



AP English III (2022-2023)

Instructor: Matthew Davidson

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Room: 2108

Office Hours: after school Monday-Friday

Course Content

This course will prepare students for the English Language Advanced Placement test in May, potentially earning credit for a student's first college English class. As such, the readings and assessment are aligned with the types of reading and assessments that students would experience were they to take the equivalent college course. For all intents and purposes, then, students will be working two full grade levels beyond their academic peers. As such, students should expect a workload and rigor that reflects this fact.

That said, I do recognize that Waltrip is not a university and do build in quite a bit of class time for students to work on assignments. If students are falling behind or bringing home massive amounts of English homework, this is almost certainly a reflection of not taking wisely utilizing this class time.

About the Instructor

I have over twenty years of experience as an educator and seventeen as a high school English teacher. Specifically, I have taught AP English courses since 2009 (at both the junior and senior level) and have scored AP tests in the summer multiple times for College Board (who administers the AP test).

This is my first year at Waltrip HS.

Grading

There will be one grading category in the gradebook, and assignments will be weighted according to their importance, complexity, and the time it takes to complete them. For example, a multiple-choice quiz will be entered once into the gradebook. A typical daily assignment might be entered twice into the gradebook. A timed writing or longer writing assignment might be entered three times into the gradebook, and an assigned revision of the same assignment would be worth twice as much (entered six times into the gradebook).

If less than approximately 10% of the AP classes are not making As at the end of a marking period, there will be a small curve of everyone's grades to accomplish this.

Required Materials

The expectation is that students bring their laptops to class.

Assignments and texts can be accessed from Canvas or directly from my web-site:

<https://www.davidson-eng.net/>

Planned Units of Instruction

Readings are chosen to support AP U.S. History-- either providing context for topics discussed in that class or focusing on periods in U.S. history that typically receive less class attention than they might merit. Many of the texts that students read will be primary documents from the period in question, and questions of points of view and purpose will be framed in such a way that the skills should be transferable to history class.

The first cycle of readings will concern the first documented contact of Europeans with Native peoples in the Americas-- Norse explorers in what is presently Canada. This story will be examined from the point of view of the Norse, the Native people of Greenland, and the contemporary United States. The skills focus will be an examination of how the point of view of the one communicating the message shapes the presentation of the account.

The second cycle of readings will concern the second documented contact of Europeans with Native peoples in the America-- the more familiar story of Christopher Columbus' voyages of exploration. The content focus will be less on what happened than on how different people have thought about these events. Texts will examine a variety of views, ranging from laudatory to critical. The skills focus will be on persuasion and how the one communicating an idea attempts to appeal to a specific audience.

The third cycle of readings will concern conflict on the 19th century American frontier between the United States and the Lakota Sioux. It will consist of a mixture of more expository texts (like the first cycle) alongside more texts with more of a persuasive agenda (like the second cycle), and the skills focus will be on how specific language choices communicate a speaker's assumptions and point of view. It will consolidate and extend the skills learned in the first two cycles of readings.

The fourth cycle of readings will concern 19th century slave narratives, with a special emphasis on Frederick Douglass' *Narrative*. Using the skills learned in the first semester, students will learn to deconstruct the form of an argument and explain in more detail how speakers achieve their purpose through rhetorical choices.

The final weeks before the AP test will be less overtly themed, often pairing related readings, but otherwise trying to capture some of the unpredictability of the AP test. Activities will apply the ideas from the fourth cycle of readings to more informational texts, examine tone in more detail, and investigate how textual repetitions emphasize important information to achieve a speaker's purpose.