

# AP<sup>®</sup> English Language & Composition

## Sample Syllabus 1

### Course Overview

Students in this introductory college-level course read and carefully analyze a broad and challenging range of nonfiction prose selections, deepening their awareness of rhetoric and how language works. Through close reading and frequent writing, students develop their ability to work with language and text with a greater awareness of purpose and strategy, while strengthening their own composing abilities. Course readings feature expository, analytical, personal, and argumentative texts from a variety of authors and historical contexts. Students examine and work with essays, letters, speeches, images, and imaginative literature. Featured authors include Annie Dillard, Jill Ker Conway, Eudora Welty, E. B. White, Michel de Montaigne, Truman Capote, Susan Sontag, Mark Twain, Donald Murray, James Joyce, and William Shakespeare. Students frequently confer about their writing in the Writing Center as well as in class. Summer reading and writing are required. Students prepare for the AP<sup>®</sup> English Language and Composition Exam and may be granted advanced placement, college credit, or both as a result of satisfactory performance.

Central course textbooks include *The Craft of Revision*; *Easy Writer*; *Everyday Use: Rhetoric at Work in Reading and Writing*; *Everything's an Argument: With Readings*; *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*; *The Norton Sampler: Short Essays for Composition*; *One Hundred Great Essays*; *Picturing Texts*; and *Subjects/Strategies: A Writer's Reader*. For full publication data, see Teacher Resources below.

Course reading and writing activities should help students gain textual power, making them more alert to an author's purpose, the needs of an audience, the demands of the subject, and the resources of language: syntax, word choice, and tone. By early May of the school year, students will have nearly completed a course in close reading and purposeful writing. The critical skills that students learn to appreciate through close and continued analysis of a wide variety of nonfiction texts can serve them in their own writing as they grow increasingly aware of these skills and their pertinent uses. During the course, a wide variety of texts (prose and image based) and writing tasks provide the focus for an energetic study of language, rhetoric, and argument.

As this is a college-level course, performance expectations are appropriately high, and the workload is challenging. Students are expected to commit to a minimum of five hours of course work per week outside of class. Often, this work involves long-term writing and reading assignments, so effective time management is important. Because of the demanding curriculum, students must bring to the course sufficient command of mechanical conventions and an ability to read and discuss prose.

The course is constructed in accordance with the guidelines described in the AP English Course Description.

## Course Planner

### First Quarter: Course Orientation, Introduction to Close Reading, and Rhetorical Awareness

(September 7–November 5)

The course opens with an immediate follow-up on a summer assignment, which consists of reading two memoirs and keeping a reading response journal. [C3] With a focus on purpose, students find ways to recognize what’s remarkable in Annie Dillard’s *An American Childhood* and Jill Ker Conway’s *The Road from Coorain*. They consider rhetorical context—purpose, audience, and strategies—as they focus on close reading. [C5] They study the introductions to course readers (One Hundred Great Essays, Subjects/Strategies, and The Norton Sampler) and begin annotating, accounting for purpose and context, and recognizing strategies and tactics. The entire class considers the substance and context of William Faulkner’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

**Major Paper #1:** After considering Faulkner’s closing statement concerning “the writer’s duty,” students select two passages, one from Annie Dillard’s *An American Childhood* and one from Jill Ker Conway’s *The Road from Coorain*, that allow them to discuss the purpose of each book. They then draft an essay in which they discuss their selected passages, illustrating how each writer fulfills Faulkner’s “writer’s duty” concept. [C1] Students may draw on their summer reading journals and subsequent classwork with the books. They are also encouraged to consider issues raised in other works by these same authors—namely, Dillard’s “To Fashion a Text” and Conway’s “Points of Departure,” both of which are available in another of the course textbooks, *Inventing the Truth*. Following discussions over their drafts with me, students revise, prepare, and submit the final versions of their essays. [C2] Due: September 21.

Focus on rhetorical purpose and language continues as students read more Annie Dillard: “Living like Weasels” (in *One Hundred Great Essays*) paired with Virginia Woolf’s “Death of the Moth” (both found in *The Norton Sampler*). [C5]

Emphasis on close reading and annotation continues with prose selections drawn from personal essays by Eudora Welty and several essays from *One Hundred Great Essays*, including E. B. White’s “Once More to the Lake,” Andre Dubus’s “Light of the Long Night,” William Hazlitt’s “On the Pleasure of Hating,” Jamaica Kincaid’s

**C3:** The course requires students to write in informal contexts (e.g., imitation exercises, journal keeping, collaborative writing, and in-class responses) designed to help them become increasingly aware of themselves as writers and of the techniques employed by the writers they read.

