

## AP Language—Mr. Goldin

“Why not go out on a limb? That’s where the fruit is.”

—Mark Twain

### Contact Information

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### Course Description & Objectives

Students in this college-level course will have previously demonstrated strong writing and analytical skills. Students read and carefully analyze a broad and challenging range of prose selections including challenging fiction, non-fiction and visual texts, for the purpose of developing their own awareness of how language works. The reading assignments feature expository, analytical, and argumentative essays from a variety of primarily American authors and American historical contexts. Through close reading and frequent writing, students develop their ability to work with language and text with a greater consciousness of purpose and strategy, while strengthening their own composing abilities. Students will consider various rhetorical devices, how these devices function in given passages, and apply these skills in their own writing. This course includes intensive study and practice in the mechanics of composition, including a research paper. Ultimately, it is the teacher’s intention to train students in methods of forceful expression, logical thinking, and intelligent reading.

As this course has been designed to meet the College Board description of Advanced Placement English Language and Composition, the teacher will “emphasize the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communication, as well as the personal and reflective writing that fosters the development of writing in any context” (The College Board, AP English Course Description, May 2007, May 2008, p. 6). Students will also prepare for the Advanced Placement Examination in English: Language and Composition to earn possible college-level credit.

We will use Aristotle’s rhetorical triangle to examine the relationships among writer, subject, and reader. Students learn to establish their credibility and reliability as writers, and critique these same qualities as readers (ethos). Students learn to develop and support their arguments with logic, as well as examine the logic used in readings (logos). Finally, students learn to engage the interest and emotions of their audience in their writing, and evaluate these skills in other writers (pathos).

By the time students take the AP English Language Examination in May, they will be able to do the following:

1. Identify and analyze a writer's effectiveness, including their use of rhetorical strategies
2. Recognize, as well as describe the use and effectiveness of literary devices in literature
3. Compose a well-supported argumentative essay
4. Write a cohesive essay in which data from multiple sources has been properly unified to support a thesis.

**Five things that I care immensely about and always focus on:**

1. Respect yourself, others, others' belongings, and the school
2. Accountability for one's self and one's actions
3. Critical Thinking
4. Ask the important questions
5. Student advocacy vs guardian advocacy

**Reading Tasks**

Students in Advanced Placement English read a significant amount of nonfiction prose. Selections are drawn from different sources, such as magazines, specialty journals, and newspapers, as well as from the anchor text, Peterson and Brereton, eds. *The Norton Reader 13th EDITION*. The focus of study is upon several key questions: What is the purpose of the piece? Who is the audience for the piece? What are the author's rhetorical strategies? We will use the Rhetorical Analysis Triangle as a guide for study of rhetoric.

Guidelines for reading an essay and specific annotating skills serve as touchstones for student thinking and writing about these readings during the year. A primary goal is to get students thinking about what they're reading in a more reflective, disciplined, logical, and alert way.

Students consider a variety of literary texts, speculating about the writer's use of language and other choices authors made in their writing. During the course, students are brought to a deeper awareness of the different stylistic effects created by different syntactical choices and by different levels of diction. Since these differences are visible in fiction, literature clearly has a place in this course.

However, the main purpose for including literature is to facilitate the scrutiny of linguistic and rhetorical choices, and not to study the subtleties of literary analysis. Language study is at the center of the course, and is, therefore the focus of papers written in response to literary texts read.

**Writing Tasks**

Students write for different purposes as they explore what's involved in developing identity and voice as a writer. Writing tasks may result in "draft on demand" or finished pieces, which are subject to extensive conferencing. Assignments cover a range of rhetorical tasks: description, narration, persuasion, explanation, language analysis, comparison/contrast, and synthesis.

In all, students produce around eight finished pieces during the year; they also write a number of short responses in connection with nonfiction prose readings. In addition, they will write "on demand" during class in response to different topics, during full period "draftless" essays modeled after AP questions. Questions are chosen which feature tasks aligned with concurrently or previously assigned (i.e., readings in *The Norton Reader*).

Student writers may use various texts, such as Thomas Kane's *The New Oxford Guide to Writing*, Richard Marius' *A Writer's Companion*, and Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* as resources.

Students are required to turn in all prewriting and drafting with their finished pieces. The development of student writing is important to trace and reflect on in subsequent conference conversations. Revision is a key component of student writing, as learning emerges when students need to make sense of their errors and misunderstandings.

**Speaking and Listening Tasks**

Students are required to speak before the class, and listen and respond to their classmates in the context of several assignments. Collaborative exercises often focus on "says/does" analysis, and include consideration of a text, negotiating consensus, and presenting results to the class. Whole-class discussions provide all students with the opportunity to present their views during class assignments.

