

**Williamsville East High School**  
**Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition**  
**2009- 2010**

Advanced Placement English is a rigorous, college-level course of study that students may choose in place of the English elective program when they are seniors. The English department recommends students who wish to take A.P. English. In May, the A.P. students take an exam created by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. The exam is graded on a one through five scale, and students who score three, four, or five on the exam may receive college credit. The score required and the numbers of credits granted vary from school to school. The course does not end with the A.P. exam, but continues to the end of the school year.

Although the A.P. English course is like the regular English 10-12 courses to a certain extent, it differs from other English courses in a number of ways. It is intended for seniors who want to explore the subtle dynamics of literature rather than for those who are simply trying to gain a college credit. Not only is the amount of reading greater than that required in other courses, but also the books are generally more complex, and there is also a much greater emphasis on poetry. A.P. students must take more time to reflect on the reading before they come to class. Whereas honors level students usually focus on plot and character as vehicles for the expression of theme, A.P. students focus on language, image, and style, as well. They examine not what an author says so much as how he says it.

This expanded focus is dictated, in part, by the nature of the A.P. English exam. On the first part of the A.P. exam, selected poetry and prose passages are followed by extremely difficult multiple-choice questions. Students are given an hour for this section of the exam. During the second part of the exam, students must write three essays in two hours. Thus, the course will include frequent timed writing practice with an emphasis on critical and analytical writing. Students will concentrate on developing their literary analyses with precision and coherence.

To sharpen their understanding of the craft of writing, students will also do significant creative work in the course. Experimenting with different genres and styles is crucial to understanding them. As Richard Feynman, the great physicist, says, "I can't understand what I can't create."

### **AP Lit Summer Reading List**

Your ability to read voluminously as well as insightfully and deeply is critical in this course. To jump start you in that direction, we have assigned you a summer reading list that features novels and short stories and short story cycles that introduce and connect to the readings selected for the school year. Because you will work in groups to present the following summer reading texts, we expect you to annotate them and to bring them to class on the first day of school.

[American Poetry & Literacy Project Academy of American Poets](#), ed.: **How to Eat a Poem: A Smorgasbord of Tasty and Delicious Poems for Young Readers** ([Dover Thrift Editions](#), ISBN: 0486451593) \$2.50

Crane, Stephen: **The Open Boat and Other Stories** ([Dover Thrift Editions](#), ISBN: 0486275477 ) \$2.50

Gogol, Nikolai: **The Overcoat and Other Short Stories** ([Dover Thrift Editions](#), ISBN: 0486270572) \$3.50

Hosseini, Khaled: **The Kite Runner** (Riverhead Books, ISBN:1594483175

Joyce, James: **Dubliners** ([Dover Thrift Editions](#), ISBN: 0486268705 ) \$2.00

Lahiri, Jhumpa: **Unaccustomed Earth: Stories** (Vintage, ISBN: 0307278255) \$15.00

Oates, Joyce Carol: **We Were the Mulvaney's** (Plume, ISBN: 0452277205) \$16.00)

To access current reviews on the books listed, go to the WCSD homepage at <http://www.williamsville12.org/>, select *Our Schools*, then *East High School*. Select *Libraries & Research* from the left column. Click on the related link, Williamsville East High School Library WITS Page. You will need to use your student's username and password to access this site. The second listing on the right will take you to a variety of resources containing current book reviews.