

Folsom Cordova Unified School District

ADVANCED COMPOSITION

DATE: May 2008

COURSE TITLE: Advanced Composition

PROPOSED GRADE LEVEL(s): 11-12

GRADING: A-F

PREREQUISITES: None

SCHOOL: Vista del Lago High School

SUBJECT AREA: English

COURSE LENGTH: 2 Semesters

NUMBER OF CREDITS: 5/Semester

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Advanced Composition course is a 11th and 12th grade elective course designed to help students continue the base of knowledge acquired in Beginning Composition, and to become more skilled writers by engaging in thoughtful writing that will extend across the content areas. The majority of the writing in this course will be in preparation for college-entry English classes and the literacy demands of higher education, and will rely heavily on analytical reading and expository writing. The course is designed to integrate thinking, reading, and writing, and students will become more aware of writing as a process and deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to convey specific ideas.

Through a sequence of rigorous instructional modules, students in this rhetoric-based course develop advanced proficiencies in expository, analytical, and argumentative reading and writing. The cornerstone of the course—the assignment template—presents a process for helping students read, comprehend, and respond to non-fiction and literary texts. Students will be expected to increase their awareness of the rhetorical strategies employed by authors, and to apply those strategies in their own writing. They will read closely to examine the relationship between an author's argument or theme and his or her audience and purpose, to analyze the impact of structural and rhetorical strategies, and to examine the social, political, and philosophical assumptions that underlie the text.

GOALS/PURPOSES:

Standards and goals for writing at the Advanced level focus on extensions of the knowledge and skills previously targeted in the early grades. There will be special emphasis placed on making choices as a writer to fit the writing task at hand. Students will focus on specific writing genres listed under the State Content Standards in the Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools.

- To enable students to analyze, interpret, and apply the rhetorical strategies of a variety of expository and literary texts
- To foster students' ability to create and support written arguments based on readings, research, and personal experience
- To increase students' repertoire of cognitive and metacognitive strategies for approaching various academic reading and writing tasks
- To promote independent academic literacy practices in college-bound students, including the ability to use reading and writing processes recursively and reflectively
- To provide a conceptual and disciplinary focus for a wide variety of issues and problems that converge in written discourse

- To prepare students to meet the standards of the CSU English Placement Test and the California English-language arts content standards

The majority of writing will be done in class in a “writer’s workshop” environment. Limited homework will be assigned to perhaps type a paper, but most work will be completed in class.

STUDENT READING COMPONENT:

The course will have complete integration of thinking, reading and writing, including intensive study and discussion of representative works that demonstrate a specific writing strategy. Students will respond to literature in writing, use readings to stimulate thought, and incorporate other writings as evidence as needed in their own analytical writing. Literature, non-fiction and speeches will be used for students to analyze style, and use as models in their own writing.

STUDENT WRITING COMPONENT:

Writing instruction will include attention to developing and organizing ideas in a clear and coherent manner. Throughout the course, emphasis will be placed on helping students develop a wide-ranging vocabulary used with denotative accuracy and connotative resourcefulness. Students will become aware of organization, purpose, tone, and generalizations vs. specific details.

Some of this writing will be informal and exploratory, allowing students to discover what they think in the process of writing. Some of the course writing will involve research, perhaps developing an argument or offering an historical perspective. In addition, some writing assignments will encourage students to write effectively under the time constraints they encounter on essay examinations.

Students will study writing as a process, including editing and revising techniques, and final formatting of papers in MLA format.

STUDENT ORAL COMPONENT:

In the writer’s workshop format of the class, all readings will be discussed in class to stimulate thought for writing. Because class discussion allows for more thoughtful, organized responses in writing, students will be expected to engage at a formal and informal level in the sharing of ideas, writing strategies, and exemplars with their own writing.

Students will be expected to:

- Actively participate in class discussions of a given work;
- Read aloud from readings and their own work;
- Present information gained in research;
- Use technology to enhance final products.

DETAILED UNITS OF INSTRUCTION:

Weeks 1 – 2: Fast Food—Who’s to Blame?

“Fast Food—Who’s to Blame?” is based on four newspaper articles and a set of letters to the editor written in response to one set of the articles about the issue of fast food and its role in contributing to childhood obesity. As the first assignment in the Expository Reading and Writing course curriculum it serves as an introduction to the approach to teaching expository reading and writing utilizing accessible readings and an engaging topic. The assignment culminates with a choice among three writing assignments: a timed essay topic similar to writing prompts used in the California State University’s English Placement Test (EPT), in

this case a persuasive essay; an essay evaluating the arguments in the letters to the editor; or a text-based argumentative essay suitable for writing out-of-class. Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Readings:

Brownlee, Shannon. "It's Portion Distortion that Makes America Fat." *Sacramento Bee* 5 Jan. 2003.

