ADVANCED PLACEMENT ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Established Goals:
The course is designed to develop skills that will enable the students to become skilled readers and writers through engagement in

- reading complex imaginative literature (fiction, drama, and poetry) appropriate for college-level study;
- writing interpretations of pieces of literature based on careful observation of textual details; consideration of the works’ structure, style, and theme; the social and historical values they reflect and embody; and such other elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone;
- composing in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) based on the students’ analyses of literary texts.

Understandings:
Students will understand that

1) literature reflects social and cultural tensions;
2) authors use language and literary techniques in various ways to provide meaning and pleasure;
3) employing various forms of analysis — structural, symbolic, psychological, etc. — leads to a richer understanding of theme;
4) how to write with effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure;
5) how to formulate precise thesis statements with supporting analytical development under a time limitation.

Essential Questions:
1) How does our response to conflict in literature inform our understanding of social and moral issues in society?
2) How do works of literature advocate change in social attitudes or in traditions?
3) How does an author use humor, violence, or other stylistic techniques to illustrate specific themes in a literary work?
4) How does literature elicit fresh ideas and guide the formation of insightful and original essays?

Core Units:
1) Truth and the Individual: The Color Purple and Old School
2) Humanity vs. Time: A Visit from the Goon Squad
3) Myth, Storytelling, and War: The Things They Carried
4) Violence and Dystopian Structures
5) Madness and Identity: One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest
6) The Power of Language and Voice
Core Literature:

**Summer Reading:**
- *The Color Purple* (Alice Walker)
- *Old School* (Tobias Wolff)

**Core Novels / Drama:**
- *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Ken Kesey)
- *The Things They Carried* (Tim O’Brien)
- *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (Jennifer Egan)

*Hamlet* (William Shakespeare) or
*The Merchant of Venice* (William Shakespeare)

Since the themes of the core units are universal, other works may also effectively illustrate the particular unit concepts.

**Bank Novels / Drama:**
- *Blindness* (José Sarramago)
- *Death of a Salesman* (Arthur Miller)
- *Ethan Frome* (Edith Wharton)
- *A Gathering of Old Men* (Ernest Gaines)
- *Heart of Darkness* (Joseph Conrad)
- *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte Bronte)
- *No Country for Old Men* (Cormac McCarthy)
- *Pygmalion* (George Bernard Shaw)
- *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Tennessee Williams)
- *The Sun Also Rises* (Ernest Hemingway)

**Core Writing:**
Students will have opportunities to respond to literature with both timed writing sessions and take-home process pieces.

Students will reflect on writing regularly and revise for

- a wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively;
- a variety of sentence structures, including an appropriate use of subordination and coordination;
- logical organization, enhanced by techniques such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis;
- a balance of generalization and specific, illustrative detail;
- and an effective use of rhetoric, including tone, voice, diction, and sentence structure.