I expect that all students will participate in our class discussions. Participation in class discussion will be considered in determining a student's final grade for the class. The participation rubric is included with this syllabus.

**Outside Assessment**

Testing or assessment episodes are part of the reality of schooling, particularly, it seems, junior year. Therefore, some class time is devoted to familiarizing students with tests requiring writing on demand and/or demonstration of understanding of literary content. Students must take the ACT along with all other 11th graders in the state during the year, and students are familiarized with that test's format. PSAT and SAT preparation is included, as many students will take these tests as part of the college application process. Preparation for the Advanced Placement examination is ongoing, as it is obviously essential to the course and in the interest of most

students to sit for the exam. Students who choose not to take the AP examination in the spring semester will be given an alternative assignment as a “final exam.”

### **Course Expectations**

**Absences:** When you are absent, and it is possible, you are expected to complete the assignment during your absence. Anytime you have an excused absence, you will have one school day for each day you are absent to make up the work and hand it in. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to not only pick up the missed assignments but also to get them handed in on time. No credit will be given for late work or work missed due to an unexcused absence.

**Tardies:** Refer to the Rock Canyon tardy policy.

**Behavioral Expectations:** You are all at an age where you understand proper behavior and should be able to act in a mature manner. You must take responsibility to follow the Douglas County Behavioral Expectations, be accountable for ones self, and self-advocate.

1. You will be expected to partake in class and take an active role. *In all honesty, you will get as much out of this class as you put into it.* Thus, if you do not understand something, please ask. It is preferable that you speak up and are wrong than for you not to speak at all. Since so much of what we learn in here will be done through group discussion and other such cooperative learning activities, this is the year to come out of your shell! (There will be a class participation grades factored into your grade.)

2. **Late Work:** I will ONLY allow two days (not class days and a weekend counts as one day) to make-up late work. The highest grade that you can earn on the first day that is late is 75%, and for the second day is a 50%. After this, the grade will be marked as missing (counts a 0% in the grade book) and canNOT be made-up.

3. **Make-up work is your responsibility.** When you return from an excused absence copy a classmate’s agenda or my agenda (available online weekly) for the days you missed. Then speak to me about making up the work. If you do not speak to me, I will simply assume you want a 0 for any assignments we did the day you were absent. I will not remind you if you need to make-up an assignment. You need to get your make-up work into me in a reasonable amount of time (2 days for for most assignments/quizzes). For example, if you were absent on Monday, get your make-up assignment on Tuesday, and turn it in on Wednesday. Or, if you were absent on Monday for a quiz, you should have completed the quiz by Wednesday.)

4. If you know ahead of time that you will be absent on a day when an assignment is due (for example, a pre-arranged absence or field trip), it is your responsibility to turn in the assignment prior to the due date, or send the assignment to me with another student, guardian, or via email. However, this arraignment should be agreed upon me before submitting the assignment.

If you miss class the day an assignment is due but are on campus at any time during that day (for example, missing part of the day due to a half-day field trip), it is your responsibility to bring the

assignment to me or somehow get it to me by the end of the school day. Failure to do so will result in a grade of 0.

5. You are allowed to eat and drink in the class. However, this is a privilege vs. a right. If this becomes distracting to others and/or me, or you make a mess, then this privilege will be revoked.

6. Cell phones used in class (improperly) will be confiscated and given to the administration.

7. Required materials :

- An open mind that is willing to take chances and go to new realms
- Pen/pencil and paper.
  - I will NOT supply these items for you.
- Something to collect handouts—stay organized (ideally a 3 ring binder with subject dividers for different things we will be doing in class)
- Composition notebook (a book without the metal spiral binder)

### **Grading**

As this is an AP (college-level) course, performance expectations are high, and the workload is challenging. Students are expected to complete a minimum of five hours of course work a week outside of class. Often, work involves long-term writing and reading assignments. Effective time management is important. Your grades will be a compilation of points from homework, class work including discussion participation, tests & quizzes, and various writing assignments.

Grades will be based on the percentage of points possible using the following scale.

- Grading Scale--I round up your final grade.
  - 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, 59% and below = F

### **Grading Weights (Points within weights)**

Writing: On-Demand Essays & Take-home Essays 40%:

Students will write "on demand" during class in response to different topics modeled after AP questions. On Demand Essays will be graded according to the College Board Rubric. Students will also be required to write other major essay assignments with multiple drafts. The students will participate in teacher/student conferences and peer/student conferences throughout the drafting process. In addition, students will self-edit final drafts before submitting finished pieces for grading.

