

## **AP English Literature and Composition Light and Darkness: From Sight to Insight**

*Syllabus*  
*2008-2009*

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

Building on the themes studied in grades 9-11, “the examined life,” “revolution,” and “transforming self and society,” the theme of this course in AP literature is “Light and Darkness: From Sight to Insight.” It will include frequent and varied writing assignments and a focus on close reading, textual analysis and critical thinking.

The objectives of this senior English course stem directly from the school outcomes. It is our hope that our graduates are effective communicators, collaborative learners, critical thinkers, problem solvers, lifelong learners and morally responsible women and men. This course is designed to engage motivated students in college-level work and to prepare students for the required AP Language and Literature exam in May.

**READINGS** include representative works from various periods and genres that invite careful, deliberative reading. As we read, we consider structure, style, and theme as well as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone, deepening our understanding of the ways that writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS** focus on the critical analysis of literature and include expository, analytical and argumentative essays. The course includes frequent opportunities for students to write and rewrite formal, extended analyses and timed in-class responses. We will write:

- To understand: Informal, exploratory writing activities help us discover what we think in the process of writing about our reading (assignments include annotation, freewriting, journaling, and response/reaction papers).
- To explain: In expository, analytical essays we draw upon textual details to develop an extended explanation/interpretation of the meanings of a literary text
- To evaluate: In analytical, argumentative essays we draw upon textual details to make and explain judgments about a work's artistry, quality, and social and cultural values.

**FREQUENT FEEDBACK** from the instructor and from peers, including writing workshops, ensures that instruction is provided before and after revision, and that students develop:

- An appropriate, effective and wide-ranging vocabulary;
- The ability to construct a variety of sentences, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination;
- The ability to organize essays, using techniques such as repetition, transition, and emphasis;
- The ability to balance the general and the specific, using illustrative detail; and

- An effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure

**WRITER'S WORKSHOP** is generally a whole-class activity in which a student's work is placed on the overhead or SmartBoard for consideration by the assembled group of writers. Active participation is a course expectation, comparable to participation in Socratic seminar. Your performance as a participant providing feedback will be evaluated according to a rubric, not just your preparedness as a writer. Like Socratic seminar, it is student-centered and student-led, with teacher participation only when needed for correction or addition.

## **KAP**

The KAP English course is designed to help students to develop skills in perceptive reading, critical thinking, and effective writing, through the study of significant literary texts representing a range of genres and chronological periods, and drawn from a variety of gender and cultural perspectives.

Students enrolled in this course have the option to earn college credit at Kenyon College. The course has been reviewed and approved by the English faculty at Kenyon College. The grade you receive in the course is the grade that will appear on your Kenyon college transcript. The credit will be as transferable to another college as any Kenyon College credit. If you are interested, see the course instructor for a registration form.

## **COURSE EXPECTATIONS & ASSESSMENT**

I assume that writing is a process and that the role of a writing teacher is that of a coach who facilitates the process of thinking, learning, and self-discovery. Our goal, together, is to construct new understandings about ourselves, each other, and the texts we are working with. I also assume that learning is a cooperative/collaborative effort that will occur only when each party invests the necessary time, energy and attention to make it work.

Students are graded on preparation, participation and quality of written work. All of the course work demands that students move beyond observation and recall to interpretation and evaluation. Major papers and projects which evolve over time and go through a rigorous revision process are weighed most heavily. Daily assignments will reflect preparation and engagement and will be evaluated on a regular basis. In-class work will occasionally be collected and evaluated. Formal Socratic seminars, writing workshops, and informal discussion of the assigned literature are designed to encourage independent thought, clear articulation of ideas, and close analysis of specific textual detail.

A major component of KAP English classes is the informed and specific discussion of the assigned literature. Discussion should engage as many students as possible each day, and should encourage independent thought, clear articulation of ideas, and close analysis of specific textual detail.

**DAILY PREPARATION** and participation are crucial to success in this course. Daily reading and writing assignments, formal and informal, individual and collaborative, in-class and assigned, will be used to assess preparation and growth in critical reading and writing skills.

Socratic seminars and writing workshops will be regularly scheduled in order to support and promote fluency and sophistication in writing and in reading comprehension.

Daily homework assignments must be completed in a timely fashion, as they are the springboard for in-class activities; it will be impossible to engage in the in-class activities without adequate preparation. All students are expected to demonstrate that they have read and prepared for class each day. Failure to do so will result in a zero for daily work and may also result in exclusion from full participation in class activities, particularly in Socratic seminars and writing workshops where full participation by all students is expected. It is an expectation of the English department that student work be made public.