**C5:** The course requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain an authors use of rhetorical strategies and techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers linguistic and rhetorical choices. (Note: The College Board does not mandate any particular authors or reading list, but representative authors are cited in the *AP English Course Description*.)

**C1:** The course teaches and requires students to write in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects (e.g., public policies, popular culture, personal experiences).

**C2:** The course requires students to write essays that proceed through several stages or drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers.

“The Ugly Tourist,” and Michel de Montaigne’s “Of Smells.” In their close reading, students are expected to recognize the author’s choices when using generalization and specific, illustrative detail, and later be aware of such choices in their own writings. [C12] Students develop the habit of accounting for their close reading in a variety of ways—by producing descriptive outlines, “says/does” analyses, close-reading response forms, annotated photocopies of assigned texts, and double-entry notebooks. [C3]

**C12:** The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work, that help the students develop these skills: 4. A balance of generalization and specific, illustrative detail.

In a focused discussion on the importance of considering audience and context, two essay/photo combinations are considered: “And My Hats Were Prettier,” an essay/photo combination by Nancy Carpenter from *Picturing Texts* and Donald Murray’s “The Stranger in the Photo Is Me,” taken from the August 27, 1991, *Boston Globe*. [C6]

**C3:** The course requires students to write in informal contexts (e.g., imitation exercises, journal keeping, collaborative writing, and in-class responses) designed to help them become increasingly aware of themselves as writers and of the techniques employed by the writers they read.

**Major Paper #2:** After reading and annotating Donald Murray’s “The Stranger in the Photo Is Me,” students write their own personal essay. Following consultations with peers, they select personal photos (or a series of photographs) as points of departure for purposeful memoirs of their own that integrate images and related words. [C1] Each student is asked to use details, memories, perceptions, and ideas that can be gathered up and purposefully arranged.

**C6:** The course teaches students to analyze how graphics and visual images both relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms of text themselves.

Each student’s “Stranger” essay is the culmination of a two-week whole class commitment to what Donald Murray calls “getting the words right.” In addition to using Murray’s *The Craft of Revision* as a resource while planning, drafting, and editing, each student prepares for two major student/teacher writing conferences. These one-on-one conferences often set the tone for the year’s work with my students. [C2] The first conference occurs during the essay’s “discovery” phase as each student reports on initial efforts to fashion his or her text. Different students face different issues early on. Some wrestle with purpose, as they explain why their subject matters. Some arrive wondering about their leads and others appear with issues involving voice and tone. During this conference, I wait, listen, and then respond as each student conveys what’s happening with his or her text. In those instances when the student is well underway to giving shape to his or her text, I may ask about the precise use of certain words and the character and consistency of particular phrases. This discussion builds on vocabulary development exercises in class, helping students to recognize the need for first knowing, and, second, using the exact word. [C9] The second conference typically opens with the following question: “How can I help you now?” At this point, the student identifies portions of the piece that require additional attention and discussion. Typically, students want to better represent, illustrate, or clarify vital scenes and ideas. [C2] Conference interactions always vary according to individual needs. As drafting proceeds, some students may ask about deepening the development of their texts by including additional concrete details. Others may seek help on emphasizing key ideas by revisiting or rearranging words, sentences, or whole sections. I will

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**C2:** The course requires students to write essays that proceed through several stages or drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers.

**C9:** The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work, that help the students develop these skills: 1. A wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively.

frequently discuss the variety of sentence structures available to the writer in order to best convey his or her meaning. [C10] I sometimes ask students to read particular text segments aloud before revising. Each student's ear and voice come into play during the conferring phase of the revision process.

**C10:** The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work, that help the students develop these skills: 2. A variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination.

Student work on this essay is further informed by readings in *Picturing Texts*, especially Chapters 3 and 4, "Making Lives Visible" and "Representing Others," with a particular focus on "Seeing and Not Seeing" and "Composing Life Stories," pages 166-69.

When these papers are complete, I ask students to account for their own rhetorical choices on submission sheets (which accompany final versions of most major papers) and in discussions with me during postsubmission conferences. [C3] Due: October 7.

