

Syllabus – AP English Language and Composition

Central High Magnet Career Academy

Course Objective: To offer a broad writing experience to allow students to sharpen their analytical and rhetorical skills. The course will focus on the art and analysis of argument, and how to apply rhetorical skills in future careers. A major course objective is to prepare students for the AP Advanced Placement exam, which will be given in May. Students will practice both test procedure and subject matter. Note: This course is a requirement of Central’s Advanced Diploma standards, but it can be taken by any student who wishes to study and hone analytical skills.

Introduction: Everything is an argument of some sort. Almost every topic of conversation could lead to a debate: Where should we eat? How much should we spend on clothes? May I stay out after curfew? Although you might not realize it, whenever you are trying to convince someone of your “side” of an argument, you are using rhetorical skills. Such skills, in a more refined form, are used throughout the workplace. Central’s magnet programs offer the insight into careers which involve frequent rhetorical situations. Lawyers have to argue their client’s innocence. Doctors find themselves having to convince patients to follow directives. Business people have to convince banks to lend them money. Any career in politics revolves around rhetoric, whether it is during a campaign or attempting to pass a law. Rhetoric is the art of argument, and it can be a powerful tool.

Organizing Principals: The course requires students to:

- examine the nature and history of the English essay
- read broadly among a variety of authors, rhetorical purposes, and eras
- engage in a significant study of writing as an art
- learn to employ the fundamentals of sound argumentation

Requirements:

Reading: You are required to read and respond to your reading (see *informal writing* below) on a daily basis for this class. We will be reading from a variety of British and American writers, and identify and analyze how those authors use rhetorical strategies and techniques. Unlike your other English classes, this course will be focused on non-fiction work, especially essays and speeches. Some fiction will be included, but we will focus on the rhetorical aspects of the work. Our core texts include anthologies of essay writing by authors from various historical periods:

- DiYanni, Robert, ed. *100 Great Essays*. 4th ed. Boston: Longman, 2011.
- Maimon, Elaine P., et al. *A Writer’s Resource, A Handbook for Writing and Research*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007.
- Shea, Renne H., et al. *The Language of Composition, Reading Writing Rhetoric*. Boston: Bedford/St Martin’s, 2008.

In addition, we will read from several supplemental texts including *The Great Gatsby*, *Hind Swaraj*, and *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.

Formal Papers: You will write six formal papers (one for each grading period), in a variety of forms (e.g. expository, analytical or argumentative essays), during the course of the year. Each paper will be focused on a specific form (narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative), but the subjects will be varied and based upon your choice. Some of these papers will mirror the essays one will find on the AP Advance Placement test. The schedule will go as follows:

- 1st six weeks: Personal Essay
- 2nd six weeks: Persuasive Speech
- 3rd six weeks: Rhetorical Analysis
- 4th six weeks: Compare/Contrast Essay
- 5th six weeks: Synthesis Paper
- 6th six weeks: Issue Based Research Paper

Each paper will proceed through multiple drafts. We will use teacher conferences and peer response groups where students will help each other brainstorm, revise, edit and polish their papers. The teacher will provide formative feedback by commenting on the individual drafts and giving mini-lessons that focus on areas of improvement for the individual and the whole class. All papers will follow MLA guidelines. We will be using *A Writer's Resource* to learn how to do in-text citations and document sources. All final drafts must be emailed to me so I can screen them for plagiarism.

Informal Writing: Informal writing will take place every class day. Much of this writing will be responses to our daily reading. Reading journals will be used for reading responses, reaction to visual rhetoric, note taking, and dialectical journaling. We will also write summaries and/or editorials of current events. Journal writing will often be shared with the class. Other in class writing will include practice AP exam essays, small group activities, and impromptu exercises.

Class Work and Quizzes: Other daily work will include vocabulary development, exercises in sentence structures (imitations), class discussions and debates, and analysis of current events. Since rhetoric surrounds us every day, and AP students are expected to keep up with the event of the world, we will take a “news quiz” each week.

Research: Scholars and professionals continually seek out information and data sources that they can integrate into their own arguments. We will learn how to seek out reliable sources in an unreliable world. We will work with the school library, and students will be required to visit the public library four times during the year for homework. Your final paper for the year will be an issue-based research paper where you will select an important cultural, political, or social issue and formulate a thesis based upon research. You will synthesize ideas from at least seven primary and secondary sources in support of your thesis. Students will conference with the teacher starting with their working thesis through several drafts.