If you know that you are going to miss a class, see me to get the assignment. If you miss class due to illness or another unanticipated reason, e-mail me, ask a classmate, or refer to the class webpage to get the assignment. It is YOUR responsibility to inquire about making up any missed work. Be vigilant. I will adhere to the policy as stated in the Student Handbook: **If you are absent (excused) on the day a paper is due, it is due upon your return to class. You are expected to be fully prepared for class on the day you return.**

Sixty percent of the course grade is based on preparation and participation, including class discussion, Socratic seminars, and in-class writings and writing workshop. The other forty percent is based on quality of written work.

**Work submitted late** due to an excused absence will be accepted without penalty according to the guidelines set forth in the *2006-2007 Student-Parent Handbook*. It is due upon your return to class. Late papers will lose 10 points **per school day** for every day after the due date up to a maximum of 50 points. If a paper or assessment is not submitted within two weeks of the due date no credit will be given for that assignment. All assignments are due immediately upon return to school following an absence. If a student has missed part but not all of one school day, or if the absence is unexcused, assignments are due **THAT DAY**.

Computer malfunction will **not** be accepted as an excuse for late assignments. If your printer fails, come in early and print it in the library or find an alternative printing source.

The important thing to remember is this: If there are extenuating circumstances, discuss the situation with me, and submit the late work within a reasonable amount of time, in most cases, by the next class meeting. Communication is the key when you find yourself in a tough spot. Generally speaking, your final grade for the course will be based on the following categories:

<b>Preparation (30%) includes:</b>
Quizzes
Journal writing/annotation
Misc. homework assignments
<b>Participation (30%) includes:</b>
Seminar/writing workshop
Daily discussion/activities
<b>Written work (40%) includes:</b>
Formal analysis and research papers
In-class timed writing
Miscellaneous writing assignments

### **Plagiarism:**

"Plagiarism is the dishonest act of presenting the words or thoughts of another writer as if they were your own. You commit plagiarism whenever you use a source in any way without indicating that you have used it." (James A.W. Heffernan and John E. Lincoln, *Writing: A College Handbook*, 2nd ed., New York: Norton, 1986, 522.). Flagrant, unacknowledged use of another's material is a grave matter. All acts of plagiarism will be referred directly to the school Honor Council.

### **Course materials**

- Cassill, R.V., and Richard Bausch. *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Norton, 2000.
- Cassill, R.V., and Joyce Carol Oates. *The Norton Anthology of Contemporary Fiction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Norton, 1998.
- Arp, Thomas. *Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound and Sense*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt, 1956/1991.
- Hunt, Douglas. *The Riverside Anthology of Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
- Smiley, Jane. *A Thousand Acres*. NY: Fawcett, 1991.
- Cunningham, Michael. *The Hours*. NY: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2002.
- Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. Orlando: Harcourt, 1925.
- Faulkner, William. *Light in August*. NY: Vintage, 1932/1990.
- Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Remains of the Day*. NY: Vintage, 1990.
- Wilson, August. *The Piano Lesson*. NY: Penguin, 1990.
- One of the following:
- Smith, Zadie. *On Beauty*. NY: Penguin, 2005.
  - Franzen, Jonathan. *The Corrections*. NY: Picador, 2001.
  - Eugenidies, Jeffrey. *Middlesex*. NY: Picador, 2002.
  - McEwan, Ian. *Atonement*. NY: Doubleday, 2001.
- Various short stories, poems and essays will be distributed in class.
- A generous and inviting reading journal
- A notebook and/or binder for handouts and miscellanea

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Summer Reading assignment:**

- *Escape from Slavery* by Francis Bok (whole school reading)
- *First They Killed My Father* and *Lucky Child* by Loung Ung
- *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf
- *A Thousand Acres* by Jane Smiley

## **SEMESTER 1**

P= Perrine  
R=Riverside  
N=Norton

### Week 1-2: Course introduction

Why read? Experiencing, interpreting and evaluating literature

- “Mr. Difficult” by Jonathan Franzen
- “Seeing” by Annie Dillard
- *A Thousand Acres* by Jane Smiley

Assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Reading journal entries, graded and ungraded
- Reduction for *A Thousand Acres*
- Socratic seminar on Franzen piece
- Essay in imitation of Dillard

