

AP Literature & Composition Syllabus

READING RESPONSIBILITIES

The overall reading goal is to provide for the experience of literature, the interpretation of literature, and the evaluation of literature. We will supplement our core readings with independent readings and literature circle activities. As we read, we will look to identify common themes among the novels, plays, poems, stories, articles, and essays. The way we make learning real and lasting is through finding connections between the different texts we immerse ourselves in during class. We will not study texts in isolation; rather, we will put them in conversation with one another and use them as lenses for critically viewing each text. This course will teach you to interpret a work of literature through developing your ability to read deliberately and reflectively. As you immerse yourself in each text, you will consider its structure, style, themes, figurative language, imagery, and symbolism in addition to the social and historical values it embodies or critiques.

Core Texts (Required Reading)

- **Cat's Eye**, Margaret Atwood (summer reading)
- **Native Son**, Richard Wright (summer reading)
- **Dubliners**, James Joyce
- **Oedipus Rex**, Sophocles
- **Macbeth**, William Shakespeare
- **Jane Eyre**, Charlotte Bronte
- **Beloved**, Toni Morrison

Literature Circle Texts Listed at end of Syllabus

NOTE: Book titles may be added or subtracted as time permits. Also, there is some flexibility in choosing supplemental texts based on the available resources. I also encourage you to bring me any articles or essays that you encounter that pertain to the text we are studying. As this class is a college-level course, there is a substantial amount of reading to be done.

WRITING RESPONSIBILITIES

Writing to Explain and Evaluate: You will submit several major compositions each marking period. These compositions (approximately three to five typed pages in length) will reflect diversity in the writing experience: literary analysis, personal narrative/imaginative, expository/information, or persuasive/argumentative. These writings will have you scrutinize the work's quality as well as its socio-cultural values. Written examinations will occasionally follow the major reading assignments; they will call upon you to organize and synthesize your understanding of the material in multiple ways (short answers, more developed essays).

Writing to Understand: You will be required to maintain a double-entry note journal that will aid you in remembering what you have read. The double-entry notes will allow you to make connections between texts and write down questions and responses that will ensure you are a

contributing member of class discussion. This writing will serve as a springboard for response/reaction papers.

There will be ample opportunity to do expressive writing in response to your reading. You will have a section in your binder that will allow you to respond what you have read and grapple with these issues that emerge in the readings and through discussion.

Your double-entry notes, response journals, and class notes will serve as excellent source material for your compositions and essay exams.

RESEARCH RESPONSIBILITIES

Each of you will be responsible for the completion of a literary research paper. The paper is due during the fourth quarter and requires correct MLA documentation. [The six to eight page paper will be an original critical analysis of at least one specific work of fiction written by your selected author. You will be required to research not only your author and the socio-cultural climate he/she wrote in but published literary analysis of your author's work. We will begin our discussion of the research project early in the second semester with an overview of the paper and the process you will undertake to complete it.

AP TEST PREPARATION

Each of you must take the AP Literature and Composition test in May. We will weave test preparation into the course in the form of taking practice tests (essay and multiple choice), reviewing past AP tests, and engaging in timed writing exercises. The best preparation will be spending the year critically reading challenging texts, discussing their themes, and writing essays that demonstrate your understanding of the text.

ASSESSMENT

The majority of your grade will stem from the major compositions and essay tests you will complete. The other components of your grade will consist of completing double-entry notes, responding to journal prompts, brief in-class essays and outlines, vocabulary quizzes, projects and presentations, class discussion, homework, and literature circles.

AP LIT BINDER

Students are required to purchase a large 3-ring binder to build an AP prep textbook over the year. We need this binder to maintain our work on vocabulary development, double-entry notes on the books we are reading, student-generated author/book profiles, key passages, journal responses, writing portfolio, test prep objective questions, sample essays, grammar enrichment, etc. The maintenance of this binder is crucial to not only your success in this course, but to your success on the AP test. It will ensure you have all of the relevant test prep materials in one place and will also double as a stellar resource for a college level class in the future.

TEACHER'S ROLE

My role in this course is to be a discussion leader, questioner, critic, resource, and ally. I see myself fulfilling the following tasks as you prepare for success in the course, the AP test, and beyond:

1. Helping you assume responsibility for your learning.
2. Selecting materials that challenge and engage you intellectually.
3. Welcoming a wide range of ideas for exploration and consideration.
4. Conferring with you on your written work to help you become a better writer.
5. Showing an eagerness to work hard for you and grow intellectually along with you.
6. Working to help you understand writing as a process and teaching you specific techniques to increase the clarity and coherence of your writing
7. Aiding you in your understanding of rhetoric, including crafting and maintaining tone, forging a distinct voice, and understanding emphasis through diction and sentence structure.

STUDENT'S ROLE

I see your role as working to develop your abilities as readers and writers. Throughout the year, you should review and reflect on these questions:

1. Do you possess the desire to learn more than the obvious or superficial?
2. Do you possess the desire to engage in intelligent discussion, active listening, and constructive speaking?
3. Do you have the willingness to accept criticism from both teachers and peers?
4. Do you have the patience to accept a variety of answers or unresolved questions as starting points for further exploration of ideas in works of literature?
5. Do you have the willingness to work hard to improve your command of the English language?

You will notice that your role hinges on your willingness to be a positive and productive member of the class. Success in this class is less about natural ability and more about work ethic and willingness to stretch yourself. We must all be willing to allow what we read and discuss to transform the way we think and act. This course will have failed in its overarching purpose if we all leave it holding onto our initial beliefs and responses to the reading. We must be willing to try on different perspectives and even if we ultimately disagree with them we must be willing to listen to them and respect them.

Overarching Goals

Putting Texts in Conversation: Using One Text as a Critical Lens for Viewing another Text

Charting the relationship between Form and Function (Method and Meaning)

Forging a Sense of Voice / Considering Audience

Rhetoric: Argument and Counterargument

Writing for a Purpose

Self-directed Discussion via Socratic Circles

Simultaneous Endeavors: Literature Circles will run through three cycles over the course of the year. We will constantly hold peer editing workshops to develop our understanding of the

effective use of rhetoric. Also, test preparation lessons, practice multiple choice questions, etc will be interspersed with our charted course of study

Note: Some essays and writing endeavors are listed under the writing section of each unit outline. In addition, I have included a sample of assignments, assessments, essays, etc in the Appendix following the syllabus.

Unit I: Narrative Styles and Perspectives

Primary Texts

Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*

Richard Wright's *Native Son*

James Joyce's *Dubliners*

Essential Questions

Why do we read literature? Making distinction between reading for pleasure and reading for enrichment as a student of literature

What does it mean to read critically?

What is literary interpretation?

Understanding interpretation as process.

The role of literacy criticism.

How do we interpret literature?

Raising key questions about literature

Understanding the role of writing in response to reading

What is argument?

Every act of speech and writing is an argument

We must support our words with evidence from the text

Supplementary Texts

Literature Circle connections

Visual Texts

John Huston's *The Dead*

Assessments

Writing Journal

Key Passages Assignment

Crafting AP Questions

Practice AP Test

Literary Criticism Project

Double-entry notes

Writing

Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*: In some works of literature, a character who appears briefly, or does not appear at all, is a significant presence. Working with *Cat's Eye*, write an essay in which you show how such a character functions in the work. You may wish to discuss how the character affects action, theme, or the development of other characters. Avoid plot summary.