Course Schedule:**1st Six Weeks – Introduction to Rhetoric**

This unit will introduce the organization and techniques of argument beginning with Aristotle and continuing to modern rhetoric. In particular, we will focus on rhetorical terminology, use of appeals, sentence structures (coordination and subordination), use of tone and voice, and logical organization. Students will read a variety of essays from *100 Great Essays*, and ultimately compose their own personal essay.

- Terminology
- The Rhetorical Triangle
- Tone and Appeals
- Personal Essay Examples
- Paper 1 – Personal Essay

2nd Six Weeks – Political Argument and Fallacy

During the political season, students will read a variety of political speeches, ranging from The “Gettysburg Address” to “Obama’s Inauguration Address.” An emphasis will be placed on logical argument and the dangers of logical fallacies. The unit will also include a section about visual rhetoric by studying artwork (Picasso’s *Guernica*) and advertising. The final paper for this unit will be a persuasive speech where the student defends a position on a current event topic. The speech must contain research from at least two sources that supports the student’s argument.

- Logic and logical fallacies
- Political Speeches
- Guernica and visual literacy
- Paper 2 – Persuasive Speech

3rd Six Weeks – Analysis of Argument

This unit will revolve around the American Abolitionist movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In particular, we will analyze how Frederick Douglass makes his ethical appeals against slavery through his use of dialogue, oratory style, figures of speech, and details. [C9d] The students will be introduced to dialectical journals as a form of note-taking, and MLA guidelines will be taught. The final product will be a rhetorical analysis of Douglass’s writings.

- Whole class reading – *The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass*
- Quote response essays
- Dialectical journaling
- MLA guidelines
- Paper 3 – Rhetorical Analysis of *The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass*

4th Six Weeks – Civil Disobedience Unit

In 1839, Henry David Thoreau published an essay entitled “Resistance to Civil Government.” In it he argues that individual conscience should take precedence over an unjust law. This pamphlet, later to be called “Civil Disobedience,” has been the foundation of world changing events, including the liberation of India and the American Civil Rights movement. We will

read several papers, essays, and letters that show the development of nonviolent resistance and how these affected world history. A separate focus will look at how visual rhetoric is used in advertising by studying both print and multimedia sources.

- “Civil Disobedience,” Thoreau
- *Hind Swaraj*, Ghandi
- “Letters from a Birmingham Jail,” King
- Multiple choice practice
- The rhetoric of advertising
- Paper 4 – Comparison/Contrast Essay on the various interpretations of *Civil Disobedience*

5th Six Weeks – Synthesis – The American Dream

The American Dream is part of the romanticized notion of the United States: there is a promise of prosperity and success. Many works of American literature revolve around the attainment or the denial of this promise. We will read several pieces of American fiction that speak of this national ethos. The formal paper for this unit will be a synthesizing of elements from literature and non-fiction sources from previous units.

- Conception of the Dream: “Leaves of Grass,” Whitman
- The struggle for the Dream: *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald
- The Dream deferred: The Harlem Renaissance
- Sample AP essays
- Paper 5 – Synthesis Paper

6th Six Weeks – Final Project

The last six weeks will focus on the writing of a major research paper utilizing one or more libraries as well as electronic media. As stated above, the paper will be based on a cultural, governmental, or social issue. Seven primary and secondary sources will be required, and the paper must be formatted in MLA style.

- Paper 6 – Issue-Based Research Paper

Plagiarism: Copying information off the Internet or taking a paper from someone else and claiming it as an original is considered plagiarism. This is a form of cheating that is taken very seriously by colleges and universities where plagiarism can result in expulsion from all classes. I do an Internet check on each paper turned into me. If I catch you plagiarizing, I will fail your for the assignment and insist that it be put on your permanent record so that your future college can be warned. Plagiarism is stealing, and in many cases cheaters have had to face criminal and civil court cases. You are AP students, and you have tremendous abilities. Use them!

Required Materials for Class: Your agenda book and ID are required to use the computer labs. You will also need to bring your books and journals to class every day.

Grading Breakdown:

Formal writing assignments – 40%
Journals and informal writing – 20%
Classwork and Assignments – 40%

JCPS Grading Scale

<u>Letter grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
A	93 – 100	Exceeds Standards
B	86 – 92	Meets Standards
C	79 – 85	Marginally Meets Standards
D	70 – 78	Below Standards
U	Below 70	Unsatisfactory Performance

Gilbertsclass.com: I keep a website where I post all assignments, due dates, original handouts, and research links. In the case of an absence, you can find out what the class covered at www.gilbertsclass.com.

How to Reach Me: Both you and your parents can contact me through email. My address is Jim.Gilbert@Jefferson.kyschools.us. I read my mail at least three times per day.