



RADNOR TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
Course Overview

American Literature College Prep
Course # 05010134



General Information

Credits: 1.0
Weighted: N/A
Prerequisite: Teacher Recommendation

Length: Full Year
Format: Meets Daily
Grade: 11

Course Description

This course continues the sequential study of literature, composition, vocabulary, speaking, and thinking skills begun in grade 9. A thematic and/or chronological approach to major American literature aims at increasing proficiency in critical reading and thinking, as well as increasing literary appreciation. An emphasis on both creative expression and effective exposition should help college-bound students move closer to the kinds of writing skills demanded by advanced study. A step-by-step approach to the research paper is included as part of the course's aim to increase proficiency in both critical thinking and composition. Oral communication assignments further enhance students' academic and interpersonal skills. There is an emphasis on vocabulary. This course relies on a directed reading approach and differentiates through the use of graphic organizers and frequent checkpoints.

Course Objectives:

The student will be able to...

- A. ...apply techniques of class analysis to reading independently to understand historical development and authors, to understand characters and themes, and to understand figurative language and literary devices (and how such elements supply meaning to a text).
- B. ...structure thought precisely with language to produce and refine: topic sentences, paragraph development, transitions, introduction, body, and conclusion.
- C. ...develop a substantial idea with careful control of both language and composition techniques throughout an essay by selecting and using substantial evidence, working in class both with guided instruction and in independent application and appropriately integrate quotations.
- D. ...gain an understanding of "Americanness" as an idea/mythology and American Literature as a body of literature, and be able to articulate this understanding and apply it.
- E. ...apply conventions of English grammar, syntax, and sentence and develop structure in composition, control complete sentences, use subordinate elements logically and accurately, and vary sentences by length and type.
- F. ...cultivate fluency and voice in written work with personal and reflective, persuasive, informative, analytical, writing.
- G. ...develop and apply vocabulary skills.
- H. ...sharpen discussion skills of listening, speaking, and responding to the ideas of others to evaluate text/argument organization and content to determine the author's purpose and effectiveness according to the author's style, theses, accuracy, thoroughness, logic and reasoning.
- I. ...understand multiple perspectives in a conflict.
- J. ...work independently and with guidance in using multiple sources, evaluating and synthesizing the essential ideas in order to develop a research paper which incorporates the writing process to proceed through each step of the research process, independently select and evaluate sources, integrate secondary sources and primary sources to support argument, and synthesize different kinds of support as well as to document sources correctly according to the standards of MLA.

Common Assessments:

Common Assessments (all 11th grade students in all levels)

Close Reading Common Assessment

Students will be given a cold passage to read on either the mid-term or the final to test their knowledge/comprehension of an historical speech given by Sojourner Truth.

Close Reading Common Assessment

Students will be given a cold passage from a female writer to read on either the mid-term or the final to test their knowledge on a typical American Literature fiction passage.

MLA Research and Skills Common Assessment

Students will be given a research topic to write and will be graded on their MLA skills in regards to parenthetical citations, Works Cited Page, and paper formatting.

PSAT Common Assessment

Students will take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) in October. It is a standardized test cosponsored by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) that provides firsthand practice for the SAT[®].

Common Course Assessments (all students enrolled in this course)

Assessment of contribution to play-reading in class

Students will have opportunities to read large or small parts aloud in class, and will be expected to contribute affirmatively in some way.

Analytical Research Paper

Analytical Research Paper using MLA: 3-5 pages, on a topic with at least two outside resources that are independently located by the student

Supplemental Texts and Resources (optional)

Discussion activities
Reflective, Analytical/Expository, Persuasive Essays
Dialectical journals
Vocabulary exercises and reviews
Independent reading

Major Units of Study:

- I. Independence, Opportunity, Non-Conformity, and the Dream of Justice
 - a. The American Indian experience, the myth of America, and the American Dream
 - b. Developing research questions in a controlled research project
- II. A Difficult World – What we know to be true (as opposed to dreams and ideals), storytelling, the challenges of learning difficult truths
 - a. Personal narrative and memoir
 - b. Corruption and/or War
- III. Trying to Rise: Attitudes in the American Dream
 - a. African-American Literature
- IV. Searching For and Defining Yourself: Making a path in the world, breaking some rules, and asserting identity
 - a. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and the bildungsroman
 - b. The problem of racist language and racist perspectives, and the power of satire
 - c. Analytical research project

Materials & Texts

Common Texts (all 11th graders in all levels)

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, by Mark Twain

Harlem Renaissance – starting with Langston Hughes: “Harlem”, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”, “Mother to Son”, “The Weary Blues”, and “I, Too”

Common Course Texts (all students enrolled in the course)

Friday Night Lights, by H.G. Bissinger (selections)

“When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer”, by Walt Whitman

“He Has Filled Graves with Our Bones”, by Charlot

A 20th Century Play – at least one from among the following:

- *A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry
- *Death of a Salesman* or *All My Sons*, by Arthur Miller
- *A Streetcar Named Desire*, by Tennessee Williams

The Things They Carried, by Tim O’Brien

Born to Trouble: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1999, PBS Video)

A minimum three of these authors – short stories and/or poetry – as well as one nonfiction piece from among the following authors/critics: Katherine Lee Bates, Kate Chopin, Flannery O’Connor, Alice Walker, Richard Wright, Anzia Yezierska, Maya Angelou, Junot Diaz, Michael Herr, Annie Dillard, Anne Tyler, Peter Gammons, Zora Neale Hurston, Martin Luther King Jr., Walt Whitman, John Updike, James Wright, Yusef Komunyakaa, Randall Jarrell, Countee Cullen, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, James Weldon Johnson, Gwendolyn Brooks, Gregory Corso, Allen Ginsberg, Nikki Giovanni, Dudley Randall, Melvin B. Tolson, Robert Frost, John Wallace, Tony Norman (and more)

Supplemental Texts and Resources (optional)

Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, by Sherman Alexie

A Lesson Before Dying, by Ernest Gaines

Smoke Signals (1998, dir. Chris Eyre)

Friday Night Lights (2004, dir. Peter Berg)

This Boy’s Life, by Tobias Wolff

Catcher in the Rye, by J.D. Salinger

The Glass Castle, Jeannette Walls

Summer Assignment

Radnor High School publishes an annual summer reading list. Students should refer to the RHS English page for Summer Reading expectations.