Assessments: Tests and Quizzes 30%:

Tests and quizzes will cover various topics. I will assess your knowledge of rhetorical devices and their function in given passages, reading comprehension, and vocabulary units.

Practice/Responsibility/Participation 15%:

Daily assignments will vary depending on our specific focus, and they should be kept in a Response Journal\*. Daily tasks might include grammar review, rhetorical devices,

documentation practice, and vocabulary development. I will collect Quick Write Response Journal whenever the mood strikes me, and I will choose which responses to evaluate. Class Participation grades also fall in this category. This category also includes homework tasks. Homework will also vary depending on our specific focus. Much of the homework will involve drafting, outside reading, responding to analytical questions, using rhetorical devices, and practicing the conventions of writing. Lastly, you will be formally assessed for your participation in class discussions.

Semester Final 15%: Each semester will end with a culminating assessment. Part of the second semester final will be an actual AP English Language Test.

**\*Response Journal: (COMPOSITION NOTEBOOK THAT YOU BRING EVERY DAY!!!)**

Students will maintain a response journal that will allow them to analyze short essays, editorials, important quotations, and open-ended questions. These responses will either provide practice in analyzing rhetorical devices, developing arguments, or generating ideas for their own pieces (often times asking that they connect their own lives to various concepts, decisions, or epiphanies addressed in our readings). In addition, these journals will often incorporate vocabulary enrichment exercises, requiring students to enhance their writing with rich and precise word choice.

All response journal grades are done on a point system.

Responses earn either a check plus (5 points), a check (4 points), check minus (2 points), or 0.

### **Class Notebooks**

You are required to have a notebook that you bring to class every day. Blank paper must be kept in the notebook for lecture notes and writing assignments. All other class handouts must be kept in the notebook. I would try to get a thick 3 ring binder, since I have such a plethora of valuable papers to give to you.

**Papers**

All papers turned in must have the following in the upper right hand corner of the paper:

- A) Name
- B) Date
- C) Period
- D) Assignment Name

All formal essays will be turned in to a “plagiarism prevention” site entitled [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). You will receive a password later this month, and you must run any formal essay through this program and print out the receipt the program will send to you. This website checks for improper paraphrasing, citing, and plagiarism. The receipt is your proof that the paper was submitted correctly. I will warn you ahead of time what essay will be submitted via [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com).

**Course Materials**

Required text for use throughout the school year:

- Peterson and Brereton, eds. The Norton Reader 13th EDITION
- Huck Finn by Mark Twain
- The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- 1984 by George Orwell
- The Devil’s Highway by Luis Alberto Urrea

*Support our English Department by purchasing these books from the Lone Tree Barnes & Noble between August 8-14 or online. When ordering online, enter the book fair code 11886694 in order for RC to receive the purchase credit.*

Supplemental texts I might provide in the form of handouts include:

- Clifford and Diyani. Modern American Prose. Third edition. (McGraw Hill College Division).
- Kane. The New Oxford Guide to Writing. (Oxford University Press).
- Marius. A Writer’s Companion. Fourth edition. (McGraw Hill Higher Education).
- McCuen and Winkler. Readings for Writers. Seventh edition. (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

Suggested Resources:

- Cracking the AP English and Composition Exam. 2014 Edition. (Princeton Review)
- Strunk and White. Elements of Style. Fourth edition. (Allyn and Bacon).
- MLA Handbook.
- Swovelin. Cliffs Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination Preparation Guide. (Cliffs Notes)

Essays by:

- Ellen Goodman, Loren Eiseley, Joan Didion, Annie Dillard, Richard Selzer, James Baldwin, Norman Mailer, E. B. White, John McPhee, Maxine Hong Kingston, Lewis Thomas, N. Scott, Momaday, Donald Murray, Barry Lopez, Anna Quindlen, Tom Wolfe, Alice Walker, Martin Luther King Jr. Lewis Thomas, Virginia Woolf, Jonathan Swift, Donald Hall, Malcolm X, James Boswell, Frederick Douglass, William Styron, Richard Rodriguez, Edmund Wilson, Oscar Wilde, Jack London, Margaret Freyer, Mike Barnicle, others.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating on tests, copying papers, forging the signatures of teachers and/or parents on any document, or illegally changing a grade. Students will face disciplinary action (referral to office) in all cases involving academic dishonesty. In cases of academic dishonesty on an assignment, including plagiarism or copying, your grade will be an automatic zero. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and administrative action will be taken in all cases. If you are unsure about assignment expectations, do not cheat—ask for help!!!

### **Assistance**

If at any time you need help, please feel free to make an appointment to speak with me or e-mail me. Remember—you can do it! You are AP!