

English 7-8 AP: Course Syllabus

Burke 2010-2011

Course

Description

“Students will engage in the careful reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature. Through this close reading of selected texts, students should deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers. As they read, students should consider a work’s structure, style, and themes as well as smaller-scale elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone” (College Board 2004).

Office Hours

I am at school every day from 7 to 12ish. I teach periods 1-3; the other part of my day is taken up with my work as a writer. I will meet with students before school, during brunch, or at lunch as I am able. You may also contact me via email (jburke@englishcompanion.com) or by phone (415.823.0449) but not to discuss grades or your standing in the class. Additional links to class blogs, wikis, and our tweets can be found on my School Loop homepage.

Fall Semester Texts

- Summer Reading texts
- Short fiction and poetry from *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, Michael Meyer
- *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*, Joseph M. Williams
- *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*, Sophocles (in Meyer anthology)
- *Hamlet*, William Shakespeare (in Meyer anthology)
- *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley
- *Siddhartha*, Herman Hesse
- Independent Reading (3 books required)

Materials

Please have the following materials ASAP:

- Composition book (traditional size; not spiral)
- Highlighters (of different colors)
- Pens, pencils, paper

Independent

Reading

All students will read three books each semester. Students write a timed, in-class essay in response to past AP exam writing prompts *each* grading period. See the Independent Reading assignment for more details.

AP

Contract

Complete the attached contract and return it by Friday of the first week of school.

Academic

Honesty

Burlingame High School defines the following as cheating or academic dishonesty:

1. Receive or provide information during a test.
2. Receive or provide information on tests given during an earlier period.
3. Use unauthorized material on tests.
4. Use ideas or written material from other sources—students, professional writers, Internet notes/study guides—without acknowledging the source in their own writing.
5. Use or copy another student's homework when not authorized by the teacher to do so.
6. Allow other students to use their work on assignments.

All official school policies regarding academic honesty are in effect in the course. In addition, please note the following:

- The first time you plagiarize or otherwise cheat, you go to the administration and get a zero (not an F, a zero) on the assignment, as well as a call to your parents.

- Should it happen a second time, you fail the course and are referred to the administration, and must meet with your parents. As a senior, that would also mean you would not graduate and your spot at any university would be rescinded.
- These events happened last year, as they have in previous years. *Earn your success.*

Habits of Mind

The University of California and California State University released a joint report ting those “habits of mind” that lead to university success:

Broad Intellectual Practices:

- Exhibit curiosity
- Experiment with new ideas
- See other points of view
- Challenge one’s own beliefs
- Engage in intellectual discussions
- Ask provocative questions
- Generate hypotheses
- Exhibit respect for other viewpoints
- Read with awareness of self and others

Classroom Behaviors

- Ask questions
- Be attentive in class
- Come to class prepared
- Complete assignments on time
- Contribute to class discussions
- Attend class regularly and on time

Grading

- Extra credit is not available in this course.
- NB: Every assignment is crucial to your success in this class.
- I do not weight grades nor do I use points: All grades are letter grades.
- Standard grading percentages apply.

Missing/Late Assignments

All missed assignments can be submitted within two days of an excused absence. No missed assignments will be accepted if you are present but have not completed the work. If you have a planned absence, you are still responsible for the work missed. Should you be absent the day a major assignment is due, *you must email the completed assignment to me by the time our class meets*. Failure to do so will be the equivalent of not doing the assignment. All assignments are posted daily on School Loop (SL); if you are out, check SL and come to class having done the work. Not doing several key assignments last year resulted in one person not graduating and others not getting the grade needed to get into the college of their choice. True story. Sad story. *Their* story. Don’t make it yours.

Attendance

Follow school policies. If you have excessive absences, your grade will reflect this; if you have excessive tardies, it will affect your standing in the class and your ability to attend such events as the prom and formal.

Final Thoughts

Now that I have all the official business spelled out, let me say how much I enjoy this class. I know senior year is an exciting but stressful time for you all. Mostly this means the college application process and all that goes with it. I am here to help you through that process in whatever ways I can. I am also here to push you, though; learning inevitably involves feeling vulnerable, learning to do what you cannot do or do well now. Trust me—and yourself—to help you through that confusion to the next level of your learning. This is a year-long conversation *with yourself about yourself*, a conversation that cannot be rushed. Let’s have a great year. I’m ready and eager to get to know and work with you, as well as to learn from and with you.