2017-18 AP Language and Composition

“An AP course in English Language and Composition engages students in becoming skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes. Both their writing and their reading should make students aware of the interactions among a writer’s purposes, audience expectations, and subjects as well as the way generic conventions and the resources of language contribute to effectiveness in writing…”

[The AP English Language and Composition course’s] purpose is to enable students to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers.”
--The College Board, English Language and Composition Course Description

Prospective Students:

Welcome to AP English Language and Composition! To prepare for an intensive year of analyzing quality prose and poetry, students are expected to begin reading a variety of literary texts widely and often. Throughout the year, students will be expected to read outside literary works in addition to the assigned coursework. Students should read the works carefully, paying particularly close attention to the authors’ purposes and what the authors are doing stylistically to achieve their purposes.

Students will be given in-class essays and assessments on literary and prose pieces, beginning the first week of class. Individual novel projects will also be featured in both the autumn and spring semesters (the first assignment will be due four weeks after school begins). Students should be prepared to devote up to an hour of reading per night to this class.

Much of the students’ success in the class will be based upon his or her ability to write insightful analyses of prose works under time constraints. Students should expect an in-class essay approximately every ten days. These assessments comprise a large portion of the student’s autumn grade, so students are encouraged to build their literary arsenals and to hone their own prose styles by reading quality texts regularly. The class is in-no-way a remediation course or grammar workshop. Students are expected to have mastered the elements of grammatical conventions, spelling, rhetorical expression, and punctuation before matriculating into AP Language and Composition. Students who are not proficient writers will find this course to be extremely difficult. The expectation is that, since many colleges grant college credit for passing this AP exam, students should be able to write at a collegiate level by the second semester. We focus on rhetorical strategies, not elementary mechanics and conventions.

In order to be competitive in the field of literary and compositional analyses, students also need to be avid readers of relevant works—period. The best way to develop a facility with language is to read quality texts from a diverse array of cultures, eras and artistic styles. Pulitzer Prize winners and National Book Award winners are particularly highly regarded by AP readers. The well-read are well-served in AP Language and in AP Literature.

Summer Reading

This year’s required reading will be Nathaniel Hawthorne’s The Scarlet Letter and Arthur Miller’s The Crucible. There will be an assessment on these texts at the beginning of the school year. Students may obtain copies on their own or check out copies with the school bookroom clerks before the beginning of summer (preferably by May 21, 2017).

I look forward to working with students as, together, we explore the American literary landscape and hone our analytical voices.

If you have any questions regarding the AP Language and Composition course, please feel free to see Mr. Eitelgeorge in D-25 or to e-mail him at school before the end of the school year.