**C3:** The course requires students to write in informal contexts (e.g., imitation exercises, journal keeping, collaborative writing, and in-class responses) designed to help them become increasingly aware of themselves as writers and of the techniques employed by the writers they read.

As the first quarter draws to a close, students complete their first timed essay. The chosen topic is drawn from AP Released Exam free-response questions that highlight personal essays. Typical selections include question 1 from 1997 (featuring a passage from Meena Alexander's *Fault Lines*) and question 2 from 1999 (featuring the opening of "On Seeing England for the First Time" by Jamaica Kincaid). These tasks require students to read closely and account for how language and rhetoric are purposefully employed. [C4]

**C4:** The course requires expository, analytical, and argumentative writing assignments that are based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres.

## **Second Quarter: Accounting for Purpose, Deepening Appreciation of Rhetorical Strategies, and Intimations of Argument (November 8–January 14)**

During the second quarter, students encounter clusters of essays that are generally related by subject but are markedly different in purpose and strategies. Students write a pair of major papers analyzing the rhetorical differences seen in two such clusters. In one such grouping, they read several essays that touch on the theme of disability, all written by authors who use wheelchairs. The cluster includes several essays by Nancy Mairs; a brief Newsweek "My Turn" essay entitled "Living Under Circe's Spell" by Matthew Soyster; "Unspeakable Conversations," a February 16, 2003, New York Times Magazine essay by Harriet McBryde Johnson; and a short essay entitled "Body Imperfect" by Debi Davis from The Norton Sampler.

**Major Paper #3:** Students produce a major rhetorical analysis paper, writing a finished essay on the following topic: "By focusing on rhetorical purpose, explore the ways in which Nancy Mairs's 'Disability' and Matthew Soyster's 'Living Under Circe's Spell' intersect with and diverge from each other. In your essay, consider *how* each writer uses the resources of language to achieve his or her aims." [C4] In connection with this assignment's required drafts, students prepare descriptive outlines or "says/does analyses" of their own essays, accounting for the function as well as the content of their texts. They share their descriptive outlines first with their peers in small groups and subsequently with the teacher in one-on-one conferences. Peers respond to each other's work by indicating portions of text that are effective as well as those segments that need attention. Through this process, students learn to increase the coherence of their essays as they consider how to better represent and convey their ideas. [C2] I ask students to represent *how* they

**C2:** The course requires students to write essays that proceed through several stages or drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers.

move from the discussion of one text to another by identifying their essay’s transitional phrases and *how*, specifically, they express and develop their views. [C11] Due: November 10.

**C11:** The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work, that help the students develop these skills: 3. Logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence, such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis.

Following this paper, students are introduced to the CD-ROM APCD: *English Language* and the “AP English Glossary” that is included on it (see Publications information in chapter 2). Collectively, the class deepens and varies its exploration of the term *rhetoric*, considering definitions offered in *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers* by Erika Lindemann and *Everyday Use* by Hephzibah Roskelly and David Jolliffe and applying them to word- and image-based texts, including speeches, letters, and advertisements.

By this time, students are also working with *Everything’s an Argument*. Initially, students approach argument from a variety of angles as they deepen their appreciation of context, audience, and purpose. In this regard, they consider provocative images in *Picturing Texts* that appear to promote a particular viewpoint. [C6] They grapple with a single question: Does every text pose an argument? They gather and consider a variety of accessible and diverse “texts”: a Boston Red Sox cap with a “World Series Champions” logo, a nutrition label for a whoopie pie, a yield sign, a vintage Barbie doll, ads for various adornments (from cars to cologne), and an invitation to enter a piece of writing in a contest sponsored by Stephen King. After considering whether there is a distinction between persuasion and argument, students focus on argument—specifically, appeals or lines of argument based on values, character, or emotion, and those based on facts and reason. In this way, they begin to develop a more integrated and organic understanding of words, images, rhetoric, argument, and persuasion.

**C6:** The course teaches students to analyze how graphics and visual images both relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms of text themselves.

**Major Paper #4:** With an awareness of rhetoric, appeals, and argument in the background, students read Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. During the unit students work in small groups, becoming experts on one of several key scenes. Then they get to apply their knowledge of rhetoric to a pivotal scene. They write an essay in which they analyze the rhetoric of both Macbeth’s and Lady Macbeth’s arguments in Act 1, Scene 7, and explain why Macbeth is persuaded by his wife to murder King Duncan. They are asked to consider such elements as the use of appeals, choice of details, and audience. In this way they apply their appreciation of the language of the play and their understanding of rhetoric and appeals in an evaluation of argument. [C4] Students must carefully consider and thoughtfully discuss two related excerpts taken from the scene. Accordingly, I ask students to arrive at required writing conferences ready to discuss the organizational features of their papers. [C11] After their papers have been completed, students view Roman Polanski’s film version of *Macbeth* and explore how its visual elements correspond with the language of the play and its themes. Due: December 9.

