Personal Philosophy
A letter grade is a miniscule reflection of what you will learn in this class. By accepting the rigors of an Advanced Placement literature course, you are preparing yourself to be more than college-ready: you are advancing through a door to your own potential as a mature, self-responsible, brilliant, complex, original thinker. In exploring rich and complex works, whose underlying themes and ideas have found home in minds and hearts throughout time, you will awaken to newfound complexities in yourself and, thus, in humanity.

AP-level courses expect the best you have and will have to offer throughout the year—not to impress anyone else but yourself. Thus, through heavy, close-reading, silent and vocal thinking, and trenchant, structured analysis, you will achieve a strong control over language, a heightened sense of yourself and an original appreciation for the ambiguous, nuanced, and exciting world you’ve inherited.

Course Overview
“Literature is news that stays news.”
--Ezra Pound

The great Romantic poet William Wordsworth said that literary expression is “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling…recollected in tranquility.” My take on Wordsworth is that he wrote his best stuff after the fact, “in tranquility”—that is after he had time to observe, think, read, walk, ponder, sleep, discuss. . .to live just a bit more. Have you ever written something, and the morning after, had a sudden rush of new thought to add? Have you ever revised your thoughts, opinions, or interpretations after a class discussion, a conversation with someone, the ride or walk home, a post on your Facebook, a viewing of a film, or a random lyric that spoke to you through your headphones?

You will learn much more in this class in reflection than while you are reading each work. Therefore much of this course is devoted to writing--reflective, analytical, and imaginative, much if it timed in-class, much of it nurtured outside of class. You will be writing something substantial every week, either in your composition notebook, or typed
outside of class. The timed writing is meant to spark structure to your thinking and to prepare you for the free-response questions on the AP exam. Expect to be writing 40-minute, in-class essays at least once every month. Expect to compose extended, out-of-class essays or other major writing assignments every five to six weeks.

You will be reading works that contain many themes, interpretations as numbered as there are individual readers, and a whole lot of seemingly contradictory attitudes and emotions planted by ambiguously thinking writers. This is why I am organizing the year not by time (spanning time from the sixteenth century to the present), not by theme, but by genre—poetry, then drama, and then fiction. The original thinker in you will follow your hunches, your personal experiences, and, scientifically, revise or back them up with content from your reading and noted stylistic choices (literary techniques) with which the author, playwright, or poet uses to engage your emotions and then your intellect.

**Workload—PACING**

As you will note in the attached reading list, I have balanced your writing and reading assignments fairly equally throughout the year. The pace is pretty much the same: whether you are reading textbook handouts, poetry, drama, short stories, or novels, expect to be reading and thinking about your reading at two times the rate of your in-class time. That is, expect to be reading and reflecting on your reading about six to eight hours a week. Keep in mind that the success of your participation in class—formal and informal discussions, group participation, oral presentations, quizzes and timed essay assignments—is in large part predicated on the knowledge of the material and personal reflection you bring to each class.

**Materials Required**

Because we do not have a textbook for this class, I am making enough copies from four different textbook sources to fill one good-sized college textbook. My suggestion is that you buy **three two-inch binders for the year**, each devoted to one genre: poetry, drama, and fiction—expect to use these binders in your college literature courses. One of the upsides to having a textbook in this form is that you can freely annotate without having to worry about giving the textbook back to the school.

You will also need to start the year off with **one composition notebook** (with the back-and-white patterned covers). You will need more as the year progresses. I will be collecting these periodically, so take care to write legibly.
Novels and Plays

Since we are devoting the entire first nine weeks to poetry, you have some time to purchase a copy of the titles below. As I have already arranged to have them shipped at a wholesale discount, please purchase them at:

K News Hallmark
5914 B 75th Street
Kenosha, WI 53142
(262) 694-4055

King Lear, by William Shakespeare
Death of a Salesman, by Arthur Miller
Heart of Darkness, by Joseph Conrad
The Awakening, by Kate Chopin

Add one of the following for your literary circle assignment in the fourth quarter. You may purchase these at any bookstore:
- The Road
- Revolutionary Road
- Beloved
- Ceremony
- Snow Falling on Cedars
- The Bonesetter’s Daughter