We open the year with several days of informal discussion of the summer reading, including the school-wide book-in-common, *Escape from Slavery*. The author will be speaking at the school in September, so we will discuss authorial intent and purpose, and craft questions for his visit. Next, we will discuss writing for an audience versus writing for aesthetic purposes only, using Jonathan Franzen’s essay “Mr. Difficult” as a springboard for discussion of “quality” of works of fiction and high art versus low art. A character map and discussion of themes in Jane Smiley’s *A Thousand Acres* lays the groundwork for our study of *King Lear*. We review how to annotate, guidelines for keeping a reading journal, and discuss key terms including explication, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

### Weeks 2-5: *King Lear* by William Shakespeare

Secondary material includes:

- *Oedipus Rex* R,P
- Joseph Campbell on myth
- Aristotle’s *Poetics* (for the basic characteristics of the tragic figure) R
- *Looking for Richard* by Al Pacino
- Chautauqua address by Michael York, “
- *Ran* by Akira Kurosawa

Assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Reading journal entries, graded and ungraded
- Discussion of select literary criticism of play
- Socratic seminar
- AP style in-class timed writing
- Writer’s workshop (description above; used in each subsequent major unit)

In this unit, we work quickly through *Oedipus Rex*, discussing the myth of Oedipus, the symbolism of “blindness,” and Aristotle’s definition of tragedy and the tragic figure. We then begin discussing Shakespearean language and how to read, watch, and understand it. We listen to Michael York’s explanation of the Shakespearean dialect and watch Al Pacino’s *Looking for*

*Richard*, in which Pacino discusses and demonstrates how to read, perform and understand Shakespeare, specifically *Richard III*.

Finally, we turn to *The Tragedy of King Lear* itself, mapping it against Smiley's novel, working through the language and watching various interpretations of key lines and key scenes. We read through several critical essays on *Lear*, work together to frame an essential question connecting *Lear* and Larry Cook from *A Thousand Acres* for a Socratic seminar, then engage in our first timed in-class writing to the same prompt. In a writer's workshop, we read and critique the essays. The revised essay is submitted for evaluation.

### **Week 6-8: The Personal Essay**

- Tom Romano "Crafting Authentic Voice"
- Selections from Mary Jane Reed *Teaching Powerful Personal Narratives*"
- "The Inheritance of Tools" by Scott Russell Sanders
- "Living Like Weasels" by Annie Dillard
- "Thinking as a Hobby" by William Golding
- essays from current journals and magazines, i.e., NY Times magazine, Harpers, The New Yorker

Assignments include, but are not limited to:
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- analysis of writers' voice/style; class discussion
- Journal entries, including experimental essays to find "voice;" imitation essays
- Writer's workshop
- Portfolio: One final polished essay, two strong drafts

In this unit on the personal essay (timed to coincide with college essays) we examine several models of strong, clear prose, discussing tone, style, metaphor, use of anecdote and example ("showing, not telling") active and passive voice, strong verbs, engaging leads and powerful conclusions. The bulk of the time is spent in writer's workshop where every student's work is given consideration by the assembled group. The collaborative inquiry of the Socratic seminar is used here in the writer's workshop as we—teacher and students—bring our critical insight to bear under discussion to provide careful considered feedback for every author.

A portfolio of one polished and two strong drafts is due for evaluation at the end of the unit.

### **Week 9-11: The Short Story**

- "Sonny's Blues" by James Baldwin R
- "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez RN
- "Araby" by James Joyce
- "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin N
- "The Swimmer" by John Cheever P
- "Shiloh" by Bobbie Ann Mason
- "Hills Like White Elephants" by Hemingway P
- "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid R

Case Study: Flannery O'Connor (the short story; the grotesque; the South)

- "Revelation"
- "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" R N
- "The Fiction Writer and his Country"
- "Writing Papers about Fiction" by Richard Baugh

Assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Journal entries, graded and un-graded
- Reading & summarizing critical response to O'Connor's work; class discussion/presentation
- Literary analysis/research paper
- Comparing and contrasting elements of style
- In-class, timed writing

Our short story unit focuses on close reading and analysis of complex short stories from a variety of writers from different time periods. We will discuss character, setting, plot, diction, and theme, with a particular emphasis on tone, irony, and point of view; write a literary analysis paper focusing on one of those literary characteristics; and workshop examples of strong papers.

#### **Week 12-14: The Novel**

- *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf
- *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham
- *The Hours* (film) by Stephen Daldry
- "For 'The Hours,' an Elation Mixed With Doubt" by Michael Cunningham

Assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Journal entries, graded and un-graded; tracking and discussion of literary allusion
- Reading quizzes
- Socratic seminar
- Short paper re film v. written text: Examining and analyzing construction of character, tone, point of view, etc. in various media, i.e. what can you do in a written text that you cannot do with film and vice-versa?

