.

Teacher signature: \_\_\_\_\_