We will also be reading heavily, through copies I will issue, from the following text, which can be bought on Amazon for a fairly reasonable price. It is probably the most touted book on reading poetry out there and a standard for AP-Literature and college literature course reading. It’s a keeper:

Poems, Poets, and Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology
by Helen Vendler

Grading

Reading assignments and exploratory writings 30%
- Multiple-choice and short-answer reading questions (formatted to resemble the AP-Exam)
- Quizzes based on textbook handouts and primary text reading
- Peer reviews
- Summer Reading Assignment

Extended essay, research project, oral presentations, poem, one-act play 35%
In-class essays and revisions and final exam 35%
   Five 40-minute in-class essays and one revision  (15%)
   Cumulative Semester Exam (20%)

Note on major writing grading turnaround….I will randomly divide the class up into four groups and assign due dates based on the group numbers I pull from a hat. This will allow me to have your papers ready to hand back to you within three days after you’ve submitted them.

Lateness
Essays submitted after the assigned deadline will be lowered one full letter grade.

Sources for materials handed out in this course:


THE YEAR IN PREVIEW (subject to change)

First Semester
Week One: Introduction to the Course

What is literature, and why do we study it? (Edgar V. Roberts pp. 2-4; Jago pp. 1-4)

Assignment: Type one page reflecting on how Roberts’ definition of “literature” applies to your summer reading. Due second day of class.

Assignment: Choose one poem, analyze it, and discuss how it “tell[s] all the Truth but at a slant.” Due week two.

Due: Summer Reading Assignment
Week Two: Poetry

Introduction

What makes poetry poetry?
(Minot pp. 1-10; Vendler ix-xiii (pp. 3-24); handout: Ideas for Annotating Literature; Explication Cheat-Sheet)

First impressions about mood and tone; first questions we ought to ask ourselves about the poem as a whole—speaker’s situation, divisions within poem, unifying elements (Vendler pp. 3-24) Compare Blake’s vision of “innocence lost” to Bob Dylan’s similar tensions and conflict in “Forever Young”

Assignment: Write a letter to a friend or loved one from the vantage point of the speaker.

Assignment: Annotate “Traveling through the Dark” by William Stafford

Group discuss summer readings. Share notes of conversations with class.

Week Three: Poetry

Language, Imagery, Symbolism
(Jago pp. 21-24; Vendler pp. 145-160; Minot pp. 31-41); handout: Speech Acts


MAJOR WRITING ASSIGNMENT: Write an imagery essay on one of the Romantic poems (poems supplied in handout from week one)

Due: End of week four

Week Four: Poetry

Rhythm, Sound
(Vendler pp. 67-76; Jago, Shea et al pp. 26-33)

Assignment: In-class group assignment: explicate a sonnet, noting sound and rhythmic style to suggest how these contribute to movement and theme of poem.

Explanation of explication assignment…re-introduce analysis short-cuts (MADE CATS) and (TPSCATT).
Assignment: In-class writing assignment (40-minute poem response)

**Group Out-of-Class Oral Assignment:** “Talk Aloud” In an hour-long group session, read through one poem (from next week’s reading), noting use of repetition and changes in speech acts, tone, rhythm, rhyme, and how each of these techniques affect the listener’s interpretation of imagery, action (verbs), subjects, symbols, and the development of emotions and idea(s) in the poem. Record your discussion and present recording of best five minutes to class, after reciting the poem with character—as if you are the speaker.

Due: week five

*Due: Collect essays from groups one and two.*

Week Five: Poetry

**Form:** Lyric vs. Narrative: Sonnet, Epigram, Villanelle, Sestina, Ode, and Elegy
(Vendler pp. 101-119; pp. 593-608)

Identify different forms and functions of these forms. “Sestina,” “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night.”