In this unit we discuss Woolf's 1925 novel, which students have read as part of the summer reading assignment, and the ways that it contributed to the transformation of the very nature of the novel, by focusing on the minutiae of a single day rather than the grand and epic themes of the novels that preceded hers. We discuss "stream of consciousness," Woolf's interest in sharing Proust's and Joyce's interest in time and psychology, and more generally examine theme, motif, and symbol.

We then read Michael Cunningham's 1998 novel, *The Hours*, inspired by, based on, and extending *Mrs. Dalloway*. We examine again, theme, motif and symbol, searching for the connections to and departures from Woolf's work, and discuss the further evolution of the form of the novel. We study the further extrapolation of Woolf's work in the 2002 Stephen Daldry

film adaptation of Cunningham's book, including Cunningham's and Daldry's representations of Woolf herself, and the themes of domesticity, the lives of women, the writing lives of women, and mental and physical illness.

### Week 15-16: Poetry I

- "Ars Poetica" by Archibald MacLeish P
- "Constantly Risking Absurdity" by Lawrence Ferlinghetti P
- "The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams RP
- "On Television" by Robert Pinsky TBD
- "Fire and Ice" by Robert Frost P
- "In White," (TBD) and "Design" (P) by Robert Frost
- "A Noiseless Patient Spider" by Walt Whitman P
- "Nuns Fret Not at their Convent's Narrow Room" by Wordsworth
- "Provide, Provide" by Frost R
- "Sestina" (TBD) and "One Art" (P) by Elizabeth Bishop
- "A Work of Artifice" by Marge Piercy P
- "Sound and Sense" by Alexander Pope P
- "Metaphors" by Sylvia Plath P

Casebook: Emily Dickinson

- I felt a Funeral in my brain P
- It sifts from leaden sieves P
- I taste a liquor never brewed P
- Much madness is divinest sense P
- Apparently with no surprise P
- I heard a fly buzz when I died P
- As imperceptibly as grief P
- Because I could not stop for death P
- The wife poems (TBD)

Assignments include, but are not limited to:
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- SOAPS
- DIDLS
- TPCASTT
- Identify and analyze poet's use of tone, imagery, etc.
- Identify and discuss diction/tone/irony
- Identify shifts in tone, attitude, etc.
- In-class timed writing: critical analysis of poem specifically addressing use of poetic devices

In our first poetry unit, we discuss how to read a poem, review the concepts of connotation and denotation, and consider the use of basic poetry terms including imagery, figurative language (including metaphor, symbol and allegory), rhythm and meter. We begin to



move on to more complex devices such as apostrophe, metonymy, synecdoche, and subtler devices such as understatement and irony.

AP style multiple choice questions will be assigned for homework and reviewed in class, and in-class work includes discussion, Socratic seminar, a timed writing to an AP style prompt, and a writers' workshop.

**Assigned reading over Christmas break:** *Light in August* by William Faulkner

## SEMESTER 2

**Week 1-2** *Light in August* by William Faulkner

Assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Reading journal entries, graded and ungraded
- Seminar: in defense of Joe Christmas
- Seminar: comparing Joe Christmas and King Lear as tragic figures
- In-class timed writing
- Paper: literary analysis paper or research paper
- Writer's workshop

In this unit on Faulkner's tragic 1932 novel *Light in August*, we apply Aristotle's definition of the tragic figure to the modern work of William Faulkner, and draw comparisons between Joe Christmas and King Lear, examining the history and motivation of each. We explore Faulkner's modernism, use of language (diction, cadence, invented language) stream of consciousness, and his invented world of Yoknapatawpha County.

Assignments include seminars, an in-class timed writing and a literary analysis or research paper of the students' choice.

### Week 3-4: Poetry II

- "It's a Woman's World" by Eavan Boland TBD
- "Daddy" by Sylvia Plath R
- "Ozymandias" by Shelley P
- "Ode on a Grecian Urn" by Keats P
- "The World is Too Much with Us" by Wordsworth P
- "Clearances 3" by Seamus Heaney TBD
- "God's Grandeur" by Hopkins P
- "Anthem for a Doomed Youth" by Owen P
- "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden P
- "Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night" by Dylan Thomas P
- "in the inner city" by Lucille Clifton P
- "Dream Deferred" by Langston Hughes P

- “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” by T.S. Eliot P
- “Sunday Morning” by Wallace Stevens P
- “Out, Out” by Robert Frost P
- Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” and “Living in Sin” by Adrienne Rich P

Casebook: Wm. Butler Yeats

- “The Second Coming,” R
- “Leda and the Swan,” R
- “Sailing to Byzantium” R
- “The Coming of Wisdom with Time” P

Assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Reading journal entries, graded and ungraded
- Timed in-class writing
- Sample AP multiple choice tests
- Writing workshop; developing a rubric for the final paper
- Final paper: explication & evaluation of a poem of choice

In our second poetry unit, we continue to examine and discuss basic (including form) and more complex poetic devices (such as allusion and irony). The Yeats’ casebook provides an opportunity to analyze a sophisticated body of poetic work and in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” we work with a longer, more challenging poem.