Richard Wright's *Native Son*: Some novels seem to advocate changes in social or political attitudes or in traditions. From *Native Son*, note briefly the particular attitudes or traditions that Wright apparently wishes to modify. Then analyze the literary techniques (plot, point of view, setting, symbolism, irony, etc.) the author uses to influence the reader's or audience's views. Avoid plot summary.

James Joyce's *Dubliners*

1. "Silence can be a play rigorously executed... It is a presence; it has a history, a form. Do not confuse it with any kind of absence."

Adrienne Rich, *Cartographies of Silence*

Use this quotation as an entry point for critically reflecting on James Joyce's *Dubliners*. Examine the role silence plays in two or three of Joyce's stories.

2. Trace the description of Dublin through the stories. What is the ultimate picture that Joyce is painting?

3. Argue as to the extent which Joyce uses the personal as a microcosm of the Irish public and national identity.

4. Analyze Joyce's portrayal of his male or female characters.

5. Consider Joyce's critique of religious strictures and/or spiritual paralysis in Ireland.

6. Examine notions and symbols of escape throughout the short stories.

7. Trace the musical imagery throughout *Dubliners*. How does music relate to both romance and religion? How does musical imagery communicate what the characters cannot?

8. Which characters have stunted artistic impulses? In which characters could this sense of unobtained beauty (through art, music, or writing) be realized?

Unit II: Fate, Tragedy, and Race

Primary Texts

Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*

Essential Questions

Is there a distinction between myth and religion?

What does it mean to be responsible for our actions?
What can literature teach us about the enormity of accepting responsibility in a world where many individuals either ignore or deny personal responsibility for their actions?
What does it mean to put a text in conversation with another text? Using one text as a critical lens for reflecting upon or analyzing another text

Supplementary Texts

Rita Dove's *The Darker Face of the Earth*
Aristotle
Assorted Greek myths
Excerpts from Emerson's *Self-Reliance*
Emily Dickinson selected poems
Excerpts from Orlando Patterson's *Rituals of Blood*
Student-selected poetry relating to themes
Gwendolyn Brooks selected poems

Visual Text

Orlando Patterson images
M.C. Escher paintings
R.E.M. music video "Losing My Religion"

Extended Texts

Antigone
Minority Report
Bamboozled

Assessments

Found Poetry
Poetry Analysis Using Literary Criticism Approaches – Langston Hughes "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"
Double-entry notes

Writing

Texts in Conversation Assignment

1. *Oedipus* / Emerson (see Appendix)
2. *Oedipus* / R.E.M
3. *Oedipus* / Dickinson

Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*
Reinterpreting Iocaste
In a short piece, choose one of the following topics to write about:

1. The play centers on the actions of Oedipus while ignoring the role Iocaste plays in the events of the play. In ancient Greece, one did not speak ill of the dead. So, was Iocaste's suicide an act of courage designed to protect her children from the shame of her actions since once dead she would not be denigrated? Or was Iocaste forced into suicide because Oedipus would have killed her? In this scenario, is she cowardly for escaping a possible murder and killing herself or is she brave for taking her own life on her own terms? Drawing on specifics from the text clearly define Iocaste's role in the events of the play. Is she a tragic figure? More or less so than Oedipus?

2. Give voice to Iocaste's voiceless last moments. Imagine she either composes a final suicide note or gives a speech to her faithful servant before dying. What does she say? Who does she blame? Imagine the horror of her realization that she has slept with her own son and conceived children with him. Not to mention that her own son has murdered his own father, her first husband.

3. Imagine yourself as Iocaste on the eve of her wedding to Oedipus. She has the usual pre-wedding jitters, but there is also something else: a lingering familiarity about her future husband. Imagine her expressing her doubts to a servant.

Unit III: Colonialism, Feminism, and the Other

Primary Texts

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*

Essential Questions

What is a Bildungsroman?

What is Gothic literature?

How can all writing be viewed as an argument for or against something?

Must there be a distinction between passion and logic?

What is colonialism? postcolonial discourse?

What is feminism?

Extended Texts

Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*

Assessments

Double-entry notes

Researched Literary Analysis

Writing

Response papers: The power of naming in life and literature, Passion versus logic

In-class essay options: *Jane Eyre* has often been valued as speaking on behalf of women. To what extent does *Wide Sargasso Sea* articulate aspects of women's experience that *Jane Eyre*

ignores or suppresses? OR In *Wide Sargasso Sea* Antoinette remembers “Our garden was large and beautiful as that garden in the Bible - the tree of life grew there. But it had gone wild. The paths were overgrown and a smell of dead flowers mixed with the fresh living smell.” Comment on the way in which descriptions of landscape and environment in the novel mark stages in the spiritual and psychological journey of the heroine.

Alternate writing assessments:

Mr Rochester describes in Vol 3, Chapter 1, the circumstances in which he was married to Bertha Mason, and how he came to incarcerate her in the attic at Thornfield. What do we learn about him from this, and how far does the novel endorse his claim that he has acted for the best?

Unit IV: The Psychology of Shakespeare

Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*

Essential Questions

Is there a distinction between greed and ambition?

Are we the sum total of the decisions we make?

Must power corrupt?

How does literature guide us in developing a belief system, a personal philosophy of life?

How does imagery function within the play?

Supplementary Texts

Shakespeare’s sonnets

Visual Texts

Michael Bogdanov’s *Macbeth*

Roman Polanski’s *Macbeth*

Assessments

Macbeth Test: Quotations, Identifications, Short Answer, Essay (see Appendix)

Macbeth Imagery project (see Appendix)

Double-entry notes

Writing

Take-home: Select one of the following characters who you will meet in Acts I/II: Macbeth, Banquo, Lady Macbeth, Duncan, Macduff, Three Witches. Write a description of their personality based on what they say, what they do, what they think (soliloquy and aside) and/or what others say about them in Acts I/II.

- Use specifics from the play to support your assessment of their personality
- Use good descriptive adjectives when describing the personality of your character.

Brief in-class essay

Response papers: Predictions
Comparative Analysis: Visual Text

Unit V: Poetry Immersion via Socratic Circles: Diction, Imagery, Allusion, Tone, Etc

Primary Texts

Michael Meyer's *Poetry: An Introduction*
Laurence Perrine & Thomas R. Arp's *Sound and Sense*
Assorted Poems (listed after Appendix)

Essential Questions

What is poetry?
How does poetry provide insight into the human condition?
How do we "read" poetry?
How does poetry address the enduring issues of humanity?

Assessments

Self-reflection after Socratic circles (see Appendix)
Double-entry notes
In-class essays

Writing

Argument
Crafting thesis statements
Sonnets

Sample Poetry Assignment

Instructions: You are to write three sonnets (or one sonnet with three different arrangements).

- a. Each sonnet will be fourteen lines.
- b. Employ iambic pentameter (not required in every metrical unit, but should be frequent enough to make your understanding of it credible). Pay particularly close attention to where the stress falls on multi-syllable words. Use a dictionary freely to guide you.
- c. Rhyme scheme should be the following:
 1. abab, cdcd, efef, gg - (Shakespearean)
 2. abba, abba, cde, cde (or cdcdcd) - (Petrarchan)
 3. abab, bcba, cdcd, ee - (Spenserian)
- d. Select your own subject matter, though you should note that sonnets most typically address the weighty issues of life, especially love.
- e. Review *Writing Essays About Literature* (Chapter 5) to be sure you understand the importance of rhythm and structure in sonnet writing. Review the sonnets in our poetry book.