*Due: Collect essays from groups three and four.*

**MAJOR WRITING AND ORAL ASSIGNMENT:** write own poem using one of the forms discussed; annotate literary techniques in poem

Due: End of Week Six

Week Six: Poetry

**Author v. Speaker v. Reader, Persona**
(Vendler pp. 171-188)

How do poets make their subjects “real”? What is persona, and why do poets use it as an agent? How do poets use imagination to draw reader into their speakers’ minds?

Dickinson’s “I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—“; Yeats’s “Crazy Jane Talks with Bishop”; Dickinson’s “I’m Nobody! Who are You?”; Yeats’s “An Irish Airman Forsees His Death”; Blake’s “The Black Boy”

**Assignment:** Recite personal poems; annotate Dickinson or Yeats poem.
Due: annotated form-specific poems

Week Seven: Poetry

Poetry and Social Identity (roles and stereotypes)
(Vendler pp. 211-225)

Assignment: Using the explication cheat-sheet as a source, analyze one of the assigned poems or songs.

Assignment: AP-multiple choice questions on poem or song on list not discussed in class. Group assignment.

Week Eight: Poetry

Attitudes, Values, and Judgments
(Vendler pp. 283-292)
Discuss what Lowell means when he says that poets “pray for the grace of accuracy.” What truths do poems tell that non-fiction works do not? What are the differences? Can a poem be political and not lose its creative, ambiguous luster? What must a poem have in order to “succeed in achieving lasting interest over time?”

“Sonnet 76” “Epilogue”

Assignment: Annotate, journal, and explicate one poem, paying particular attention to how it attains Lowell’s “grace of accuracy.”

Preparations for test…

Week Nine: Poetry

Groups discuss and grade explications, together. Review for test. Test.

Week Ten: Drama

Introduction: Dramatic Plot
(Jago pp. 59-63; Minot pp. 145-146)
“One of These Days” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

**Assignment:** Library activity—choose one fairy tale and analyze plot according to outline in reading

(Jago pp. 93-96; Minot pp. 282-289)

“Trifles” by Susan Gladspell
“Andre’s Mother” by Terrance McNall

**Assignment:** from readings, offer two thematic sentences based upon plot nuances, pacing, conflicts and complications, and characterization

**Assignment:** Read Act I in *King Lear*, thinking about implied backstory, the setting, and how they lead to the tone and mood of the first scene.

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**Week Eleven: Drama**

**Conflict, Setting, Tone (playwright v. protagonists)**

(Act I in *King Lear*)

Discuss background of play and author

What is the setting? How does this shape Lear’s intentions and motivations? What might have happened just prior to the opening scene? Is the action *in medias res* and why? Define the conflict and first impressions in the play. What are the dramatic questions posed in the first act/scene? What crucial lines and actions best establish characterization in Lear, Edmund, Gloucester, and Cordelia? How do these shape the tone of the play? How does Edmund (subplot) complicate or contribute to the dramatic questions and tone of the play?

Read aloud and focus discussion on interchange between Lear and his daughters. Focus on Lear’s change in tone—discerning how Shakespeare offers clues into the disposition of Cordelia and Lear. Compare our reading to that of the film. Use tone words vocabulary to help hone in on best two terms to describe tone of author versus tone of characters.

**Assignment:** Critical questions—Why does Cordelia respond the way she does? Why does Lear respond the way he does? What might be suggested as Lear’s *hamartia*?

**Or**

**Assignment:** Compare tone of the reading as you “heard” it in your own reading to that of the actors in the film. Choose one passage in the opening scene and compare the “script” to the film. When comparing, identify how characterization and setting and dramatic questions shape the tone in the first scene.

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**Week Twelve: Drama**
Tragedy: Greek version versus *King Lear’s*; Using the Fool to get into Lear’s head; dramatic characterization
(Act II in *King Lear*)

**Dramatic irony** (definition and functions); dealing with multiple themes; setting on mood and tone; **tragic flaw; hubris**; plot divisions based on acts; Lear’s state of mind; the many functions of fools

What complications have developed as a result of Lear’s actions? How has his primary characteristics been revealed and amplified through his interactions with Goneril and Regan? What characteristics are revealed through his interactions with the Fool? What are the implications of seemingly contradictory characteristics?