**C4:** The course requires expository, analytical, and argumentative writing assignments that are based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres.

Next, we return to *Picturing Texts* and its “Picturing Argument” chapter. On page 386, an advertisement sponsored by the Episcopal Church confronts readers with the question “Whose birthday is it, anyway?” spanning two comparable but distinct images, one of Santa Claus and the other of Jesus Christ. Students consider the effect of such juxtaposition and other tactics in the visual/text presentation. At this point, they work with *Adbusters*, a Canadian periodical that challenges students to think about how commercial products and ideas are “sold.” Photographs that appear to argue a point,

such as documentary photographs by Dorothea Lange (in *Picturing Texts*, page 395) and Robert Frank (in Lorraine Monk’s *Photographs That Changed the World*), are examined and discussed as well. [C6]

**C6:** The course teaches students to analyze how graphics and visual images both relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms of text themselves.

**Major Paper #5:** With about two weeks to go in the second quarter, students are given 48 hours to prepare a rhetorical analysis of two passages from essays that, while related by subject, differ in purpose. After reading and annotating both passages carefully, each student prepares a “says/does analysis” and identifies the intention underlying each text. [C4] While both Linda Thomas’s essay “Brush Fire” and the opening segment of Joan Didion’s “Los Angeles Notebook” present detailed and evocative descriptions of the Santa Ana winds, the authors invoke the winds with different aims. Students are asked to apply knowledge of context, intention, structure, and appeals from their study of *Everyday Use* as they account for how the two texts intersect with and diverge from each other. By this time, students are expected to articulate how particular tactics, such as each author’s use of metaphor, anecdote, authority, or personal observation, help drive home her central ideas. Following this paper’s January 11 due date, I schedule a midyear writing conference with each student. During these conferences, students open and discuss the contents of their writing folders. Often, discussion turns to matters of style. We may consider tone, diction or the structure, character, and variety of sentences. We may examine tactics that lead to more effective development. [C13]

**C4:** The course requires expository, analytical, and argumentative writing assignments that are based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres.

**C13:** The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work, that help the students develop these skills: 5. An effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure.

Prior to the end of the semester, students also encounter a selection of purposeful letters and speeches, drawn from collections such as *Farewell, Godspeed; In Their Own Words; Letters of a Nation; A Treasury of the World’s Great Letters; and The World’s Great Speeches*. Again, audience and context are considered along with purpose. [C5]

**C5:** The course requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain an authors use of rhetorical strategies and techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers linguistic and rhetorical choices. (Note: The College Board does not mandate any particular authors or reading list, but representative authors are cited in the *AP English Course Description*.)

### First Semester Exam

At the end of the second quarter and first semester (January 20), students take an 80-minute exam featuring two AP free-response questions from released exams— one focusing on prose analysis and rhetoric, the other on argument.

### Third Quarter: Understanding and Developing Argument (January 24–April 8)

Throughout much of the third quarter, on an almost daily basis, students continue working with nonfiction: argumentative essays, letters, and speeches. [C4] Drawing on texts from different cultural and historical milieus, students increase their familiarity with the various rhetorical modes. During one segment, they give careful attention to chapter nine of Ronald C. White Jr.’s *The Eloquent President: A Portrait of Lincoln through His Words*. This chapter (and its notes) illuminates the rhetoric and background of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. Then, following close study of John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address, Queen Elizabeth’s “Speech to the Troops at Tilbury,” and Chief Seattle’s “Speech on the Signing of the Treaty of Port Elliot,” students complete the free-response question from the 2001 AP Released Exam based on Lincoln’s second inaugural address.

