

# Project Advance at a Glance

## Bottom Line

- PA students pay tuition to Syracuse University and earn dual credit: one grade-weighted credit for 12<sup>th</sup> grade honors English at BHS and six hours of college credit.
- The 2015-2016 price for those six credits was approximately \$675.
- Tuition assistance is available for those who qualify, and a deferred payment option allows for making smaller payments throughout the year.
- Acceptance of the credits varies. It sometimes happens after simply forwarding your Syracuse transcript. It sometimes involves an appointment with the university official who decides on transfer credits, and a portfolio is produced the first semester and encouraged second semester to help make your case. It has sometimes involved having a transcript sent directly from Syracuse after completing your freshman year and counting the credits toward the university's general elective requirements. Another option is taking the AP Language exam, as PA exceeds the expectations of AP Language coursework.
- Classes are limited to 20 students per section.
- Regardless of whether their credits were accepted, the vast majority of students report that the course left them very well prepared for university level writing and thinking.

## Course Description

**First semester in a nutshell:** This course will give you the time and structure to really grow as a writer.

**In detail:** WRT 105 is a writing studio. During this term, students compose an analysis exploring the cultural significance of an object, a research based argumentative essay, and an analysis exploring the nuances of language. Essays are written in several drafts, and students learn and incorporate intense revision strategies to bring them to their final form. Rather than relying on simplistic answers and formulaic writing, students seek out and engage evidence that complicates their position, resulting in essays with an evolved thesis and a comprehensive analysis of the subject. In addition to these larger assignments, students will work with college writing textbooks, will read scholarly articles on a variety of subjects, both for content and to analyze composition techniques, and will write at least two timed responses in order to prepare them for further university essay test writing.

**Second semester in a nutshell:** This course will help you become an astute reader of social class, as it appears in literature, but also within our larger cultural context; if you're already a culturally astute reader, it will give you a framework for analysis.

**In detail:** "English" classes in universities today can often more properly be characterized as cultural studies classes, and ETS 181 is an introduction to recent ideas in textual and cultural theory. The main source for these ideas is a textbook that distills major issues in theory, but we will read primary theoretical articles as well. Armed with these ideas, our reading takes on a different focus. Instead of asking what a text means, we spend at least as much time examining *how* it creates meaning—particularly meaning that inform how readers understand topics that are central to discussion of social class: status, power, production, consumption, and stratification. Instead of staying within the isolated world of the text, we investigate what it can tell us about the culture in which it was produced. Instead of trying to ferret out transcendent themes, we examine how subjects (in texts and in life) are constructed, what texts reveal about that which is taken for granted in a culture, and how those seemingly natural assumptions exert their power. These concerns expand our notion of what sort of text is worthy of examination, so we study not only canonical (i.e., AP) literature such as poems, stories, novels, and plays, but also films, television shows, advertisements – any text that may prove enlightening. Along the way, students write short response papers to practice applying these new ideas to a text, compose two larger essays that allow for a more in depth reading, and create a final project to synthesize the ideas presented during the semester.

## Class expectations

- Classes are fun but challenging! Expect to actually discard major portions of a rough draft or to look critically at something that at first may seem trivial.
- Be prepared to avoid easy answers in your first semester papers and to engage new and sometimes complex ideas second semester.

## Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition at a Glance

### Bottom Line

- AP English students can receive three or four college credits by taking the AP test in May. The number of college credits depends on your test score and the institution granting that credit.
- Almost every university accepts AP test scores.
- The cost of the AP test in 2016 was \$92.
- The class grade is weighted in your GPA calculation.

### Course Description

AP English Literature and Composition is designed to engage students in the careful reading and critical analysis of literature.

### Reading

The course includes intensive study of representative works from various genres and periods, concentrating on works of recognized literary merit. Readings are organized into four thematically related units: The Search for Identity; Reality vs. Illusion; Good vs. Evil; and Understanding Perspective. In each unit, there is one major text that speaks to the unit theme as well as short fiction and poetry. Students must read deliberately, closely, and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is created by the specific features of the text. Analysis will not only engage a text's literary artistry; students should also consider the social and historical values it reflects and embodies. As a result of the work in this course, students will have a more acute sense of why these works are considered timeless.

### Writing

Writing assignments focus on the critical analysis of literature. Students will learn how to systematically break-down complicated texts and puzzle through elements of literature in order to figure out how each element, device, or details contributes to the work as a whole. The writing process in AP Literature, whether it be daily assignments, smaller homework pieces, or drafting out an essay, consistently pushes students to use details from a text to make intelligent, articulate analytical conclusions that can be supported with text. All writing assignments ask that students make their own original, creative insights based on the text. These insights, however, can only be achieved with a very thorough understanding of the reading itself. Overall, major writing assessments include

- AP-style impromptus: There will be at least one of these per month, and as the AP exam approaches they will be assigned more frequently.
- Drafted essays will ask questions similar to those found on AP open response questions but will allow students to work on matters of structure and style that are difficult to practice in a timed setting.

### General Expectations

- This class is taught with the expectation that all students enrolled will take the exam in the spring. If you do not plan on taking or preparing for the exam, do not enroll in the class.
- Reading assignments are challenging and interesting; writing assignments push students to draw their own conclusions through accurate and focused analysis.

#### **Major AP Texts:**

The Color Purple, Alice Walker  
King Lear, William Shakespeare  
Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad  
Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe

#### **Short Fiction Authors:**

James Baldwin, Jhumpa Lahiri, Toni Cade Bambara, Plato, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, George Orwell, Shirley Jackson, and others

#### **Poets:**

John Keats, Robert Hayden, Marge Piercy, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Marie Howe, Billy Collins, Robert Penn Warren, Howard Nemerov, Margaret Atwood, T. S. Eliot, and others