In light of Edmund’s actions, language, dialogue, and soliloquy, what theme seems to be developing alongside Lear’s problems? How might they be related?

Read final scene aloud in class.

**Assignment:** *ANNOTATE*--Note key language, stage directions, and interactions to comment on how the lines should be delivered. Define scene with three or four tone words. Pose several dramatic questions that develop as a result of the final scene.

**Assignment:** Respond in groups to one free response question regarding characterization and tone. Share with class.

**MAJOR WRITING ASSIGNED:** ONE-ACT PLAY

…(the play and analysis is part of your final exam… a third, separate grade will be issued for the performance exam week or first week of second semester).

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Week Thirteen: Drama

**Setting and Symbol**
(Act III of *King Lear*)

**Assignment:** *Free Response Question*--“Often setting in a piece of literature adds meaning to the work, almost serving as another character. Explain how Act III of King Lear uses setting to contribute to a developing theme in the play. Note how it affects characterization, reveals state-of-mind, establishes mood, develops complications in the plot, and points to a developing theme.”

**Assignment:** Read and respond to essay on functions of fools in myth and literature. How does Lear’s fool counter the conventional definition?

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Week Fourteen: Drama

(Acts IV and V of *King Lear*)
Thematic closure, symbolic actions and blindness, symbolic characters, symbolic meaning as related to other literary techniques in play—imagery; characterization, unanswered questions
Track the parallel plots and parent/child characterizations/conflicts throughout and articulate theme. Symbolic implications of blindness. Is Cordelia a character or an emblem?

Use two songs to reveal themes and conflicts in the play: Civil Twilight’s “Human” and Coldplay’s “Viva la Vida”

MAJOR WRITING ASSIGNMENT: Introduce compare/contrast essay assignment between King Lear and Death of a Salesman.

Week Fifteen: Drama
(Death of a Salesman: Act I)

Introduction: Arthur Miller bio, time, comments on tragedy; societal role vs. self conflict; review of hamartia and hubris; pathos; Greeks vs. Miller’s definition of tragedy; plot construction and flashbacks; backstory; dramatic irony
What has been going on before the first scene? Through his dialogue with his wife, how does Willy reveal his thoughts about who he is? What are his primary characteristics? How does he view his sons—in particular, Biff? What dramatic questions develop in the first scene? Based on the apparent conflict in the first act, what is going to propel the play forward? Where is the dramatic irony in the first act? What techniques does Miller use for us to get into Willy’s head? What affect do the time shifts have on the mood of the play? Ultimately, what is more a problem for Willy, the way society has valued his vocational role in it, or Willy himself? In this way, how is he like Lear? How do Lear and Willy define success?

Read and offer a close analysis of first scene in play. Looking at setting, mode, style and tone of language (what is being said, how it is being said, and reactions), developing characterization, and apparent symbols, suggest two to three thematic statements for the play.

Assignment: Annotate first scene to determine tone and manner for speaking. Any silences? What is being unsaid?

Read first scene in class. Watch first act on film.

Assignment: Open-ended question using King Lear or Death of a Salesman

Week Sixteen: Drama
(Death of a Salesman: Act II)
motifs, themes (delusions, love, success, vanity), tragic flaw, inner conflict, drama as vehicle for social commentary, soliloquy

How have Willy’s primary characteristics been revealed, repeated, or altered throughout the play? Is his world any more or less hostile than Lear’s? Is he a man “more sinned against than sinning?” Does he see the world as being unfair? What is the dramatic irony in what the audience knows versus what Willy knows at the end? Why did Miller allow Willy to die without enlightenment, as Shakespeare did for Lear?

Discuss meaning behind Charley’s eulogy. Remember this line!

**Assignment:** If you were to assign a percentage to how much Willy defined himself as a salesman versus how much he defined himself as a parent, what number would you come up with? Does this ever change throughout the play? How about for Lear? How does Miller make this a universal tragedy, and not just one for Willy? Why does he push his son away in the end? Why does Lear push Cordelia away? Why does Biff rebel against his father? What motifs, symbols, images, or language throughout the play suggest a connection between Willy’s vocational role and his perceived relationship with his son? How are Biff and Cordelia alike? How are they different?

