

**Instructor:** Ms. Commander

**Class:** AP Language & Composition

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**Course Overview:**

The AP Language and Composition course is designed to teach entry-college writing through the fundamentals of rhetorical theory. We’ll do this by “engaging in complex prose written in a variety of rhetorical contexts.” Our ultimate goal is to “become skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes” (The College Board, *AP® English Language and Composition Course Description* 4). The course is organized to provide ample opportunity to read critically, think analytically, and communicate clearly in both writing and speech. We will also study the rhetoric of visual media such as advertisements, films, and monuments/memorials. We will learn to read primary and secondary sources carefully, to synthesize material from these sources to create original thought, and to form an argument for a given purpose and/or audience.

We will talk every day about some vital aspect of writing, including rhetorical appeals, structure, and style. However, I want you to think of this class as a workshop—a place where you will test certain kinds of writing and attempt to develop your personal style.

In order for this class to function as a true workshop, **there will be a significant amount of writing**. You will learn to revise and edit effectively so your final product is polished and something of which you can be proud. Through the workshop method, you will be exposed to your conscious choice of diction, your natural go-to rhetorical devices, your ability to create varied and effective syntactic structures, and your capacity for coherence and logical organization.

Bottom line: you will work hard to become a better writer and a more careful reader.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completing the Language and Composition course, students will be able to:

* read a variety of texts and determine the author’s: thesis, occasion or context, and motivation for writing;
* analyze the use of rhetorical strategies in a variety texts and determine their effectiveness;
* compose for a variety of purposes in a variety of modes (narrative, descriptive, division and classification, compare/contrast, process, cause/effect, and argumentative);
* determine how organization, diction, syntax, imagery, and figurative language help create meaning in text;
* develop stylistic maturity in their prose by controlling tone, word choice, sentence structure, voice, and style to suit the needs of their purpose and audience;
* how to enter into a conversation and develop a thesis that is based on readings, research, and personal experience;
* synthesize information gathered through their readings and research;
* properly cite source material using a recognized editorial style (e.g. Modern Language Association, *The Chicago Manual*, etc.)
* demonstrate understanding and mastery of standard written English by revising and editing their own work and the work of their peers; and
* pass the AP Language and Composition exam.

**Reading & Writing Assignments:**

**Reading Assignments:**

Our readings will be essays or short excerpts of essays. While they are not usually long, they require careful, methodical reading. Many of these essays must be read at least twice for proper analysis. As the old adage goes, *prior preparation prevents poor performance.* It is vital that all students read every assignment with care and on time. Our class discussions should be productive and help advance your ability to analyze text; therefore, being prepared for class is crucial.

**Writing Assignments:**

Students will be required to write papers in a variety of rhetorical modes (narrative, description, division and classification, compare/contrast, process, cause/effect, and argumentative). Students will also be required to complete journal explodes, presentations, several longer essays, and argumentative research papers outside of class. Students will be required to share their work with other students, for peer editing and revision purposes, and should be prepared to read and respond to the work of others.

All full-process writing assignments will require two conference sessions with the teacher. The first conference session will involve the student presenting a potential thesis and how he or she plans to support it and/or research it. The teacher will offer guidance to possible resources and/or criticism as to how to improve the thesis. The second conference session will occur after the student has written a rough draft. During this time, the student will be able to ask questions and seek feedback on the entire draft. The teacher will thoroughly read the draft before the conference to assist the student with the best possible feedback during the discussion. **Unless otherwise noted, all typed papers should be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font and double spaced.**

Students will complete many in-class timed writings on a variety of released and original prompts. These timed writings will be graded using the AP Language nine-point rubric. Students will also complete journal explodes once or twice a month. The journal explode must be at least 5 paragraphs, defend a thesis, and use evidence from students’ readings, observations, and/or experiences. Students will be graded using the AP Language nine-point rubric.

Within each unit, students will complete both a rhetorical analysis and a synthesis essay. These will be graded with the AP Language nine-point rubric.

**Language and Grammar:**

We will review AP Lang-centric vocabulary and sentence patterns on a regular basis. Deep understanding of this vocabulary and skill is vital for test success. This is where positive peer pressure can work wonders! Learn the words and make your friends learn the words, too. ☺

**Assessments:**

As previously stated, quizzes will be used to gauge your understanding of rhetorical devices, grammar skills, vocabulary, and/or reading if necessary. All quizzes are comprehensive—anything we’ve reviewed up until that point in class is fair game. Students will also complete practice exams throughout the course.

**Homework and Attendance Policy:**

Homework (which also includes longer essays) MUST be turned in on time. If the assignment is not turned in when collected by the teacher, it is late. If you are in school but miss my class period for some reason (sports, meetings, early dismissal, etc.) you are still required to turn in the assignment on the due date. Give it to a friend in a later class period, share it with me on Google Docs, or put it in my mailbox—just make sure it gets to me. Late work will receive teacher feedback, but it will not receive a grade. **Per county policy, you may only receive credit for make-up work if your absences are excused.**

It is the student’s responsibility to collect and make up all missed work and notes. You can do this before or after school, but **not** during class. This includes quizzes, exams, and timed writings.

**Plagiarism:**

Copying another person’s words or concepts without properly acknowledging the source will result in a 0 for the assignment and the student will be referred for disciplinary action. A copy of the plagiarized assignment will be submitted to the principal for the student’s record. These guidelines are in ordinance with the Washington County Public Schools Student Handbook. *Note: While plagiarism may not seem obvious to the student, it is always obvious to the teacher. It’s better to do the work and earn the grade than cheat and get a zero.*

**Grades:**

Grades will be rooted in the Maryland Standards for College and Career Readiness as they align to the objectives issued by the College Board. Students will complete both formative and summative assignments.

While I know they are important to most of you, this class is not about grades; it’s about learning. I want students to have the experience of college-level learning, something most students do not have available to them. College-learning is about responsibility and acceptance of one’s self as a mature student. Our time together will be spent reading thought-provoking, ambiguous, and complex texts. The difficulty of texts is a stimulus for students to make their own decisions about themselves (and others) as readers and writers. These texts will challenge students to consider the deep and ongoing questions that relate to what it means to be a responding, acting human being both individually and as part of a society.

**Required Materials:**

* pencils and pens (blue or black only)
* 1 ½ or 2 inch 3-ring binder (to be used only for this class)
* composition book (no spirals)
* notebook paper
* sheet protectors (at least 15)

Optional materials:

* Highlighters
* Post-it notes/index cards
* 5 tab dividers

**Texts:**

The following textbook will be supplied by SHS:

* Shea, Scanlon, and Aufses—*The Language of Composition* 2nd Edition
* McGraw-Hill—*5 Steps to a 5: AP Language*, 2019 Edition
* *Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic* by Sam Quinones

The following texts are suggested for additional review and practice:

* The Princeton Review—*Cracking the AP English Language & Composition Exam*, 2019 Edition
* Others will be recommended based on student needs

Additional handouts and readings will be supplied by the teacher when necessary.

**Core Classroom Rules:**

* *Be prepared*. Have all needed items for class including books, notebooks, and pencils.
* *Be prompt*. Come to class on time and be ready to learn. Find your seat when the bell rings.
* *Be polite*. Respect fellow classmates’ differences, value your teachers and staff, and

appreciate the educational setting provided for your learning.

* *Be positive*. Maintain an optimistic outlook. You can and will succeed possessing a winner’s attitude.

By signing this syllabus, I understand the course goals, requirements, and expectations.

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Student Name (printed)      Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Name:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Other important information \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_