

AP English Literature – 2018-19
Instructor: Mr. Robel – Room 30
Email: probel@carmelunified.org

Name: _____

Course Overview

In AP English Literature & Composition, we will engage in the careful reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature, with the goal of deepening our understanding of the ways writers use language to provide meaning and pleasure for readers. In addition, we will prepare for the kinds of challenging reading and writing that are expected both on the AP English Literature & Composition exam and at the university level. You will be successful in this class if you are committed to working on the following three pursuits: (1) **reading** challenging literature *attentively*, (2) **discussing** literary works and **exploring** their meaning *in collaboration with others*, and (3) **writing** about literary works to *articulate and extend your understanding* of them.

Course Details

I. Reading (45% of grade)

In this course we will read and analyze poetry, drama, short stories, and novels from a variety of cultures and historical periods, ranging from classical to contemporary. Moreover, in preparation for the AP Lit exam, you will be expected to get to know a handful of works particularly well. Assignments in the “Reading” category will consist mainly of written responses to reading selections, reading quizzes & tests, and analysis activities focusing on prose passages and poems.

Please be aware that since you have chosen a college level program, the selected texts may contain mature or controversial ideas, issues, content, and language. The College Board expects students to respond to these controversies by questioning the larger meaning, purpose, or overall effect of the detail or idea in context.

II. Writing (45% of grade)

Writing is an integral part of this course. Most writing assignments will focus on the critical analysis of literature. However, you will also gain practice in literary response, reflection, argumentation, and creative writing, including fiction and poetry. There will also be ample timed write practice for the specific tasks required on the AP English Literature & Composition Exam

Writing instruction and feedback will help you to hone your craft and develop your ideas in clear, coherent, and persuasive language. Emphasis will be placed on helping you develop stylistic maturity as a writer, which is characterized by the following traits:

- a wide-ranging vocabulary used with accuracy and resourcefulness
- the ability to use a variety of sentence-structures and rhetorical strategies to achieve a specific purpose
- a logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques of coherence
- the ability to balance generalizations with specific, illustrative details.

III. Speaking, Listening, & Participation (10% of grade)

Another crucial component of this class is the ability to listen actively and articulate your thoughts verbally. We will engage in almost daily discussion of literature and ideas—be it through Socratic seminar, large and small groups, or online—and each student’s contribution is essential. Students will also be asked to participate in and contribute to formal presentations.

IV. Rubrics and Points

All assignments will be assessed using a point system. AP practice timed-writes will be assessed using the AP 9-point rubric. Grades will be weighted according to the following categories: Reading (45%), Writing (45%), Class Participation (10%). Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A = 89.6-100%

B = 79.6 – 89.5%

C = 69.6 – 79.5%

D = 59.6 – 68.5%

F = 0 – 59.5%

V. Expectations & Course Policies

A. Use of Class Time / Attentiveness

1. Each day of class, your job is to complete the AP English Literature work assigned that day. Please do *not* use our class time to do work for another class, play computer games, message friends, listen to music, surf the internet, etc.
2. Before class, put away your earbuds, cell phone, head phones, and any other distracting technology so that you can give our coursework your undivided attention.

B. Homework

3. The nightly homework usually involves reading approximately 30 pages in a novel or reading a shorter selection and composing a written response to the reading. Depending on your skill and speed as a reader, this homework may take between 30 and 60 minutes to complete. Additional homework may include responding to questions about the reading or working on extended writing assignments.
4. *Unless otherwise stated*, homework assignments are due at the beginning of class—including electronic submissions to turnitin.com, which must be submitted prior to class.
5. Most written assignments will be submitted to turnitin.com. When you submit an assignment to turnitin.com, it is your responsibility to verify that the submission was successful. Follow all instructions for submitting your work, and then double-check that your work was uploaded properly and completely.
6. If a problem with MySchool, Google Docs, or turnitin.com makes you *unable to submit an assignment to the turnitin.com link*, please email the assignment directly to Mr. R by the assignment deadline with a brief explanation. Email: probel@carmelunified.org.