- f. Show an awareness of the role of imagery in poetry: simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, etc. These images should be used selectively and creatively. Please avoid clichés. **Each sonnet should have at least two images. The images should be different in each sonnet.**
- g. Employ enjambment and/or elision freely. Be aware of the importance of persona.
- h. Capitalize the first letter of the first word of each line.
- i. The poems should appear typed, double-spaced, with only one sonnet on a page.
- j. Give your sonnets titles.
- k. Turn this sheet in along with your sonnets as a cover sheet.

You are to write **three** poems, two sonnets and one lyric (may or may not be a sonnet). **All poems should have titles.** We will publish at least one of your poems.

A) The first poem will be a Shakespearean sonnet.

B) The second poem will be a Petrarchean sonnet.

C) The third poem will be a lyric poem. This poem can be a sonnet, a villanelle, an ode, or an elegy.

Instructions for the sonnets (15 points each)

- a. fourteen lines
- b. iambic pentameter (not required in every metrical unit, but frequent enough to make your understanding of it credible).
- c. one sonnet in Shakespearean sonnet form; one sonnet in Petrarchan rhyme scheme - you should be familiar with both.
- d. subject matter will be your choice, though you should note that sonnets most typically address the weighty topics of life (see attached page).
- e. an awareness of the role of imagery in poetry: simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, etc. These images should be used selectively and creatively. Please avoid clichés.
- f. the poems should appear typed and double spaced.

Instructions for the lyric (15 points)

- a. a minimum of 20 lines (except for sonnet or villanelle).
- b. develops a theme - review examples of themes developed in poems. For example, observe how the “carpe diem” theme is developed in such poems as “To His Coy Mistress,” “To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time,” “Go, Lovely Rose”
- c. shows a familiarity with the characteristics of a lyric poem; study the information on the accompanying page and be knowledgeable about the necessary rhythm and rhyme of a lyric poem. Remember: lyrical = musical.
- d. shows an awareness of the role of imagery in poetry: simile, metaphor (especially extended metaphor), personification, hyperbole, etc.
- e. the poem should appear typed and double spaced.

Instructions for the free verse (10 points)

- a. a minimum of twenty-five lines long.

b. a poem that responds to either Adrienne Rich's "Living in Sin" or Mathew Arnold's "Dover Beach" which you will find in Kelly Griffith's book.

c. the response should acknowledge your understanding of the original poem's intent. It should be your interpretation of the thinking presented in that original poem.

d. the poem should show your awareness of the role of imagery in poetry: simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, etc.

e. the poem should appear typed and double spaced (separate sheet of paper from your other poems).

All poems should have titles.

Self Assessment for Socratic Seminar

Score – Reflection on role in inner circle and/or reflection on role in outer circle

Reflect on your level of engagement in both the inner and outer circle.

Unit VI: Race in America / Experimental Writing Forms

Primary Text

Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

Essential Questions

What do our crimes indicate about our society?

What is white guilt?

Can writing ever capture the complexity of human experience?

How can writing create empathy toward something we may deem despicable?

How does an author's form fit the function of the work?

Supplementary Texts

Frances Harper's "A Slave Mother: A Tale of Ohio"

Richard Newman's *African American Quotations*

"Strange Fruit" Billie Holiday

"Tangled Up in Blue" Bob Dylan

Visual Texts

Jonathan Demme's *Beloved*

Alan Parker's *Mississippi Burning*

Extended Texts

Orlando Patterson's *Rituals of Blood*

Literature circle connections

Assessments

Quiz

Double-entry notes

Writing

Creative Writing Assignment

The book ends with Paul D. and Sethe laying their stories next to each other, but we don't really know what eventually happens to each of the characters. You will explore what could possibly happen down the road...five years, ten years, even generations later. In any event please make setting and time period obvious. Write the new final chapter of the novel, imitating Toni Morrison's style and continuing the development of one of the novel's major themes. Point of view can be first (as with the Middle Passage chapters) or third, but either way, you should focus primarily on one character. Stay true to Morrison's intent; would she have this same thing happen in this character's life? You can't give people fairy tale endings if this seems unlikely based on what we have read. Finally, your chapter should incorporate one of Morrison's central symbols and include "rememory."

You must also write an explanation of how your chapter continues Morrison's character and theme development. What literary methods did you use to imitate Morrison's style? Comment on your use of language, structure, diction, imagery and symbolism.

Unit VII: Focused Test Preparation

Up until this point test preparation is woven into the curriculum in conjunction with a study of a text. Here we focus in on test-taking strategies and more intensive preparation.

The Re-read assignment: Preparation for the Open-ended response

The Second Time Around

The free response essay on the AP Exam asks you to draw on your knowledge of a work of literature in order to craft an essay that answers the prompt. For this assignment, you will reimmerse yourself in one work of literature that we have studied in this course. You will reread this text and prepare the following product that will serve as an excellent resource for you and your classmates.

Eligible texts: You should spend some time reflecting on what you have read this year. Most literature circle books are eligible, but not all of them. All choice must be approved of by me. You could choose a book that you already read very sincerely that you think you could benefit from restudying. Alternately, you could decide to revisit a challenging text that you want to get a better handle on for the test. In select instances, you may choose to read a book that you have already read in another class, but not this class. For example, I would support you in reading Hamlet if you have read it once before as much as I would support you rereading Macbeth.

Note: As with all assignments, the sincerity of effort that you put into it will benefit you. Conversely, slipshod work will fail to better yourself or prepare you for success on the AP Exam.

Note: The prefix "re" means "back" or "again." I use it intentionally throughout the explanation of this assignment. I fully expect you to reread, revisit, rethink, etc the text that you choose.

Warning: You are NOT to use sparknotes or any similar website when working on this project. Any evidence of using these sources will result in a failing grade. Take the time to reenter the text and make it a part of you that you can remember and draw on in the future. Incoming triteness: You will not have access to a website during the exam, but you will have access to the wealth of your own knowledge. Take the time and energy to reinvest in yourself.

The Assignment: (typed, single-spaced, error-free, etc) (please do not staple as we will be copying and compiling them)

Author/Title: Who is the author? When was the text first published? Relevant critical reactions? May use external sources here to better your working knowledge of the text.

Basic Plot Summary: Approximately one typed page that captures the complexity of the work. As it is a summary and to act as a substitute for someone else rereading the book, you must determine how much detail is necessary based on the text you are summarizing. You are to create this summary. Know that the free response essay asks explicitly that you avoid summary. However, you must understand the scope of the work in order to write about it with the necessary depth.

Interesting Observations on Style, Form, Function, Genre: This portion of the project allows for some flexibility. As an interested and interesting reader of literature, reflect on the style of the text. What is distinctive about the text? Why is it important? What did you notice about its form and how did that impact its function? These observations may be brief and may also be deepened through extra reading/research.

Characters: Create a very brief explanation of the crucial characters and their function or role within the work. Remember you are not using sparknotes. As you reread the book determine who the crucial characters are and what should be retained about them for the test. Of the utmost importance is the correct spelling of the names of these characters.

Three Key Passages: Choose at least three key passages that appear in the work. Again, the internet does not determine what it means to be a key passage. You, as an intelligent reader, make that determination. If the passage stands out to you and has a meaning within the larger work, then it will serve you well to remember it for the exam. Be sure to type out that passage for your project followed by your analysis of it. Analyze and explain the importance of the key passage within the work. How is it indicative of the larger themes of the work?

