

## 2018-2019 English IV AP Policies

This course will prepare students for the English Literature Advanced Placement test in May, potentially earning credit for a student's second 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. In fact, College Board requires all AP instructors to turn in a syllabus to university professors for approval to ensure that AP high school courses maintain university-level rigor. For all intents and purposes, then, students will be working two full grade levels beyond their academic peers. As such, students should expect a university level workload and university level standards for the work they produce.

### Readings

The texts have been chosen to reflect the types of readings students will encounter on the test (i.e., the sorts of readings that College Board recommends) and what they would be likely to encounter as undergraduate students in a university setting (as approved by university professors in the course audit). One consequence of this means that readings will occasionally contain more adult material than would be typical in a high school English class. The working assumption in this course is that seventeen and eighteen year old students who volunteer to take (what is essentially) a college course have the emotional and intellectual maturity to read the sorts of materials that colleges typically assign. If there is a novel length assignment that contains more adult themes, then there will always be a "PG" alternative. If this sounds as if this will be a concern, the student or parent/guardian should contact the instructor for further clarification or potential alternative readings.

Readings will range in length and difficulty, and most of the reading will have to be completed at home (as would happen in an actual university course). Students will, however, be given reading assignments several days before they are addressed in class. **Understand, though, that since this is a literature course, there will be a not-insignificant amount of required reading.** If a student is not willing to commit to keeping up with the reading (never more than 50 pages a week), then this is not the course for him or her.

### Supplies

There is no notebook requirement, but students who wish to do well on the AP exam will need to keep assignments and hand-outs to study for the test in May. Students will need to bring their assigned readings to class as well as all the usual supplies needed to complete assignments (pen, paper, Chrome Book, etc.).

### Tutorials

I am here after school every day. If nobody shows up by around 4:00, I will go home, so if a student has to be somewhere else before planning on seeing me for tutorials, let me know. I am also available at lunch at all times when I do not have meetings or duty (the second half of lunch on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday).

### Assignments

- Students will be assigned reading, writing, and projects in advance. This will almost always be a week or more to finish a reading or assignment (true over 95% of the time). The students who are most successful in this course are the ones with enough discipline to not defer assignments until the night before a due date, as assignments are inevitably more complicated than they first appear.
- Turning in work through e-mail is acceptable, but it must be sent the day of the due date by midnight. If I have no record of an e-mail, I will treat it as if it were not sent (and will mark it late if turned in later).
- Late policy: 1) for most assignments, there is additional work that students will be responsible for completing if they miss a deadline and do not wish points to be deducted (this will be detailed in the instructions themselves), or 2) for most other assignments (and assignments where students choose not to do the extra work), late work will lose points for up to 8 hours late (-3), 8-24 hours late (-10), and at any point after that (-20). There will also be a small incentive for turning in assignments early (+3).
- Students are responsible for getting their own make-up work. There will almost always be make-up work should a student miss class. Students should schedule a time to see me before or after school if they need help. In addition, they should check my school web-site (which will have downloadable .pdfs of any assignments, handouts, and/or presentations).

## **Academic Dishonesty**

If a student plagiarizes someone else's work, they will receive a zero for the assignment and a possible discipline referral. In these cases, I might allow a student to complete an alternate assignment for half credit, but this is solely at the teacher's discretion.

## **Grading**

There will be one grading category in Skyward, and assignments will be weighted according to difficulty and estimated time taken to complete them. Thus, a relatively minor grade will be entered once (usually something completed in class), a typical assignment will be entered twice, rough drafts (timed writing) will be entered four times, and final drafts of essays will be entered eight times. The reasoning for this system is straightforward: studies show that students learn and retain information better with a series of low stakes assessments than a small number of high stakes ones, and weighting grades against each other forces students to take the daily assignments seriously. To analogize, for a musician the time spent practicing is as important as the performance because that is where the growth as an artist truly occurs.

## **Trouble**

Per school policy, students are no longer being automatically unenrolled from AP courses over performance issues. In other words, if your grade falls below a point that is acceptable to you, it is your responsibility to request any schedule changes. However, this should not be a problem for anybody who is keeping up with assignments, as by far the most significant correlation to decent grades is committing to turning in all assignments in a timely manner. Those who cannot do this are the students with sub-par or failing grades.

Thank you,

Matthew Davidson  
[matthew.davidson@springbranchisd.com](mailto:matthew.davidson@springbranchisd.com)

**I ask that both the parent/guardian and student sign this contract too (below)-- thereby signifying their understanding of these policies and expectations. If it is felt that any of these policies unreasonable or raise concerns, please contact me. A copy of this contract will be posted on my web-site, and I will retain the physical, signed copy for reference.**

**Student**  
**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student e-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student**  
**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian e-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_