C. Late / Missing Work

7. In general, late work will not be accepted. However, you will be granted four 1-day homework extensions per semester to use at your discretion. (Hence, you are allowed *four total days of late work in a semester* without penalty.) Once you have used up your HW extensions, no more late work will be eligible for credit that semester. Note: Homework extensions may not be used to postpone tests, projects, presentations, or group assignments.
8. A missing assignment is worth a ZERO in Aeries (also known as a “red box”). To make up a missing assignment, you must meet these three requirements: (1) you must have enough HW extensions to be eligible to do so, (2) you must submit the assignment electronically to the proper turnitin.com link, and (3) you must print out and hand-deliver a hard copy of the assignment directly to Mr. Robel.

D. Absences and Make-Up Work

9. All assignment instructions, handouts, and materials will be posted daily on our MySchool page. Whenever you are absent, check our MySchool page immediately to find out what you missed.
10. For every day of an excused absence, you will be given the equivalent amount of time to make up your work. Moreover, tests and quizzes must be made up within one week unless you make special arrangements with Mr. Robel.
11. A planned absence is *not* the same as an illness. **If you miss class due to any planned absence—such as a field trip, sporting event, doctor’s appointment, or family trip—you must find out in advance what assignments you’ll be missing, and you must complete the assignments before you return to class.**
12. If you miss a test or assignment due to truancy or “cutting class,” no make-up will be allowed.

E. A Culture of Respect

13. Through your words and actions, please show respect for each person—for their body, belongings, feelings, and personal boundaries. Of course, don’t put anyone down. Moreover, please clean up after yourself; don’t leave a mess of any sort for someone else to clean up.

F. Academic Honesty / Plagiarism

14. Plagiarism is academic dishonesty; it involves using someone else's work without properly crediting the source. All the work you submit for this course must be your own original, current work. CHS uses turnitin.com to combat plagiarism and to encourage students to do their own work. As the CHS Code of Conduct states, any form of cheating or plagiarism will result in both a zero for the assignment and a disciplinary referral.

G. Chromebooks

15. Bring your Chromebook to class each day, and make sure that it is adequately charged. Repeated failure to charge your Chromebook or bring it to class will negatively affect your participation grade.

16. During class, please use your Chromebook only to work on what is relevant to the course.

H. Communication

17. If you have questions or need help with *anything*, please come see me in person! I am usually available to give extra help by appointment during my prep periods (which are periods 2 and 7) and during lunch. You can also get help during Office Hours from 7:45 – 8:25 on Thursday mornings.

18. If you need to reach me after school hours, email is the best method: **probel@carmelunified.org**.

VI. Tips on How to Succeed in This Class

A. USE MYSCHOOL AND STAY ORGANIZED – Check our course MySchool page every day to keep track of each day's assignments—including what you might have missed when you were absent.

B. ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE READING HABITS to get all your work done every day, and stick with these habits. Moreover, change any habits that do *not* support your success.

C. GIVE FULL ATTENTION TO YOUR COURSEWORK – Don't "multi-task" when you read. Instead, focus your attention on each reading assignment, and become skilled at monitoring when your attention wanders. Learn to "catch yourself" whenever your mind wanders and "come back" to the reading.

D. HAND IN ONLY YOUR BEST WRITING – Don't hand in sloppy, careless, or incomplete work. Instead, follow instructions carefully, answer all parts of each prompt, express your thinking clearly, develop your ideas as fully as possible, and proofread everything that you hand in. (Exception: You don't need to proofread *journal entries*.)

E. ASK FOR HELP WHENEVER NECESSARY – Because this is an *AP* course, you may find some of the assignments to be challenging. However, you don't need to "go it alone." If you have any questions, or if ever you feel stressed-out about an assignment, be sure to see Mr. R for help.

F. BRING THESE MATERIALS EVERY DAY:

- the currently-assigned book, your fully-charged Chromebook, all handouts and materials for the class, pens and pencils

Please complete both sides of the following sheet.