Crucial Symbols/ Quotations/ Larger Themes: After rereading the work what symbols, themes, larger ideas, overarching questions, stellar quotations, etc stay with you? The more specific you can be about these themes and central ideas the better you will be able to apply the text to the prompt on the exam.

Final application: I will provide you with access to a list of the possible AP free-response essay prompts over the past several decades. You will choose TWO of them to respond to in writing. You will write the opening to an essay (include a very clear thesis argument) and a detailed outline with quotations from your book. Include the prompt before the typed response to each essay. Essay outlines should include specific details from the work as well as quotations from the text.

This project is more effective than several in-class essays that ask you to apply what you may or may not recollect about a book to a new prompt. This project allows you to become very knowledgeable about one text. You will have reread this text, solidified your understanding of plot and character, reflected on key passages and distinctive features of the text, and applied your knowledge of the text to free response essays. After spring break, you will be revisiting another text and completing a similar project before we take the exam. In this way you will have fully reimmersed yourself in two texts from this course before you take the test.

Final Note: This is an individual project designed to improve your understanding of a text and your potential for success on the AP Exam. This is not a collaborative project. Any indication that you have collaborated, not re-read your text, used an outside source, pooled information with another student, etc will result in a failure. Please take the time to prepare yourself to succeed on the essay portion of the exam. We cannot control the prose and poetry passages that appear on the exam or the multiple choice and essays prompts that go with them. Although we do not know the free response essay prompt, you will be well served by having a very deep understanding of at least two texts from the course. Most texts in this course can be used to respond to any prompt.

We will be compiling your projects in a way that allows everyone in the class access to your work. We are part of a team in preparing for this exam so a sloppy analysis of a crucial text hurts not only you but your peers. Also, this means we will be looking at everyone's work which guarantees that any plagiarism will be discovered.

Thank you in advance for your sincere effort in preparing for the exam.

After-school seminars dictated by the needs of students: Satire in the *Canterbury Tales*, Comedy Night, The Language of the AP Test, Crafting Effective Opening Paragraphs, etc

Potential Supplementary Unit: Unit VIII: Form, Voice, Argument, America, the Blurring of Reading for Pleasure and Enrichment

Primary Text

Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*

Essential Questions

What is satire? The absurd? Existentialism?

What is the American Experience? Can it be generalized?

Can writing evoke change?

Does technology enhance or stunt human communication?

What is our purpose?

Supplementary Texts

Literature circle connections

Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

Assessments

Double-entry notes
Found poetry

Writing

Creative writing - satire

Unit IX: Research

Primary Texts

Kelley Griffith's *Writing Essays About Literature*

Littell McDougal's *Writing Research Papers*

Joseph Gibaldi's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*

Essential Questions

How does one select and define a topic for research?

What is the nature and purpose of literary research?

How does one determine valid resources for a research topic, including primary and secondary sources?

How does one evaluate the importance and quality of sources?

Assessments

Research packet

Literary Analysis of Author / Poetry Research Assignment

Historical Figure / Literary Character Researched Interaction

Writing

Biography

Argument

Works Cited

Unit X: Senior Presentations

Essential Questions

Can writing change the world?

Do more effective and honest communicators create a more honest world?

What is the difference between rhetoric and reality? How do we close the gap?

Supplementary Texts

Literature circle connections

Stroke 9's "Tail of the Sun"

Explanation of Assignments/Assessments

Double Entry Notes provide a space for students to converse with the text they are reading. Use knowledge of root words and words from literary works to recognize and understand the meaning of new words during reading. Use these words accurately in speaking and writing. Identify, describe, evaluate and synthesize the essential ideas in text. Make, and support with evidence, assertions about texts. Make extensions to related ideas, topics or information. Evaluate the author's strategies.

Vocabulary in Context Journal provides students with a space to forge their vocabularies. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference. Understand the meaning of and apply key vocabulary across the various subject areas.

Notes on Writing

Stemming from the belief that students who are metacognitive about the writing process are more effective writers, I have students create notes on their writing as part of the peer editing process.

Focused Correction Areas

Students hone in on key areas of focus and improvement for each essay.

Key Passages

Students hone their close reading skills on key passages that they choose as emblematic of some of the crucial themes of the work.

Crafting AP Test Questions

Students create AP style multiple choice questions in response to their reading.

Literature Circles provide a forum for independent reading, discussion, and meaning-making. Read a variety of genres and types of text. Use teacher and student established criteria for making decisions and drawing conclusions.

In-class Essays / Take-home Essays

Quality of Writing

Putting Texts in Conversation

Making connections between texts.

Found Poetry

Analyze when differences in language are a source of negative or positive stereotypes among groups.

Poetry Analysis

Read familiar materials aloud with accuracy. Self-correct mistakes. Use appropriate rhythm, flow, meter, and pronunciation

Test Prep

In-class and take-home essays. Multiple choice in-class work.

Socratic Circles

Analyze the effectiveness, in terms of literary quality, of the author's use of literary devices. Sound techniques (e.g., rhyme, rhythm, meter, alliteration). Figurative language (e.g., personification, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, irony, satire). Analyze and evaluate in poetry the appropriateness of diction and figurative language

Appendix: A sample of Assignments from the course

Literature Circles Assignment

The Assignment:

Choose a book that you would like to read independently. As you read, maintain a double-entry journal where you can converse with the key ideas of the text. When you meet with your group to discuss your book, you will use your double-entry notes as entry points into the discussion. This is an opportunity for you to determine the focus of your discussion of the text. On the day you meet to discuss the book, you must have your double entry notes as a springboard for discussion. You will receive credit for maintaining a comprehensive double-entry journal on the book. I will also sit in as a member of each group to gauge the level of discussion you are having about the text. At each meeting, you are to type up one of your journal entries into a more formal reflection on a theme of the reading (approximately 2 pages). This may take the form of a character analysis, a connection to another text, a response to an issue raised by the text, etc. This will be graded for clarity in writing along with conventions of grammar and usage. For your final group meeting you are responsible for honing in on several key passages (as many passages as there are group members) and creating ten to fifteen AP style test questions based on each excerpt. The questions must be self-contained; that is to say that they should be able to be answered without an understanding of the entire book. In addition, you should create an enticing summary of your work that conveys the key elements of the text without rendering it unreadable. Drawing on your double-entry notes, you will also need to create brief character descriptions and any salient features of the text that a potential reader may find interesting. These elements include but are not limited to relevant symbolism, themes, irony, narrative style, characterization, etc. This is to be typed up and combined in a packet which will be graded.

Assessment:

Each meeting of your group will consist of 20 points

- Double-entry notes prepared for each meeting: 5 points
- Formal 2 page reflection adapted from double-entry notes: 10 points
- Discussion: 5 points

Your group will meet three times to discuss your book so you will need to divide the reading accordingly. This portion of the assessment amounts to 60 points which you will earn if you have double-entry notes prepared for each meeting, stay on task during discussion, and submit the more formal reflection on the day your group meets.

Final Typed Study Guide will consist of 40 points

- Enticing summary: 10 points
- Character descriptions: 10 points
- Symbolism, central tension and themes, relevant quotations, narrative style, etc: 10 points
- Key passages test questions: 10 points

Sample Writing Journal Prompts / Key Passages for Margaret Atwood's Cat's Eye

“Knowing too much about other people puts you in their power, they have a claim on you, you are forced to understand their reasons for doing things and then you are weakened.”

