

instructor: Lynette Williamson

2014-15

Office Hours: T/Th Tutorial; Mon after school

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R H E T O R I C

the art of persuasive speaking and writing

There are two basic premises for this class:

1. **Everything's an argument**

Everything we read, write, say, and see has the power to persuade

2. **The most effective communicator is a good listener**

*Nature gave you two ears but only one tongue, which is a gentle hint
that you should listen more than you talk.*

Who can take it?

GRADE LEVELS & PREREQUISITES

Open to 11-12th grade students who have earned at least a "C" in their previous English class, this course has been UC approved for English credit.

Who can take more?

Students opting for the **AP Language and Composition Course** which is built into the structure of the Rhetoric class, contract for more work, harder assessment, mandatory attendance at test preparation workshops in April, and the thrill of taking an \$94.00 test that will earn college credit. Students will have the opportunity to contract to become an "APe" during the 5th week of school. The contract and complete syllabus for the AP Lang and Comp class are on Williamson's website.

What do you have to read?

Everything's An Argument

Julius Caesar, William Shakespeare

Theban Plays, Sophocles

Beloved, Toni Morrison

Subject and Strategy--A Rhetoric Reader

1984 George Orwell

Infinite number of non-fiction articles

A non-fiction novel (e.g. *Farewell to Manzanar*)

A World of Ideas: essential readings for college (APes only)

What do you have to do?

The course will intersperse lecture, research, writing, and oral presentation as we cover each of the following major units of study.

- UNIT 1 Basics of Argumentation
- UNIT 2 Rhetorical Analysis of argument and film
- UNIT 3 Rhetorical Strategies in Written and Oral Argument
- UNIT 4 Using Criteria in an Argument of Value
- UNIT 5 On-Demand Writing
- UNIT 6 Synthesis Research and Writing
- UNIT 7 Writing and Thinking Logically
- UNIT 8 Distinguishing between Oral and Written Arguments
- UNIT 9 Semantics of Argument: euphemisms and loaded language
- UNIT 10 The rhetoric of the non-fiction novel
- UNIT 11 The blurring between news and opinion
- Post AP test unit...
- UNIT 12 Plato, Sophocles and Philosophical Chairs

How and when do you have to do it?

HOMEWORK POLICIES

- **Assignment sheets** detailing all in-class assignments and homework will be distributed twice per quarter and posted on the bulletin board and Mrs. Williamson's website. Essentially, there's no excuse for not knowing what's for homework!
- **Written assignments** must be completed in ink or word processed depending on the assignment instructions. NO CREDIT will be given to assignments written in pencil. All papers must follow the MLA format for proper headings and documentation--Students should consult the O.W.L. at Purdue (link on W's website) if they need clarification.

MAKE-UP WORK POLICIES

Out of fairness to ALL students, I uphold these policies. Need proof? Talk to students who have survived my class.

- No late homework will be accepted. If you are sick or miss class for a school activity, you receive one day to makeup the work for every day you were out. A planned absence—such as a college visit or school activity—requires that you submit your work before you leave unless you have made other arrangements with Mrs. Williamson. To be safe, be clear. Unexcused absences or “draft dodging” (ditching class on the day an essay draft is due ;-)) entitle you to nothing!

- Major assignments (50+ pts.) have a due date and a last day accepted. Shoot for the due date, but know for certain if you extend yourself to the last day accepted--there is no extension!
- Formal oral presentations cannot be made up. Oral presentations are due on the day scheduled unless a student makes arrangements with another student to swap speaking positions.

How should you behave?

CLASSROOM RULES

- If you MUST eat, be discreet, but NEVER munch during a student presentation!
- Raise your hand before speaking, especially if you want that participation point.
- Rhetoric is a no-phone zone unless a "Tech-break" is specifically offered—If you can't control your "phoney" urges, your phone goes in a box until the end of the day.
- If you can't wait for the bathroom break at the end of the period, be prepared to leave your phone with me.
- Don't even think about copying homework—even for another class—this is a breach of academic integrity and will not be tolerated.
- Bottom Line: **No yahoos.** Given the nature of this class, your undivided attention is necessary in order for all to succeed. Behave in a sane and sensitive manner—always.

