

2009 Ad Astra Advance Placement Summer Institute
English Language & Composition Syllabus
July 27 – 31, 2009

Institute Overview

Participants will examine various approaches of organizing and teaching Advanced Placement English Language. We will focus on approaches and assignments which occasion

- ✓ close reading and careful analysis of non-fiction prose
- ✓ writing with purpose and strategic awareness
- ✓ developing effective exemplifications and arguments
- ✓ awareness of rhetorical purpose
- ✓ language analysis
- ✓ developing a personal voice
- ✓ honing critical thinking skills

The philosophy and shape of the AP Language and Composition Examination will be examined with exercises in scoring of essays using a rubric. Hopefully, as a result of this week, teachers will strengthen and enhance their own language courses.

Consultant Background



Gretchen Polnac taught AP literature and film for 31 years in the Austin Independent School District in Austin, Texas, where she received numerous teaching awards. She now teaches full time at The University of Texas in UTeach Liberal Arts, guiding pre-service teachers through their professional sequence of methods courses. Gretchen's undergraduate work was completed at The University of Texas and her graduate work at Texas State University and The University of Texas. She is a reader for both AP Literature and Language.

Institute Preparation

Teachers should bring the following to the institute:

- ✓ A read and annotated copy of one of the following texts. We will group according to book choice to work on common assignments and will then share assignments. I suggest participants read about each book on Amazon.com to see which book most interests you.
- ✓ *The 10-Cent Plague* by David Hajden
- ✓ *Factory Girls* by Leslie Chang
- ✓ *The Tortilla Curtain* by T.C . Boyle
- ✓ A Best Practice language assignment with which they have had success (30 copies)
- ✓ A copy of their current AP Language syllabus (if participant has taught the course before).

Institute Schedule

Please note that the following agenda is tentative; an effective facilitator will address the needs and desires of the participants and we will proceed accordingly.

Monday

- ✓ Introductions and statements of purpose
- ✓ A walk through the AP Exam: framing the goals for your course
- ✓ The politics of AP: student selection, screening, grading, parents, administrators, colleagues, to test or not to test, etc.
- ✓ How to construct an AP course, with responsibility to the Exam and to your school's four year sequence of curriculum
- ✓ Syllabi considerations
- ✓ Book group formations based on choice of reading

Tuesday

- ✓ Deconstructing the 2009 Exam: Question By Question
- ✓ Analyzing visual argument
- ✓ Multiple Choice Strategies
- ✓ Book groups meet and design lessons

Wednesday

- ✓ On-demand writing
- ✓ Drafted writing
- ✓ Evaluation of Writing: various strategies and the use of rubrics
- ✓ How to avoid student burnout: other types of assignments
- ✓ Book groups meet and design lessons

Thursday:

- ✓ Critical Thinking Assignments: setting students up for success
- ✓ Sharing of Best Practice Materials
- ✓ Book groups meet and design Lessons

Friday: Putting It All Together

- ✓ Presentations of your assignments
- ✓ Looking ahead to a new year
- ✓ Evaluations

Graduate Credit Option

Participants may also earn three graduate education hours for any of the AP Summer Institutes from Washburn University for a reduced tuition rate and the successful completion of an academic assignment.

Additional Information

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