- excerpt from Margaret Atwood's Cat's Eye, p.240

Write a response to this quotation. Does knowing someone force you to treat them better? How do we treat members of our family? Friends? Someone in another car? A stranger? A distant enemy? If intimacy does require that we relinquish some power, is that necessarily a bad thing? What can be gained from being indebted to another person? What does this quotation tell us about the character's psyche? Do we understand why she feels this way?

“Forgiving men is so much easier than forgiving women.”

- excerpt from Margaret Atwood's Cat's Eye, p.292

Write a response to this quotation. Do you believe this is true? Why does Elaine feel this is true? Can we empathize with why she feels this way?

“Love blurs your vision; but after it recedes, you can see more clearly than ever.”

- excerpt from Margaret Atwood's Cat's Eye, p.408

Write a response to this quotation. Do you agree with its sentiment? Why does Elaine feel this way? Does true love blur your vision or make it clear?

“Down in the cellar there are shelves and shelves of white rats and black mice, special ones that aren’t wild. They eat food pellets from hoppers in their cages and drink from bottles fitted with eyedroppers. They have chewed-newspaper nests full of pink hairless baby mice. They run over and under one another and sleep in heaps, and sniff one another with their quivering noses. The mouse feeder tells us that if you put a strange mouse into one of their cages, one with the wrong, alien scent, they will bite it to death.”

- passage from Margaret Atwood’s Cat’s Eye, p.39

Why does the author include this image?

What theme or scenario is she referencing?

What broader understanding can be gained from Atwood’s image of how things in nature respond to that which is different?

How can this excerpt make us more aware of the sometimes seemingly unrelated images an author offers us in her writing?

“After school Carol and I walk home, not the way the school bus goes in the morning but a different way, along back streets and across a decaying wooden footbridge over the ravine. We’ve been told not to do this alone, and not to go down into the ravine by ourselves. There might be men down there, is what Carol says. These are not ordinary men but the other kind, the shadowy, nameless kind who do things to you. She smiles and whispers when saying *men*, as if they are a special, thrilling joke. We cross the bridge lightly, avoiding the places where the boards have rotted through, on the lookout for men.”

- passage from Margaret Atwood’s Cat’s Eye, p.53

How does the author reveal the ways in which girls are taught to fear men?

Is it really for their own good or protection or is it to keep women in a position of submissive fear?

Are we helping people by teaching them to fear?

Shouldn’t little boys be taught to be equally afraid of these shadowy men?

What is Atwood saying about the differences between how boys and girls are taught gender?

What is the difference between sex and gender?

“Grace and Carol look at each others scrapbook pages and say, ‘Oh, yours is so good. Mine’s no good. Mine’s *awful*.’ They say this every time we play the scrapbook game. Their voices are wheedling and false; I can tell they don’t mean it, each one thinks her own lady on her own page is good. But it’s the thing you have to say, so I begin to say it too.”

- passage from Margaret Atwood’s Cat’s Eye, p.59

What is the author indicating about the traits girls learn to associate with their gender?

Female students, do you feel uncomfortable saying that something you did was well done?

Male students, do you feel you have to boast and act confident about everything you do?

Vocabulary in Context Work for Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre

“I used to think I was poor. Then they told me I wasn't poor, I was needy. Then they told me it was self-defeating to think of myself as needy. I was deprived. (Oh not deprived but rather underprivileged.) Then they told me that underprivileged was overused. I was disadvantaged. I still don't have a dime. But I have a great vocabulary.”

- Jules Feiffer, political cartoonist and playwright

As you read through the novel, look up words that are of interest to you that you do not know. Create a TYPED list of those words. Over the course of reading the text, you will compile definitions and sentences for 25 WORDS. TYPE out the DEFINITION and use the word in an ORIGINAL SENTENCE. Write a short story or creative piece about ANYTHING that weaves in the words and demonstrates your understanding of them.

- 25 WORDS
- DEFINITIONS AND SENTENCES MUST BE TYPED
- STORY MUST USE ALL 25 WORDS IN A WAY THAT DEMONSTRATES UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF CONTEXT
- STORY MUST HAVE A TITLE

Sample In Class Essay: *Dubliners*

Value: 20 points (18 plus 2 extra credit points)

Time: 40 minutes

In some works of literature, a character who appears briefly, or does not appear at all, is a significant presence. Choose **two** of the many stories that we have read in *Dubliners* and write an essay in which you show how such a character functions in each work. Discuss how each character affects action, theme, and/or the development of other characters. Avoid plot summary.

Organize your thoughts before writing.

Write on only one side of a sheet of paper.

Use pen or pencil.

You may NOT use your book.

Make every effort to complete your essay before the end of the time allotted.

Turn this question sheet in along with your response.

Extra Credit Questions (one point each):

1. In the story “Araby” the narrator describes the former tenant of his house as a “charitable priest.” Why?

2. Consider this line: “Farrington’s dark wine-coloured face flushed darker still with anger and humiliation at having been defeated by such a stripling.” The name of the stripling?

In Class Essay: ***Dubliners***

Value: 20 points (18 plus 2 extra credit points)

Time: 40 minutes

An effective literary work does not merely stop or cease; it concludes. In the view of some critics, a work that does not provide the pleasure of significant “closure” has terminated with an artistic fault. A satisfactory ending is not, however, always conclusive in every sense; significant closure may require the reader to abide with or adjust to ambiguity and uncertainty.

In an essay, discuss the ending of **two** of the stories we have read in ***Dubliners***. Explain precisely how and why each ending appropriately or inappropriately concludes the story. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Organize your thoughts before writing.

Write on only one side of a sheet of paper.

Use pen or pencil.

You may NOT use your book.

Make every effort to complete your essay before the end of the time allotted.

Turn this question sheet in along with your response.

Extra Credit Questions (one point each):

1. In the story “The Boarding House,” James Joyce says this about Mrs. Mooney (fill in the blanks): “She dealt with moral problems as a _____ deals with _____.”

2. In the story “Eveline,” James Joyce has Eveline contemplate the following regarding her mother: “She trembled as she heard again her mother’s voice saying constantly with foolish insistence”:

-- Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!

Please give a rough translation of the meaning of this strange expression.

Scoring Rubric
Dubliners In class Essay

- 18-16
- a. the essay explores precisely how and why the endings appropriately or inappropriately conclude the stories
 - b. the essay explores the artistic issue of ambiguity and uncertainty when bringing a work of literature to a close
 - c. the essay offers specific evidence in support of its position; clear familiarity with the text is apparent
 - d. the essay demonstrates an ability to discuss a literary work with insight and understanding
 - e. the essay demonstrates a writer's ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective composition
- 15-12
- a. the essay explores how and why the endings of the stories appropriately or inappropriately conclude the stories, though without the precision of higher scoring essays
 - b. evidence exists in the essay to support the writer's position; however, familiarity with text is less apparent than in higher scoring papers
 - c. the essay is well written, though without the stylistic maturity and control of the top papers
- 11-10
- a. the essay explores the endings of the two stories but in an overly generalized way
 - b. the essay tends to skim the issues of "ambiguity" or "uncertainty" when exploring the work's ending, preferring instead to explore the issues of "appropriateness" or "inappropriateness" in a more limited fashion
 - c. the writing of the essay is not as stylistically mature as higher level papers; spelling, sentence structure, organization, while adequate, is less mature than upper-half papers
- 9-7
- a. discussion of the endings of the stories may be ineffective, unconvincing, or misguided in these essays
 - b. the matter of an ending's ambiguity and/or uncertainty may be omitted altogether from the discussion
 - c. the essay may convey the writer's ideas but reveals weak control over such elements as diction, organization, syntax, or grammar
 - d. the essay typically contains significant misinterpretations of the work discussed; it may also contain little, if any, specific or persuasive evidence to support statements
- 6-4
- a. the essay offers serious misreading of the literary text(s) (or the question)
 - b. the essay offer serious misinterpretation of the story's ending
 - c. the essay is poorly written on several counts, containing many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics, or is unacceptably brief
 - d. the views presented in these essays have little clarity or coherence
 - e. the essay is especially inexact, vacuous, ill-organized, illogically argued, and/or mechanically unsound

- 3-0 a. a response with no more than a reference to the task
 b. off task response

Anticipation Guide from Macbeth

Name: _____

Date: _____

***Macbeth* Anticipation Guide**

Directions: Write at least one complete sentence that responds to each prompt or question. In your sentence, strive to be as specific as possible. Be prepared to share your response with a partner and/or during class discussion.