CONSEQUENCES FOR UNVCIVILIZED BEHAVIOR

- **STEP 1** A friendly reminder
- **STEP 2** A not-so-friendly warning (a lost opportunity to earn daily participation)
- **STEP 3** See, ya! (A referral out of class)

ACADEMIC HONESTY Squandering your academic integrity to peek at another student's quiz, to copy homework, or to plagiarize is a waste of time—both yours and mine. Plagiarism takes on many forms—from an improperly documented research paper to a paragraph "borrowed" from a friend's homework—regardless, papers that are plagiarized receive automatic "F's" and a disciplinary referral. You've been warned.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL: Students are expected to use tutorial period to check grades, seek clarification on assignments, make up tests, and receive work for independent study or field trip absences. A quick query can be made via email, but I'm old and still power down my electronic devices—so don't expect a response if it's after 4pm.—I'm off duty!

PRINTER POLICY: If you can't print at home, plan to arrive at school 10 minutes early to print in the library, in one of the digital SANTA rooms (the list of available rooms is on my website), or forget about it. My classroom boasts a 2002 HP workhorse that may or may not be functional when you need it. Avoid stress and arrive to class prepared. FYI--College classrooms don't even have staplers, much less printers.

PARENTS: They have a right to care about you, your progress, and your grades. I plan to keep them in the loop, but in an effort to insure that you are harnessing the responsibility and autonomy needed to survive in college, you will be my first line of communication. Should we need a parent-teacher conference, plan on attending—it's my policy.

EVERYTHING'S AN ARGUMENT EXCEPT YOUR GRADE!

An argument is constructed out of assertions; your grades will be based on how well you meet specific criteria for each assignment. You will always know what's expected BEFORE it's inspected. This is called standards-based assessment. It lacks surprise--which can be a good thing when it comes to grades.

GRADING POLICY

- Use the link from my website to set up your portal account if you haven't already done so. Your grade can be checked 24-7. If you don't have access to a computer, stop by at tutorial and use the student computer in room 210 to research your grade. You must review the information on the portal before we have any discussions about your grade.
- Grades are calculated on a cumulative basis for each semester based on the following percent scale: 94-100, A; 93-90, A-; 89-86, B+; 85-84, B; 83-80, B-; 79-76, C+; 75-74, C; 73-70, C-; 69-66, D+; 65-64, D; 63-60, D-; 59--0, F.
- **Extra credit** (not available to APes)—may only increase a semester or quarter grade by half a grade--NO MORE!

TARDY POLICY: Excused or not, after the first two tardies of each semester, being late costs you 10pts a pop. Tardy absent? 20pts disappear.

Analy High School

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August 19, 2015

To Students of Rhetoric and Their Parents:

Like most English classes, Rhetoric requires students to practice the art of persuasive writing and speaking. However, many of the issues we read about in preparation for rhetorical analysis, discussion, or debate are literally “ripped from the headlines.” Students will often be researching and debating topics assigned to them rather than chosen by them.

Formal argumentation requires students to look at both sides of a controversial issue and to dine with their opposition in order to present convincing arguments. Students may often find themselves asked to use logic and evidence to defend a position that is not their personal belief. Although awkward at first, debating issues rather than beliefs will be the primary focus of our units on persuasion.

The congressional bills and resolutions for our first quarter unit on argumentation will be distributed to your student as soon as I receive them from the state speech association--probably by the third week of instruction. Please peruse the legislation when it arrives.

We can always use help with research and would greatly welcome any articles or materials that you might deem applicable the topics being discussed or debated in class.

Believe it or not, I am looking forward to a year of feisty arguments in my classroom—within the parameters of parliamentary procedure, of course.

Sincerely,

Lynette Williamson

I have read both this letter and the course syllabus covering the policies and procedures of the Rhetoric class. I am clear on Mrs. Williamson’s:

- Grading Policy
- Late Work Policy
- Tardy Policy
- Protocol for teacher contact
- AP option and expectations
- Availability of this syllabus and all course assignments on Mrs. Williamson’s website

(please print student’s name)

signature of parent/guardian

signature of student

Feel free to contact me at the high school for further clarification of this or any of the policies and protocols explained in the syllabus (824-2300 x8788 or lwilliamson.ah@wscuhdsd.k12.ca.us)

Signed permission slips must be returned by Monday, August 24th...thanks!