Read restaurant scene aloud. View film. Review a number of AP-Exam open-ended questions that could use *Death of a Salesman* or *King Lear* as a critical/analyzed source. Discuss in groups and share potential theses and topic sentences for a 40-minute essay.

*Collect first drafts groups one and two*

**Week Seventeen:**

**Collect first drafts three and four:** Review exemplary compare/contrast essays; peer review first drafts; develop rubrics.

Collect final drafts: Review for exam

**Week eighteen:**

Exams. Collect one-act play assignments.

**Semester Two**

**Week One:** Short Stories

**Point-of-view** in short stories
(Jago pp. 73-83; Roberts pp. 91-106; Minot pp. 159-171)
“Seeing Eye,” “First Day,” “Patterns” by Lowell, “Young Goodman Brown” by Hawthorne

first, third, limited v. full omniscient; irony—dramatic, unreliable, satire; frame story; reliable v. unreliable; symbolic character (“Seeing Eye”)
**Assignment:** Using one of the works read this week, write three paragraphs outlining and detailing how the work would have changed had it been told from a different perspective. Be sure to consider reliability and credibility or perspective, stylistic choices to create an illusion of reality (retrospective or immediate?), engagement of the reader, and the power of suggestion and level of ambiguity offered in the feelings and thoughts of the protagonist. Students should use “Raise Questions to Discover Ideas” on pp. 101-102 to help shape ideas for assignment.

*Activity: Perform one-act plays.*

**Assignment:** Read first ten pages of *Heart of Darkness* annotating details of setting and thoughts, dialogue, or actions they believe are especially influenced by setting.

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**Week Two: Novel**

**Mood, and Historical and Cultural Setting**

*Heart of Darkness* (pp. 1-8) (pp. 8-24) Passage from “The Masque of the Red Death”; Jago pp. 67-72; E. Roberts pp. 66-71; Minot pp. 211-220

Setting, Eudora Welty’s definition of setting, mood, conventional mood words, difference between tone and mood, historical context, cultural environment, general information about Conrad’s historical and cultural world.

**Assignment:** Compare or contrast how details of any setting in reading (time, place, image representations of historical and cultural context, mood setters) serve to establish the qualities and traits of Marlowe and one of the following: the dog in “Seeing Eye,” the speakers of “Patterns,” the speaker in “Masque of the Red Death,” or the protagonist in “Trifles.” Annotate, diagram, share.

*Activity: Perform one-act plays*

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**Week Three: Novel**

**Frame story, Setting and Symbol**

*Heart of Darkness* (pp. 24-to end of Section One) Jago pp. 84-85; Minot pp. 227-230; E. Roberts pp.139-151

frame story; analyze setting’s impact on protagonist’s perspective—primary characteristics; complications in plot; inner conflict; symbol in setting; repeated imagery (motifs): light/dark, jungle, brutality, colors; stress importance of
contextual meaning in the text’s symbols; development and relationship between two different symbols in story thus far.

**Assignment:** Choose one passage in the novel, copy and annotate it, pointing to one symbol. Chart this and another symbol and note how it relates to or is dependent on other images, circumstances, or setting details in the story. *Articulate a thematic statement* based upon your connections. Then, *offer three possible topic sentences* for an essay you could write centering on symbolic meaning in *Heart of Darkness*

**Assignment:** Timed free-response essay to open-ended question referring to setting or symbol.

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**Week Four: Novel**

**Tone (author’s v. protagonist’s), Irony, and implications on inner conflict**  
*Heart of Darkness* (pp. 1-8 section II) (pp. 9-22)  
Jago pp. 23-24; E. Roberts pp. 152-164

Tone as revelation of attitudes from both author and speaker; tone refers to techniques and modes of presentation author uses to create attitude toward objects, situations, and audience: **verbal, situational, cosmic, and dramatic irony**; descriptions and diction, connotations, speech patterns; manner of expression of or response to ideas; ambiguities or complexities in attitude

**Assignment:** Consider Marlowe’s attitude toward the workers and native peoples on his boat. Choose one passage from the reading and analyze how Marlowe’s language affects your attitude toward him (that is, your sympathy for him, your interest in the story or the situation). Suggest how irony is used in Marlowe’s experience before, during, or after the attack. Suggest two words to describe the author’s attitude toward Marlowe or the situation and use specific details from the passage to explain your reasoning by posing a thematic statement.