1. Do you believe in prophecies? Why or why not?

2. Do you believe that you are in a personal battle of good versus evil? Why do you think this?

3. How do you decide what is good and what is evil?

4. Do you believe in witches?

5. What is the difference between greed and ambition? Clarify this difference.

6. You probably would not break your moral code for a stranger but how about for a loved one?

7. If someone prophesied (predicted) that you would become someone of importance or power would you wait for it to happen or would you try to make it happen?

8. How do you feel when you feel guilty? Clarify this feeling.

Test on Macbeth

Name: _____

Date: _____

AP Literature & Composition

***Macbeth* Test (35 points) Read each prompt carefully and respond to it clearly and directly. Write all responses on looseleaf paper. Be sure to number each response.**

- I. List the speaker and what the speaker is referring to in the quotation. (10 points total)

1. "Approach thou like the rugged Russian Bear / The armed rhinoceros... / Take any shape but that." (2)
2. "Stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once." (2)
3. "Why in that rawness left you wife and child...?" (2)
4. "Thou play'st most foully for't." (2)
5. "Had I as many sons as I have hairs, / I would not wish them to a fairer death..." (2)

II. Short Answer (5 points total)

1. What is the Great Chain of Being? In what ways is the Great Chain of Being disrupted in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*? What literary devices and/or plot elements does Shakespeare use to display the disruption? How is the play and its message a reflection of this world view? (5)

III. Short Essay (20 points total)

1. In a well-constructed opening paragraph, indicate how you would begin to respond to the following prompt. Employ a Freudian Literary Analysis of the events and/or themes of *Macbeth*. (10 points)

2. Consider the following poem. Read and re-read it. Reflect on the characters and themes of *Macbeth*. Craft a self-contained paragraph in which you put the two texts in conversation with each other and argue a point in a clear thesis. (10)

"Insomniac" by Octavio Paz

Nightwatch of the mirror:
The moon keeps it company.
Reflection of reflection,
The spider spins its plots.

Hardly ever blinking,
thoughts are on guard:
Neither ghost nor concept,
My death is a sentry.

Not alive, not dead:
Awake, I am awake
In the desert of an eye.

Double-entry note Assignment Sample

Name _____

Block _____

**Rita Dove's *The Darker Face of the Earth*
Prologue, Act I: Scene 1, Scene 2, Scene 3**

Double-Entry Notes: Read the Prologue up to Act I: Scene 4 (p.53). As you read, question and converse with the text. In your notebook, divide your page down the middle into a left and right side. On the left hand side, write down the portion of the text that you are referencing, paraphrasing, or citing. Then, on the right hand side, write down your responses, questions, analyses, and any relevant links you see between this portion of text and any other text or experience you have encountered. We will use these notes as a springboard for discussion.

For Discussion: Consider the following questions and be prepared to respond to them drawing on tangible details from the text when appropriate. You may have addressed these questions through your double-entry notes. Feel free to add your own questions to introduce during discussion.

1. What is the function of the repeated rhyme, “Stepped on a pin, the pin bent./That’s the way the story went!”?
2. What does Louis’ question, “Who did this to you?” tell us about his view of the situation?
3. What gendered difference concerning sexual politics does Dove address in the play?
4. Are there any similarities in the language used on the Doctor in *The Darker Face of the Earth* and the language used on Teiresias in *Oedipus Rex*?
5. How has Amalia’s upbringing impacted her character?
6. Are there parallels in how minor characters spur major plot developments? For example, the shepherd in *Oedipus Rex* and the Doctor in *The Darker Face of the Earth*?
7. Where do moments of irony appear in the text and what function do they serve?
8. How does Scylla compare to Teiresias?
9. In what ways is the slave culture a culture of subversion?
10. How do the stage notes inform and frame the text?
11. What ways does this play differ from *Oedipus Rex*?

Modern Connection

1. In instances of rape, do we tend to believe the woman is the victim and the man the perpetrator or vice versa?
2. Do people assume that men are more logical than women?
3. Are traits like power and aggression associated more with men than women?
4. Why is literacy as essential component of attaining freedom? Is knowledge power?

Rita Dove’s *The Darker Face of the Earth*

Act I: Scene 4, Scene 5, Scene 6, Scene 7, Scene 8

Double-Entry Notes: Read the Prologue up to Act II (p.88). As you read, question and converse with the text. In your notebook, divide your page down the middle into a left and right side. On the left hand side, write down the portion of the text that you are referencing, paraphrasing, or citing. Then, on the right hand side, write down your responses, questions, analyses, and any relevant links you see between this portion of text and any other text or experience you have encountered. We will use these notes as a springboard for discussion.

For Discussion: Consider the following questions and be prepared to respond to them drawing on tangible details from the text when appropriate. You may have addressed these questions through your double-entry notes. Feel free to add your own questions to introduce during discussion.

1. In what ways do Dove's female characters assume some of the traits associated with Oedipus?
2. What warning does Scylla give to Phebe?
3. What role does religion play in institutionalizing slavery?
4. What parallels exist between Oedipus and Augustus?
5. Is Augustus really too proud? Or just trying to share his truth?
6. In what ways does the confrontation between Augustus and Scylla mirror the debate between Oedipus and Teiresias?
7. What do the snakes symbolize?
8. How does Dove allude to the power of language and words in the text?
9. In what ways does Louis reflect some of the characters in *Oedipus Rex*?
10. What instances of irony appear in the text and what are the function of these devices?
11. What assumption does Augustus make about his father and mother?
12. How does the play differ from *Oedipus Rex*?

Modern Connection

1. Do we still see religion being used as a rationalization for war or hostility?
2. Why do people cast those with more experience than them as somehow smug or proud? Is there a way to share your truth and your experiences without offending or isolating those around you?
3. How do we see the language of binaries at work in our world?
4. Are those who lead rebellions not manipulating the masses as much as those who currently enslave them? Is manipulating people always wrong? What if it is for a people's own good? Are the intentions behind manipulation relevant for judging whether the manipulation is right or wrong?
5. Amalia's comment about revolting. Let's discuss the ways in which those in power use statements like this to justify why the enslaved remain enslaved. If you lived back then, would you have revolted? Today, are we fighting for people whose rights are being denied?

Rita Dove's *The Darker Face of the Earth* Act II

Double-Entry Notes: Read the entirety of Act II. As you read, question and converse with the text. In your notebook, divide your page down the middle into a left and right side. On the left hand side, write down the portion of the text that you are referencing, paraphrasing, or citing. Then, on the right hand side, write down your responses, questions, analyses, and any relevant links you see between this portion of text and any other text or experience you have encountered. We will use these notes as a springboard for discussion.