Previous discussions about the power of images lead to a unit that focuses on “War and Authenticity of Photography: What’s True?” Students consider several prominent photographic images associated with the involvement of the United States in Vietnam, viewing a selection of photographs such as Nick Ut’s “South Vietnamese Children Burned by Napalm” and Eddie Adams’s “Execution of a Viet Cong Suspect,” as well as photographs taken by North Vietnamese war photographers (in Monk’s *Photographs That Changed the World* and also in Stewart O’Nan’s *The Vietnam Reader*). [C6] Next, they read segments of Michael Herr’s *Dispatches* (excerpted in *The Vietnam Reader*) along with selected letters from Vietnam veterans published in *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam*. Finally, they watch portions of the Errol Morris documentary *The Fog of War*, featuring Robert S. McNamara’s 2003 reflections on the effects of the Vietnam War. They contrast McNamara’s recent reflections with public remarks he made during the war as secretary of defense.

**C6:** The course teaches students to analyze how graphics and visual images both relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms of text themselves.

**Major Paper #6:** In light of their inquiry into texts associated with the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War, students consider a passage from Susan Sontag’s *Regarding the Pain of Others* in which Sontag asserts that the authenticity of war photographs remains removed from war’s grim reality. Her assertion provides students with a point of departure for an essay of their own in which they must draw on the texts encountered to form a response to the following passage:

We—this “we” is everyone who has never experienced anything like what [these war dead] went through—don’t understand. We don’t get it. We truly can’t imagine what it was like. We can’t imagine how dreadful, how terrifying war is; and how normal it becomes. Can’t understand, can’t imagine. That’s what every soldier, and every journalist and aid worker and independent observer who has put in time under fire, and had the luck to elude the death that struck down others nearby, stubbornly feels. And they are right. (126)

In addition to considering the texts I’ve selected, students are asked to locate, read, and cite (with annotations) four to six additional texts that offer valuable insights on the relationship between war as represented through photography and war as reported through participant narration. This task asks students to make use of their knowledge of the rhetoric of images and words as applies to Sontag’s observation but also to prominent images and narratives associated with particular wartime contexts. Accordingly, students are encouraged to expand their own research to texts associated with conflicts other than Vietnam. In this way, they enlarge upon as well as synthesize their reading, bringing new knowledge into play as they formulate purposeful essays of their own. [C7]

**C7:** The course teaches research skills, and in particular, the ability to evaluate, use, and cite primary and secondary sources. The course assigns projects such as the researched argument paper, which goes beyond the parameters of a traditional research paper by asking students to present an argument of their own that includes the analysis and synthesis of ideas from an array of sources.

This assignment calls upon students to “reactivate” the research and documentation skills they developed in conjunction with the previous year’s researched persuasive essay. [C7] Once again, they make frequent use of their composition handbooks as they refresh their knowledge of proper research routines, including the use of Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation style. [C8] Due: February 17.

**C8:** The course teaches students how to cite sources using a recognized editorial style (e.g., Modern Language Association, The Chicago Manual of Style, etc.).

Work in *Everything’s an Argument* proceeds as students focus on the terms and

practice of Stephen Toulmin’s method of making convincing arguments. Students learn about the importance of making strong claims, offering pertinent data and strong reasons, and connecting claims and reasons with suitable warrants. Appreciating these key elements of Toulmin’s argument helps student writers see how they might present evidence in support of a particular stance.

**C4:** The course requires expository, analytical, and argumentative writing assignments that are based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres.

Over February vacation, and concurrent with exercises in argument, students read Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood*, a lengthy and purposeful nonfiction work. During early March, they carefully analyze selected passages that suggest Capote’s various rhetorical purposes. Special attention is given to a recording of the book’s opening as read by the author on an old LP record from my collection.

**Major Paper #7:** The students’ study of what Capote called a “nonfiction novel” culminates in a major paper. They closely read, annotate, and eventually compare two consecutive passages from the “Persons Unknown” section of the book. **[C4]** In this segment, Capote presents consecutive representations of the same segment of time. These passages include shared reference points, including such remarkable phrases as “Mountains. Hawks wheeling in a desert sky.” Students focus on particular quotations and representations that, presented in different contexts and from the different points of view of the two killers, suggest distinct purposes behind each rendition of the same period of time. Due: March 22.

**C5:** The course requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain an author’s use of rhetorical strategies and techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers’ linguistic and rhetorical choices. (Note: The College Board does not mandate any particular authors or reading list, but representative authors are cited in the *AP English Course Description*.)