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**Week Five: Novel**

**Theme and a novel’s level of thematic exposition through dialogue**  
*Heart of Darkness* (pp. 22-29 end of II) (pp. 1-17 of III)  
E. Roberts pp. 110-113

Theme—exposition offered by main characters

**Assignment:** Annotate and chart three quotations by Marlowe and Kurtz. Paraphrase them. Associate them and suggest a theme by
commenting on one quote from each speaker. Comment on their implications through point-of-view and tone, and, if possible, suggest how they are influenced by setting. Note also the author’s attitude toward the situation, considering any presence of symbol.

**MAJOR ESSAY ASSIGNMENT:** Choose any one of your written commentaries for the novel and extend it into a full essay. In your essay you must cite from at least two critical essays found in the EBSCO directory. Use proper MLA citation for internal citations and works cited list. First draft due week six.

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**Week Six: Novel**

*Heart of Darkness* (read to end). First draft due. Groups will determine rubric. Peer Review. View film (*Apocalypse Now* or *Heart of Darkness*)

**Week Seven: Novel**

Read “The Awakening” (Chapter 1-5)

*Final drafts (first groups) due.*

Introduce *The Awakening* through bio of Kate Chopin. Read “Story of an Hour” in class. Discuss range of themes and conflicts. Suggest psychological and thematic connections with *The Awakening*.

**Assignment:** Write a short narrative describing a day in the life of Edna Pontellier prior to her stay at Grand Isle. Annotate narrative by suggesting primary characteristics of both Edna and Victor, point-of-view, and potential internal conflicts.

Share narratives in class.

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**Week Eight: Novel**

*The Awakening* (Chapter 5-15) (Chapter 15-25)

**Due:** Collect second group’s final draft

Discuss society vs. individual themes being played out in text. Note how Chopin’s nuanced attitude is revealed through ambiguous characterizations of Edna and Robert. Compare Edna’s reactions to and interactions with Madame Reisz and Madame Ratignole. Discuss conflicts and complications / developments in Edna’s character. Based upon her actions dialogue (or lack thereof), suggest her thoughts and Edna’s internal “options.”

**Assignment:** Choose one exchange between Edna and either Reisz or Ratignole. Citing language used, comment on how tone, setting, actions, symbol, and point-of-view reveal the trouble Edna is having at this stage in her journey. Suggest a goal that she might
have, and comment on how her actions within the scene reveal her desire and the obstacles she faces in obtaining happiness.

**Group activity:** survey former AP-Exam open-ended prompts to suggest potential thesis statements using *The Awakening* as a source. This activity will be timed and posted in CHALK-TALK form.

**Week Nine:** Novel

**Weeks Ten and Eleven:** Novel
- **Literary Circles:** Choose from “The Road,” “Revolutionary Road,” “Beloved,” “Ceremony,” “Snow Falling on Cedars,” “The Bonesetter’s Daughter”

**MAJOR WRITING ASSIGNMENT:** Research paper…first draft due week twelve. Final due week fourteen.

**Weeks Twelve and Thirteen:** AP-Exam Preparation
- Modern Prose and Poetry
  - Selections of short-stories, contemporary poetry, and music.

**Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen:** AP-Exam Preparation
- 19th Century Prose and Poetry
  - Selections from Coleridge, Dickinson, Hopkins, Wordsworth, Charlotte Bronte, Twain, and Hawthorne

**Weeks Fifteen and Sixteen:** AP-Exam Preparation
- 17th and 18th Century Prose and Poetry
  - Selections from Donne, Shakespeare, Pope, Ben Johnson, and Andrew Marvell

**Weeks Seventeen-Eighteen:**
- Reflective “Graduation Speech”
- Final grade is presentation
- Final Exam