For Discussion: Consider the following questions and be prepared to respond to them drawing on tangible details from the text when appropriate. You may have addressed these questions through your double-entry notes. Feel free to add your own questions to introduce during discussion.

1. What is the function of repetitive statements like “There’s a curse on the land. The net draws closer.”?
2. What does Augustus say is his reason for meeting with Amalia? Do you think it is something more?
3. Through the relationship between Amalia and Augustus, what insight does Dove offer us about the sexual politics of the time?
4. Cite moments of irony in the text.
5. What is the purpose of the story about the princess that Amalia tells?
6. How does Louis’ obsession with looking at the sky mesh with the Augustus’ scars?
7. Is the relationship between Amalia and Augustus purely sexual?
8. What “devil’s choice” does Augustus face?
9. What does Augustus still fail to realize?
10. What do you make of the final lines of the play concerning freedom? Who has found freedom?
11. How is this play similar to *Oedipus Rex*? In what ways does it reinterpret or diverge from *Oedipus Rex*?

Modern Connection

1. Do we demonize that which is different? Is it easier to fear that which we do not know?
2. Would you choose love and be imprisoned by society or take freedom and be lonely?

Literary Criticism Presentations

Use the internet or any other relevant resource to research different varieties of literary criticism. With a partner, create a brief (3-5 minutes) and useful handout and presentation that will help your peers remember the basic ways of approaching a text using your specific literary criticism. The focus is less on the history of your specific approach and more about how to apply the approach in writing a paper. To that end, include in your presentation a sample of how your approach could be used to view *Oedipus Rex*. For example, how would a feminist literary criticism approach go about addressing the play? Also, be sure to include your thoughts on whether the specific approach is useful for analyzing this play. For example, a Freudian or Archetypal literary criticism approach would definitely apply to the play whereas a biographical approach may seem less relevant.

The literary criticism approaches we will be focusing on are:

Reader-Response

Archetypal

Freudian
Feminist
Marxist
(New) Historicism
Biographical
African American

You may also choose another legitimate form of literary criticism that interests you.

The goal of this activity is for you to find readily available sources that provide information about the specific literary criticism approach you are studying. The next skill is to present this material in a concise and useful way to aid your peers in remembering how to employ the approach for future writings on the play and other texts.

For full credit:

1. Define the function or purpose of your literary approach.
2. Explain how you enact or use the approach to view a work of literature
3. Highlight the implications of your approach...what is useful about using this approach.
3. Give an example of if and how it could be applied to *Oedipus Rex*

Literary Criticism Presentations

Value: 40 points

Rubric

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Clearly defined			Defined		Poorly defined			Not defined	

Function of literary approach

How to use the approach to
view a work of literature

What is useful or not useful
about using this approach

An example of how it can be
applied to *Oedipus Rex*

Clearly defined: The group clearly explains the lit crit aspect in a way that is clear and relevant to the audience; the group uses its medium of delivery in a way that is direct and accessible and engaging

Defined: The group explains the lit crit aspect in an acceptable way; the concept is understandable but not presented in the clearest and most accessible way; the audience accesses the information, but is not fully engaged

Poorly defined: The group is unclear in its explanation of the lit crit aspect they are presenting; the group fails to convey an essential component of their topic; their audience is unengaged because the material is not presented in a way that is clear and accessible

Not defined: The group does not explain its lit crit aspect in a way that is at all useful to the audience; the topic is not presented in a way that is useful and relevant

Putting Texts in Conversation

Assignment: Read Emerson's *Self-Reliance*. Take double-entry notes throughout your reading of the piece. Note any connections between his writing and Sophocles' themes in *Oedipus Rex*.

Brief Essay: Respond to the following prompt concisely and specifically. Present a clear argument. In your response, you may draw on additional evidence from each text.

Consider the closing passages of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Emerson's *Self-Reliance*. How do the culminating points of each work coincide in their message and in what ways do they differ? What, if anything, do you see as the crucial difference in the summative lines of each work?

“Let every man in mankind's frailty
Consider his last day; and let none
Presume on his good fortune until he find

Life, at his death, a memory without pain.”

Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*

“A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick, or the return of your absent friend, or some other favorable event, raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.”

Emerson's *Self-Reliance*

Contrast/Literary Criticism Paper: MLA Format, 4-5 pages. Choose one.

1. In his article “On Misunderstanding the *Oedipus Rex*,” E.R. Dodds argues, “Oedipus is great, not in virtue of a great worldly position – for his worldly position is an illusion which will vanish like a dream – but in virtue of his inner strength: strength to pursue the truth at whatever personal cost, and strength to accept and endure it when found.”

In a fully developed essay, compare and contrast the characters of Oedipus Rex and Augustus Newcastle drawing on Aristotle's definition of tragic hero, Dodds' interpretation of the play, and relevant literary criticism perspectives.

2. Rita Dove's *The Darker Face of the Earth* is a reinterpretation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. Consider how Dove introduces racial themes to her play (African-American and/or Historical literary critique) and/or how she transforms issues of class and gender in her play (Feminist and/or Marxist approach). Focus your argument on a few specific elements of each play and delve into the detail. Avoid plot summary. Assume your reader is as familiar with the two plays as you are.

3. Or create an argument on any topic of contrast between the two plays framing your essay with at least one of the critical approaches we discussed in class.

Rubric: Contrast/Literary Criticism Paper

90-100 These essays introduce and elaborate upon a truly exceptional argument that draws upon literary criticism to illuminate the contrast between the two plays. These essays consist almost entirely of original argument framed by literary criticism and grounded firmly in details from the text. These essays avoid summary and exhibit a strong sense of the writer's voice. Further, errors in mechanics and usage are entirely absent.

80-89 These essays introduce and elaborate upon an argument that draws upon literary criticism to illuminate the contrast between the two plays. These arguments are not shaped by literary criticism to the extent that they could be and could benefit from further specific evidence from the text. These essays rely on summary more than necessary and do not

exhibit a truly distinct sense of the writer's voice. While these essays introduce interesting points, they do not develop them to the fullest extent possible. These essays contain a few minor mechanical errors.

70-79 These essays do not expand on all the crucial aspects of their argument and do not draw on literary criticism approach as a means of framing their argument. These essays slip into vague writing. They do not provide clear and specific evidence from the text. Reliance on summary prevents the writer from truly presenting a strong and unique argument. These essays present arguments that are not fully developed. These essays contain numerous errors in usage and mechanics.

60-69 These essays are poorly organized and have issues with coherence. The argument is superficial and not properly developed. The writer does not evidence a distinctive voice. The writer fails to use a literary approach to frame the argument. The writing demonstrates weak control of usage and mechanics.

50-59 These essays offer an unoriginal general argument unsupported by details from the text. Evidence of a literary approach is entirely absent. The writing is characterized by poor organization and errors in mechanics and usage.

Sample Unit Planning for Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*

1. Essential Understandings

What is irony?

What is tragedy?

What is fate?

Who was Sophocles?

What is literary criticism?

What struggles do wordsmiths face when using words to make arguments about life?

How does literature reflect the realities of both the time in which it was written and our time?

How does adopting a specific critical lens shape our view of a text?

How can one text from one time inform a text from a completely different time?

How do the stage notes of a play inform the plot and character?

What is the role of the chorus?

How do we craft an effective argument about a piece of literature?