Barboza, David. "If You Pitch It, They Will Eat." *New York Times* 3 Aug. 2003.

Ching, Roberta. Letters to the editor in response to "Don't Blame the Eater." 2003.

Weintraub, Daniel. "The Battle Against Fast Food Begins in the Home." *Sacramento Bee* 17 Dec. 2002.

Zinczenko, David. "Don't Blame the Eater." *New York Times* 23 Nov. 2002.

Week 3 – 4: Going for the Look

"Going for the Look" is based on a single newspaper article about the lawsuit accusing Abercrombie and Fitch of hiring sales associates based on appearance. The article incorporates a variety of brief arguments on both sides of the issue, making it a good assignment for introducing students to rhetorical analysis. It concludes by offering the option of having students write an EPT-type timed essay (persuasive) or an out-of-class text-based essay (argumentative). Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Reading:

Greenhouse, Steven. "Going for the Look, but Risking Discrimination." *New York Times* 13 July 2003.

Week 5 – 7: The Rhetoric of the Op-Ed Page

This assignment sequence introduces the Aristotelian concepts of ethos, logos, and pathos and applies them to a rhetorical analysis of an op-ed piece by Jeremy Rifkin. The culminating writing assignment is a letter to the editor in response to the Rifkin article. Students are expected to write an essay of 500 words.

Readings:

Edlund, John. "Three Ways to Persuade."

Edlund, John. Letters to the editor in response to "A Change of Heart about Animals." 2003.

Rifkin, Jeremy. "A Change of Heart about Animals." *Los Angeles Times* 1 Sept. 2003: B15.

Weeks 8 -9: The Value of Life

This assignment asks students to synthesize their understanding of Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy, an excerpt from Lance Armstrong's *It's Not About the Bike*, an article by Amanda Ripley on the aftermath of 911, and a life insurance tool, "The Human Life Value Calculator." Students are asked to add their voices to the discussion by creating a well-developed response to these sources (text-based academic essay). Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Readings:

Shakespeare, William. From "Hamlet" - Act III, Sc. 1, Hamlet's "To be" soliloquy.

Armstrong, Lance, with Sally Jenkins. Excerpt from Chapter One: *It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life*. New York: Putnam, 2000.

Ripley, Amanda. "What Is a Life Worth?" *Time* 11 Feb. 2002.

The Life and Health Insurance Foundation for Education. *LIFE*. "The Human Life Value Calculator."
<http://www.life-line.org/build/human_life_value_calculator/index.php?pt=lfhlc&m=1>

Weeks 10 -11: Racial Profiling

This assignment teaches students how to read and respond to an argumentative essay by Bob Herbert on racial profiling. First, students practice several reading strategies as they deepen their understanding of the Herbert essay; then, students learn how to write their own argumentative essay on a similar topic. Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Reading:

Herbert, Bob. "Hounding the Innocent." *New York Times* 13 July 1999.

Weeks 12 – 13: Juvenile Justice

"Juvenile Justice" is based on four newspaper articles about whether juveniles who commit serious crimes should be tried and sentenced as adults. The articles include an opinion piece, a summary of brain research, a report of juvenile competence to stand trial, and an article about a Supreme Court case. Students must evaluate the rhetorical stances of different authors and synthesize their arguments in a text-based academic essay (argumentative). Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Liptak, Adam. "Supreme Court to Rule on Executing Young Killers." *New York Times* 3 Jan. 2005.

Lundstrom, Marjie. "Kids are Kids—Until they Commit Crimes." *Sacramento Bee* 1 Mar. 2001.

Krikorian, Greg. "Many Kids Called Unfit for Adult Trial." *Sacramento Bee* 3 Mar. 2003.

Thompson, Paul. "Startling Finds on Teenage Brains." *Sacramento Bee* 25 May 2001.

Week 13 – 14: The Last Meow

"The Last Meow" is based on a long reflective essay about the implications of recent development in veterinary medicine. It is framed by the story of "Lady," a cat in need of a kidney transplant, and her human owners. The essay requires that students infer the argument that the writer is making; they then write either a timed essay or an out-of-class essay on the topic of providing medical care for pets. A variety of writing genres is offered for the assignment: timed, persuasive essay; academic summary; letter to the editor; synthesis essay; text-based academic or argumentative essay; I-Search paper; and research essay. Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Reading:

Bilger, Berkhard. "The Last Meow." *New Yorker* 8 Sept. 2003.

