

AP English Course Syllabus

Unit 1

Introduction to Poetry and Writing Workshop

I like to start the year with poetry because I think that poetry naturally lends itself to close reading. Although most of the poems we read are located in Perrin's Sound and Sense, I always make copies so that the students can make notes directly on the page. Visible evidence of annotation of all assigned readings are part of the students' grade.

1. Close reading of two poems:
 - a. "Do Not go Gentle Into that Good Night" Dylan Thomas
 - b. "Because I Could not Stop for Death" Emily Dickinson

Poetic Devices discussed and analyzed: Tone, structure (villanelle vs free verse), paradox, personification, point of view, diction, imagery, repetition.

2. Students are required to write a 3 to 5 page compare/contrast essay. Students email one copy to me, and keep one copy for themselves.

3. Teacher-Led Writing Workshop: After reading their papers and grading them with the take-home essay rubric, I cut and paste paragraphs and sections of their papers into a new document with comments and suggestions. There are, of course, no names. I make suggestions for improvement, as well as point out well-written passages. As a class, we discuss the packet.

Through discussion, students learn what to look for when editing their own essays, as well as what to look for when editing other students' essays.

4. Students are then asked to re-write their essays and resubmit them for a grade which will replace the first one.

Inevitably, the essays are significantly improved.

5. Continued in-class/outside-class practice in poetry analysis on various poems from the 16th-21st century.

6. In class compare/contrast essay on:
 - a. "Digging" Seamus Heaney
 - b. "The Writer" Richard Wilbur

In-class essays are scored with the small, 9-1 rubric.

7. Take-home compare/contrast essay with special emphasis on overstatement/understatement on:

- a. "Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone," W.H. Auden
- b. "One Art" Elizabeth Bishop

Students are to bring first draft to class and work in a round-robin group with peers for a student-led writing workshop. Revised draft will be turned in to me to be graded with the long rubric.

8. The Shakespearean Sonnet

Discussion on Rhyme Scheme, Meter, Structure of Sonnets. Petrarchan Sonnet is briefly discussed.