2. Overarching Questions

What are the ways in which humans question the reality of their existence?

How are words both necessary and incapable of fully capturing the reality of our existence?

Is ignorance bliss?

Does the truth really set us free?

How do we treat our current day truth-tellers?

What parallels exist between society/plot then and now?

Is there a value in putting seemingly unrelated texts in conversation with one another?

What is the nature of good and evil?

Does fate preclude the possibility of personal accountability for actions?

Which is more important: love or freedom?

What is the symbolic function of leaders?

Why do we demonize those who speak the truth?

Is *Oedipus Rex* a tragedy and is Oedipus a tragic figure?

Is suffering necessary?

Are we truly free?

How do authors create, build, and sustain tension in their works?

Does the truth set us free or torture us?

Why is literacy such a crucial component of attaining freedom?

3. Expected Student Competencies

SSBAT recognize writing as a craft with elements of plot and character deliberately chosen and placed.

SSBAT discuss the dual necessity and futility of using words to quantify the reality of the human experience.

SSBAT to draw parallels between the literature of the classroom and the rhetoric of our times.

SSBAT employ their understanding of literary criticism to critique a text from a specific perspective

SSBAT place two texts in relevant conversation with one another.

SSBAT recognize the potency of stage notes in a play as vehicles for furthering plot and revealing character

SSBAT recognize that literary criticism does not have a negative connotation but rather exists as a means for viewing a text

SSBAT make connections, be they logical, textual, emotional, or tenuous at best between the current text and other texts, experiences, thoughts, etc

SSBAT form coherent arguments about themes of the text such as sight and blindness

SSBAT appreciate the vivid power of words as the original and best special effect

SSBAT ground their opinions in specific textual evidence without being advised to examine a specific portion of the text

Formative Assessment

Double-entry notes

Focused Free Writes

Discussion

Summative Assessment

Quiz on relevant terms concerning tragedy

Brief writing responses

Compare/Contrast paper

Presentation on literary criticism

Macbeth Imagery Project

Imagery is most commonly defined as the effective use of figurative language to form mental pictures. Similes, metaphors, and personifications are often used to convey images. Imagery is a major literary technique in *Macbeth*. Frequent images in *Macbeth* are Bird/Insect, Animal, Blood, Plant, Food, Light/Darkness, Clothing, and Sickness/Body Parts.

In this assignment, you will be assigned one image. You must chart **20 examples** of its use in the play. Here are three examples

Example 1: Plant Imagery

Image	Location	Significance and Explanation
1. "If you can look into the <u>seeds</u> of time / And say which <u>grain</u> will grow and which will not, / Speak, then, to me, who neither beg nor fear / Your favors nor your hate."	1. 3. 61-64	Banquo addresses the three witches and asks them to predict his future. His request follows their greeting of Macbeth as "king hereafter."

Example 2: Light and Darkness Imagery

Image	Location	Significance and Explanation
1. "But 'tis strange. / And oftentimes, to win us to our harm, / The instruments of <u>darkness</u> tell us truths, / Win us with honest trifles, to betray's / In deepest consequence."	1. 3. 134-38	This scene between Banquo and Macbeth occurs just after Macbeth learns of his new title. Banquo is concerned that since the witches have spoken one truth, corruption might befall himself and Macbeth.

Example 3: Clothing Imagery

Image	Location	Significance and Explanation
1. "New honors come upon him, / Like our strange <u>garments</u> , cleave not to their mold / But with the aid of use."	1. 3. 160-62	Banquo addresses Macbeth and talks of the initial strangeness of Macbeth's title, Thane of Cawdor, a title which, like new clothing, will eventually conform to the contours of his body. His statement follows Banquo and Macbeth's discussion about Ross's news and the accuracy of the witches' predictions.

What You Need To Know and Remember:

1. **The quotes must be exact and complete. Give the entire sentence. Use a slash (/) at the end of a line with a space both**
2. **before and after the slash. Capitalize the first letter of the next line.**
3. The citation of the location must be accurate. Use proper MLA format for Act, Scene, and Lines.
4. The word or words which convey the image must be underlined.
5. The description of the significance of the quote must identify the speaker, the individual addressed, and the situation. The explanation must be written as a complete, grammatically correct, sentence.
6. The project must be typed.
7. *Move from the beginning of the play to the end.*
8. Separate the examples by using columns; number each example.
9. You may have the same image as at least one other person in class. You may work together to identify the image and its significance; you must, however, turn in your own imagery chart and write your own explanation of the image.

Each example will be worth five points:

- a. The citation (completed properly): two points
- b. The location of the quote (the citation itself): one point
- c. The explanation of the quote (in grammatically correct sentences): two points
- d. If the citation that you select is not an image (for example, if the example you cite is a literal, not a figurative use of the assigned image,) you will receive no credit.

Sample Paper Assignment

Length: 5-6 Typed Pages, Double Spaced

Your composition on *Macbeth* is, as Kelley Griffith notes, “about a specific problem of interpretation” (160). Your writing will be evaluated according to the categories identified on the scoring rubric: impact, focus, organization, content, strength and clarity of the introduction and conclusion, style and, finally, conventions and formatting. Please review each of the categories carefully before submitting your paper.

You are responsible for generating a topic. As Griffith suggests, a helpful criterion for determining if a topic is valuable is “if your readers [can] *not* answer the question after reading the work once” (160). Please read her thoughts on this issue, as well as other matters concerning the creating of a viable topic, in chapters 9 and 10.

Here are some areas that you can examine in your review of *Macbeth* that might guide you toward the development of both key questions about the play and, then, a firm, supportable argument:

Macbeth as Tragic Hero

The Role of the Witches; The Power of Spirits
The Relationship of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth
Deception and Truth
A Disordered Universe
Banquo's Ghost
The Role of Soliloquies
The Virtues of a Good King
The Tracing of an Image
The Play's Structure
The Nature of Responsibility
Dignity in Defeat?
Sympathy for the Devil?
Malcolm and Macduff? Keep or Cut?

Remember: your paper is an argument. Please be sure to follow the guidelines established for your James Joyce paper in writing this essay. You should have the following handouts:

Notes on First Writing Assignment
Literary Analysis: Introduction
Proof Paragraphs
Proof Paragraphs: Quoting
Conclusions

Socratic Circle Self- Reflection

3 – Dramatically raised the level of conversation with insightful contributions that centered on evidence from the text more than personal reactions to the text and/or offered a high-level reflective critique of the inner circle's discussion

2 – Was mentally and verbally engaged in the conversation and/or maintained notes on the level of discussion that I was prepared to share or did share

1 – Was mentally engaged in the conversation even if I did not contribute verbally and/or made notes about the level of conversation in the inner circle even if I did not verbally share my advice

0 – Completely disengaged from the conversation and/or took no notes on the level of discussion/offered no advice for the inner circle

Course Sources

Our class has expanded the definition of text to include any and all source material that we can analyze and put into conversation with other appropriately deemed text.

Primary Texts

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Hegi, Ursula. Floating in my Mother's Palm. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Hemingway, Ernest. A Farewell to Arms. New York: Scribner, 2003.

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Harper, Frances. "The Slave Mother, a Tale of Ohio."

Hemp, Christine. "Icarus"

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Marvell, Andrew. "To His Coy Mistress."

Plath, Sylvia. "Metaphors."

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Sexton, Anne. "To a Friend Whose Work has Come to a Triumph."

Thomas, Dylan. "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"

Webb, Charles. "The Death of Santa Claus."

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