Assessments include a seminar, an AP style multiple choice test, and an in-class timed writing, and a final paper, the explication and evaluation of a poem, which will be offered for critique in writer’s workshop and revised for final assessment.

**Week 5: *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro**

Assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Reading journal entries, graded and ungraded
- Seminar: Is Stevens a reliable narrator?
- Discussion regarding theme, content, style, structure of novel.
- Discussion of the tradition of the aristocratic/drawing room novel; Ishiguro’s subversion of that tradition
- Paper on refined topic of choice

In this unit, we discuss the tradition of the aristocratic/drawing room novel; Ishiguro’s subversion of that tradition; his diction; the themes of loss, regret, greatness and dignity and his body of work. History and motivation, in a different context, are examined here, as they were in our studies of *The Tragedy of King Lear*, *A Thousand Acres*, and *The Remains of the Day*. Assessments include a reduction, a seminar, and paper of choice, either research or explication/evaluation.

### **Week 6-8: Case study in drama: August Wilson**

*Fences* (P) and *The Piano Lesson*

Assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Reading journal entries, graded and ungraded
- Seminar: Communication across genres, i.e. music, poetry, drama
- Reduction
- Research paper on Wilson's use and/or reference to one of the following:
  - Pittsburgh Cycle of ten plays
  - Use of the blues in his playwriting
  - The Great Migration; the Great Depression
  - Slave narratives; legacy, allusion and symbolism in *Fences* and *The Piano Lesson*

Our study of contemporary drama is an examination of August Wilson's body of work, including his ten-play cycle chronicling the lives of twentieth century African Americans. We read through two of the plays in the cycle, *The Piano Lesson* and *Fences*, and discuss Wilson's themes and his use of the poetry of the blues across multiple works. We watch a video presentation of *The Piano Lesson*, and focus on Wilson's themes of history, memory and legacy. We discuss the symbolic weight of music, music lessons, the piano lesson and the piano itself in this historically and culturally rich play.

Assessments include a seminar, a reduction of one of the two plays and a research paper on an aspect of Wilson's life or work relevant to one of the two plays.

### **Week 9-11: Independent Reading:**

Over Spring break, read a contemporary novel from the following list, or a contemporary novel of comparable merit:

- *On Beauty* by Zadie Smith
- *The Corrections* by Jonathan Franzen
- *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides
- *Atonement* by Ian McEwan

Assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Reading journal entries, graded and ungraded
- Reduction
- Essay (review of the novel)
- Seminar on the state of/quality of the contemporary novel
- In class timed writing

In this unit we re-visit a question we explored in the beginning of the course regarding the quality of fiction. What is good fiction? What is high art? Why do we read? Analysis may enhance our understanding of a work, but does it inhibit our enjoyment of the work? These are the essential questions we discuss through the reading of one of the four award-winning contemporary novels on the list of choices.

Assessments include a seminar on the issue of “quality” in contemporary fiction; a reduction of their chosen novel; an in-class timed writing and a review of the book.

**Week 12: Review**

Review of year, including significant texts read in grades 9-11, including *Song of Solomon*, *The Things They Carried*, *Frankenstein*, *1984*, *Brave New World*, *Lord of the Flies*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, *Hamlet*, *Song of Myself*.

**Week 13-14: Test preparation**

The final unit focuses on test preparation, including strategy and practice of published AP tests. Exercises will focus on prose and poetry, multiple choice and essay questions, including timed in-class and take-home assignments.

Notes:

Films will be shown at times to be announced after school. Viewing of films listed on the syllabus is a requirement of the course. If you are unable to attend any of the scheduled screenings of a particular film, it is your responsibility to have viewed the film on your own by the time scheduled of classroom discussion. Films include *Looking for Richard*, *Ran*, *The Hours*, *The Remains of the Day*, *The Piano Lesson* and *Atonement*.

Ancillary workshops occasionally offered by various members of the department.