AP English Literature & Composition Syllabus Signature Sheet

Please complete both sides of this sheet.

Please sign and return this page to Mr. Robel by Tuesday, August 21st.

I have read and understood the course expectations.

Student's name (please print)

Student's signature

Date

Preferred email (print clearly)

Parent or guardian's name (please print)

Parent or guardian's signature

Date

Preferred email (print clearly)

Please complete the other side of this "Signature Sheet," as well.

August 17, 2018

Dear parents and guardians of AP English Literature students:

Our studies of literature this year will include the study of movies that connect with four major course themes: (1) **personal identity and relationships** with others; (2) the nature of **love**; (3) **illusion, reality, and truth**; and (4) the nature and importance of **literature, story-telling, and art**. The movies *Up in the Air*, *Almost Famous*, and *Cloud Atlas* closely fit these course themes, portraying characters whose lives are profoundly impacted by these aspects of life. However, because each of these films also received an R-rating from the MPAA, I would like to (1) explain my rationale for showing each film in class and (2) request permission for your son or daughter to view them.

Up in the Air is the story of Ryan Bingham, a man whose career is to travel from city to city and fire people from their jobs. A tremendously well-traveled man, Ryan Bingham is more at home on the road than at his apartment. He prides himself on his personal freedom and on the lack of bonds in his personal life. This movie challenges us to appreciate human relationships, the other human beings in our world, and the nature of the bonds that connect us to one another.

Almost Famous is the story of William Miller, a sheltered teenaged boy in the early 1970s who is a precocious writer and a great fan of rock music. William Miller manages not only to acquaint himself with a rising rock band, but to gain an assignment with *Rolling Stone* magazine as a journalist accompanying this band on tour around the country. *Almost Famous* is Cameron Crowe's semiautobiographical coming-of-age story that examines friendship, love, and honesty, as well as the ways people lie to and use one another.

Cloud Atlas, according to the film's official website, "explores how the actions and consequences of individual lives impact one another throughout the past, the present, and the future. Action, mystery, and romance weave dramatically through the story as one soul is shaped from a killer into a hero, and a single act of kindness ripples across centuries to inspire a revolution in the distant future." A challenging movie that places *demands* on the audience and teaches us how to watch it and make sense of it as we view it, *Cloud Atlas* is a contemporary work of art that examines the topics of love, freedom, human hierarchies, and our relationships with others.

All three of these films repeatedly engage us with questions regarding the ways we view and treat our fellow human beings. In all three films, the protagonists go on journeys of discovery, which include important interactions with other human beings, the forming of significant relationships, and opportunities to question one's way of life and one's own values. I think the films are wonderful on many levels—not just in their examination of ethical values, but in each film's artistic unity and its relevance to a number of core literary works we study in class.

However, each film was rated "R" for the following reasons: *Up in the Air* – adult language and some sexual content; *Almost Famous* – brief adult language and minor drug content; *Cloud Atlas* – violence, language, sexuality/nudity, and minor drug content. I do not take such content lightly, but I believe the films do not emphasize or glorify these elements in any way. The scholarly study of literature often requires attention to mature or controversial content, and with these movies, I will challenge students to examine both how and why each film-maker depicts such content in the film, and how such content contributes to the impact and meaning of each film.

Please sign the consent form below and check the appropriate box indicating either your permission for your student to view the films or your desire for the alternative assignments. If you prefer the alternative assignments, during the films your student will adjourn to the library to read a short story about similar themes, also in anticipation of a written response.

Thanks very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patrick E. Robel

Please sign and date this form and check the box below indicating your preference. Thank you.

- Yes**, my student has permission to view all three films: *Up in the Air*, *Almost Famous*, and *Cloud Atlas*.
- No**, my student does not have permission to view the films. Please offer the alternative assignments.
- My student has permission to view only the film(s) _____.
(Please specify which film or films.)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name (printed): _____

Student's Name (printed): _____