Weeks 15 – 16: Into the Wild

This non-fiction, full-length work, *Into the Wild*, by Jon Krakauer, was published in 1996. Engaging students in this biography/story, based on Krakauer's investigation of Christopher McCandless, a young idealistic college graduate, allows them to think deeply about human motivation and perhaps begin to understand something of the complexity of maturity. Excerpted in the book, students experience a taste of the works of the American Transcendentalists and Russian novelists, which so influenced McCandless's life philosophy. Students conclude the assignment by writing a text-based academic essay on one of a number of themes from the work. Students are expected to write an essay of 1,500-2,500 words.

Reading:

Krakauer, Jon. *Into the Wild*. New York: Doubleday, 1996.

Week 17 – 18: Bullying at School: Research Project

"Bullying at School" is a research project for the whole class. Students read thirteen different kinds of writing on bullying (provided), including two primary research articles from refereed journals, and do additional primary and secondary research on their own. They then write a School Code of Conduct on bullying to present to a real audience, their School Board. Skills include how to do research, how to evaluate and document sources (both in-text and in a Works Cited page), and how to distinguish between primary

and secondary research. Students learn how to incorporate sources into their own writing, how to tailor writing for a specific audience, and how to make an argument using several different kinds of sources to provide appropriate evidence. Students are expected to write an essay of 1,500-2,500 words.

Readings:

Banks, Ron. "Bullying in Schools." *Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Digest*. April, 1997. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. Infotrac 15 August 2003. <<http://www.ericdigests.org/1997-4/bullying.htm>>

Brown, Mark. "Life After Bullying." National PTA. 20 Feb. 2005. <<http://www.pta.org/bullying/#>>

Coloroso, Barbara. *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*. New York: Harper/Quill, 2004.

Kan-Rice, Pamela. "School Bullies Are Often Also Victims; Feeling Safe Reduces Youth Bullying." *University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources News and Information Outreach*. AScribe Health News Service 2 Sept, 2003. Infotrac July 08, 2004. <<http://news.ucanr.org/newsstorymain.cfm?story=502>>

"Keep a Lid on Bullying with a Complaint Box." *Curriculum Review*. Dec. 2003, 11. PaperClip Communications. Infotrac 15 Aug 2004.

<<http://0search.epnet.com.library.csuhayward.edu:80/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=11735009>>

Kowalski, Kathiann. "How to Handle a Bully." *Current Health*. 2. Feb. 1999. Google 15 Aug. 2004. <<http://bgeagles.tripod.com/webquest/handle.htm>>

Kuther, Tara L. "Understanding Bullying." National PTA. 20 Feb. 2005. <<http://www.pta.org/bullying/#>>

Lemonick, Michael D. "The Bully Blight." *Time* 18 April, 2005, 144-145.

Migliore, Eleanor T. "Eliminate Bullying in your Classroom." *Intervention in School & Clinic*. Jan 2003, 172-177. Online Academic Search Premier 14 Feb 2005.

Nansel, Tonja R., Mary Overpeck, Ramani S. Pilla, W. June Ruan, Bruce Simons-Morton, and Peter Scheidt. "Bullying Behaviors Among US Youth: Prevalence and Association With Psychosocial Adjustment." *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* 25 April 2001, 2094-2100.

Newquist, Colleen. "Bully-Proof Your School." *Education World*. 8 Sept. 2004. Google 21 Jan. 2005. <http://www.education-world.com/a_admin/admin018.shtml>

Olweus, Dan. "A Profile of Bullying at School." *Educational Leadership*. Mar 2003. Online Academic Search Premier 14 Feb 2005.

Smith, Peter K., Kirsten C. Madsen, and Janet C. Moody. "What Causes the Age Decline in Reports of Being Bullied at School? Towards a Developmental Analysis of Risks of Being Bullied." *American Educational Research Journal* Winter 1999, 267-285.

Optional Readings:

California Department of Education. *Bullying At School*. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2003.

Quiroz, Hilda C. *School Bullying: Fighting the Bully Battle*. Westlake Village, CA: National School Safety Center, 2005.