### **Fourth Quarter: Synthesis Essay, Focused Preparation for the AP English Language and Composition Exam, and Understanding the Rhetoric of Cinema**

(April 11–June 14)

The final cluster of essays and other texts studied are all associated with the concept of beauty. Students read numerous essays and other texts that occasion them to think about what beauty involves and what it means—and looks like—to “be” beautiful. Essays such as Diane Ackerman’s “The Face of Beauty” (in *Subjects/Strategies*), Gretel Ehrlich’s “About Men,” Angela Carter’s “The Wound in the Face,” and Susan Sontag’s “A Woman’s Beauty: Put-Down or Power Source?” (all in *One Hundred Great Essays*), and Stephen S. Hall’s “The Troubled Life of Boys” (from *The New York Times Magazine*) create a framework for the entire unit. **[C5]** Students go on to consider numerous image-based texts drawn from broadcast television (*The Swan*), selected Web sites, and periodicals such as *Vogue*, *Men’s Health*, and *Vanity Fair* that influence a culture’s perception of what it means to be beautiful. **[C6]** Pop culture icons such as Barbie, Ken, and G.I. Joe dolls are examined through personal narratives as well as Marge Piercy’s 1969 poem “Barbie Doll” and essays by Alistair Hight, M. G. Lord, Anna Quindlen, Christine Rosen, and Jane Smiley.

**C6:** The course teaches students to analyze how graphics and visual images both relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms of text themselves.

**Major Paper #8:** This unit’s culminating assignment asks students to move beyond the texts offered for whole class consideration by writing a researched argument paper that asks them to draw upon their own researched sources. While also considering apt personal experiences, they undertake purposeful research of their own as they articulate, develop, and support their own position in response to a passage that offers a debatable definition of beauty. **[C7]**

**C7:** The course teaches research skills, and in particular, the ability to evaluate, use, and cite primary and secondary sources. The course assigns projects such as the researched argument paper, which goes beyond the parameters of a traditional research paper by asking students to present an argument of their own that includes the analysis and synthesis of ideas from an array of sources.

In connection with this assignment, students are asked to avoid assuming their own stances until they have carefully considered varied but viable viewpoints on beauty and related issues as offered by a range of researched sources. During the early stages of their work, they share their deliberations over their research in classroom-based study groups. Then, prior to writing a first draft, they represent their discussions around and about their sources before me in conference. They continue to receive support and collect feedback during the writing process from me as well as their peers. [C2]

**C2:** The course requires students to write essays that proceed through several stages or drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers.

In their final essays, students are expected to exercise and sharpen the research and rhetorical skills that ultimately will support and illuminate their own arguments. Students are directed to carefully evaluate, employ, and properly cite primary and secondary sources, again using MLA documentation. [C8] Due: April 14.

**C8:** The course teaches students how to cite sources using a recognized editorial style (e.g., Modern Language Association, The Chicago Manual of Style, etc.).

After the exam, which is administered in early May, students work with Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* and Martin Scorsese's film treatment of the novel. If they are juniors, they complete a college application essay that is placed on file and made available for revision in the fall. Most students choose to complete the personal statement from the Common Application, which is available online ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)).

## Student Evaluation

Students are evaluated on the basis of major papers, homework, quality and character of class participation and involvement, and AP-style writing prompts. Major papers count a great deal toward each quarter's grade, but other elements are also significant. Students earn both numbered scores and grades on AP prompts they take during the year. The grade associated with particular AP essay scores varies according to the time of year that is, a very good essay written in November earns a higher grade than a similar essay written in April. That's because students are at work building the skills needed to succeed as the year proceeds.

Student performance in connection with important course components contributes to each student's final grade for the course in the following manner:

**Regular class work, including daily participation and preparation: 20 percent**

Major papers	55 percent
First-semester exam	7 percent
In-class writing	15 percent
Multiple choice	3 percent

In this course, student thinking, writing, reading, listening, and speaking are at the center of class activity. Grading is viewed in this context. Teachers continually assess student performance and progress, as evidenced by papers, in-class task commitment, homework, and daily preparation. Course products are regularly reviewed. One goal of our evaluation is to enable students to become more comfortable with self-assessment.

The usual A–B–C–D–F system is used to grade student work each quarter. Teachers discuss grades with students in conferences during the marking periods. In addition to the usual grades, an unsatisfactory finished piece of writing may, at the teacher’s discretion, receive a grade of R, indicating that it may be revised or reworked, then resubmitted for a grade, without penalty.

Teachers regularly observe and assess student knowledge and ability. They collect and assess student products, such as finished written pieces, on-demand writing, homework, tests and quizzes, response journals, and class notes.