THIS COURSE WILL PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE CAHSEE AND/OR THE FCUSD EXIT EXAMS IN:

Writing, Reading, and Language Arts

LAB FEE, IF REQUIRED:

None

SUBJECT AREA CONTENT STANDARDS TO BE ADDRESSED:

State Content-Standards for English 10 and 11 will be addressed, with special emphasis placed on the following writing standards:

Writing Standards

1.0 Writing Strategies

- 1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.
- 1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.
- 1.3 Use clear research questions and suitable research methods (e.g. library, electronic media, personal interview) to elicit and present evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- 1.4 Develop the main ideas within the body of the composition through supporting evidence (e.g. scenarios, commonly held beliefs, hypotheses, and definitions).
- 1.5 Synthesize information from multiple sources and identify complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium (e.g. almanacs, microfiche, news sources, in-depth field studies, speeches, journals, technical documents).
- 1.6 Integrate quotations and citations into a written text while maintaining the flow of ideas.
- 1.7 Use appropriate conventions for documentation in the text, notes, and bibliographies by adhering to those in style manuals (e.g. Modern Language Association Handbook—MLA).
- 1.8 Design and publish documents by using advanced publishing software and graphics programs.
- 1.9 Revise writing to improve the logic and coherence of the organization and controlling perspective, the precision of word choice, and the tone by taking into consideration the audience, purpose, and formality of the context.

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

- 2.1 Write biographical or autobiographical narratives or short stories:
 - a. Relate a sequence of events and communicate the significance of the events to the audience.
 - b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places.
 - c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings.
 - d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate changes in time and mood.
 - e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.
- 2.2 Write responses to literature:
 - a. Demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the significant ideas of literary works.
 - b. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and to other works.
 - c. Demonstrate awareness of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.
 - d. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.
- 2.3 Write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports:
 - a. Marshal evidence in support of a thesis and related claims, including information on all relevant perspectives.
 - b. Convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently.
 - c. Make distinctions between the relative value and significance of specific data, facts and ideas.
 - d. Include visual aids by employing appropriate technology to organize and record information on charts, maps and graphs.
 - e. Anticipate and address readers' potential misunderstandings, biases and expectations.

- f. Use technical terms and notations accurately.
- 2.4 Write persuasive compositions:
- a. Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained and logical fashion.
 - b. Use specific rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g. appeal to logic through reasoning; appeal to emotion or ethical belief; relate a personal anecdote, case study or analogy).
 - c. Clarify and defend positions with precise and relevant evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations and expressions of commonly accepted beliefs and logical reasoning.
 - d. Address readers' concerns, counterclaims, biases, and expectations.
- 2.5 Write business letters:
- a. Provide clear and purposeful information and address the intended audience appropriately.
 - b. Use appropriate vocabulary, tone, and style to take into account the nature of the relationship with, and the knowledge and interest of, the recipients.
 - c. Highlight central ideas or images.
 - d. Follow a conventional style with page formats, fonts, and spacing that contribute to the documents' readability and impact.

DISTRICT ESLR'S TO BE ADDRESSED:

Students will be:

- **Self-Directed Learners** who write independently, gaining confidence in their abilities to think on their own and synthesize information from a variety of sources, realizing that independent learning is a lifelong tool for success in the classroom and beyond.
- **Effective Communicators** who are able to relate polished formal and extemporaneous presentations with appropriate public speaking techniques and strategies.
- **Quality Producers/Performers** who take pride in all assignments and realize the value of creating an error-free product that is original in substance.
- **Constructive Thinkers** who reflect on their reading and writing to enhance the outcomes of their work. Students engage in higher level thinking activities, evaluation and peer editing of essays, and synthesis of a number of resources into a final written product.
- **Collaborative Workers** who are capable of working in both large and small groups in order to produce well-organized, thoughtful products. Group work will be a reflection of the effort contributed by each member of the group.
- **Responsible Citizens** who are prepared to contribute to our democracy in positive ways. From their reading and writing, students gain an understanding of the responsibility, honor, and integrity that is essential to become a functioning member of our society.

The Folsom Cordova Unified School District prohibits discrimination, intimidation, harassment (including sexual harassment) or bullying based on a person's actual or perceived ancestry, color, disability, race or ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity or gender expression, immigration status, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. **For concerns/questions or complaints, contact the Title IX Coordinator(s) and Equity Compliance Officer(s): Curtis Wilson, cmwilson@fcusd.org (grades K-5) and Jim Huber, ED. D., jhuber@fcusd.org (grades 6-12), 1965 Birkmont Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 96742, 916-294-9000 ext.104625**