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EPSY 485

13 December 2011

EPSY Final: AP level English, semester 1

**Introduction:**

Welcome to AP English! In this class you will not only be preparing for your first year of college but also aiming to receive an qualifying grade on the AP test in May. With that being said, this class will significantly challenge your current reading and writing skills by forcing you to think more specifically about the functions of writing and techniques in literary analysis. Although challenging, be prepared for an enlightening year that will truly improving your mastery of the English language and prepare you for the next steps in your future.

**PART I: DEVELOPING A GRADING PLAN:**

1. Grading Policy

In this classroom we value both the process of learning and the final product. Since so many of your are entering with varying skills, we will take wherever you are and strive to push you as far as possible over the course of the semester. The most important things to remember this year are to:

* Come to class prepared to participate and ready to learn
* Remember to struggle as struggles allow you to make improvement
* Put forth your best effort

With that being said, I expect full participation, no late assignments and all assignments turned in, and the best of work at all time. However, I understand that life comes at us form many angles and sometimes problems interfere; I simply ask in that case you communicate with me. Sooner is always better, but I am always willing to make accommodations.

2. Grading Components

Over the course of the year we will be improving both writing skills and reading analysis as well as preparing you for the AP test. We will have various in class assignments as well as longer assignments expected to be completed in class.

In-class assignments will include:

* Timed writings – which aim specifically at improving writing in a short time frame and deal with both analytical responses and literary responses. Timed writing will be graded out of 10 and since you are learning, expect to at first earn low scores. To accommodate for your progress, your 2 lowest scores will be dropped.
* Discussion – which aims to improve your ability to work through difficult texts and understand and author’s meaning. While your discussion grade will include how frequently and thoroughly you participate, If you show up to late consistently unprepared, late, or without your best effort, your grade will reflect that attitude.
* Classwork – which will tie with the lesson to improve various skills or prepare you for out of class activities. These activities may include group work, individual preparation for papers, and responses.
* Quizzes – Assessing progress and reading comprehension

Out of class assignments will include:

* Literary and Analytical papers ranging from shorter responses to longer responses. This category will be assessed by 2 papers during this semester. Before turning in the papers, we will have workshops to work on your writing skills which will contribute to your grade by reflecting on your improvement.
* Readings – which will include literary texts and analytical texts and use quizzes and participation in discussion to assess your performance

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| Grades will be distributed as such: | % |
| Timed writings, graded out of 10  Discussion and Participation  Classwork  Quizzes  Paper 1 (3-4 pages)  Paper 2 (4-5 pages) | 30  15  10  10  15  20 |

3. Grading Approach

I will add all your grades in each category and divide by the total to get the total points. That will then contribute to the overall percentage of your final grade based on how it is weighted. When submitting your final grade, I will use +/- grading to indicate more clearly your performance. When grading each of your assignments, I will give you a rubric and we will go over examples in class so that you know the expectations and where to improve. Although I will not offer any extra credit, if your grade is borderline between a grade level, if I have seen consistent improvement over the course of the year, then I will likely move you up. By grading you in this way I ensure that both product and process is valued. Essentially, the papers represent your ability to create a strong final product while the activities, quizzes, and writings show your willingness to work hard and make progress throughout the year.

**PART II: MOTIVATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Even though I am highly opposed to the pay-for-performance program at my school, I understand why it has been chosen as a strategy to motivate students to work. However, in my classroom, I value intrinsic motivation over extrinsic motivation. Because I realize that a large number of my students are college bound, I expect a both types of motivation since students have so many pressures from parents and society to excel. Because I have incorporated both the process of learning and the product in my grading procedure, I believe students will find value in both. The pay-for performance program relies only on the final product, so by creating my grading scale in the way that I did, I ensure that both types of students need to work in order to achieve success.

**PART III: COMMUNICATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE TO PARENTS**

After reviewing Margaret’s report card, it seems clear to me that she is doing well in both science and math, but struggling in English and social studies. With an A- in science and a B+ in math, she shows little room for improvement. However, in each of those classes she is missing one assignment indicating an area of improvement. Looking more specifically at these classes, in science, her main area of trouble is in receiving all her points for homework. Perhaps she needs more time at home to complete these assignments. With that being said, her pre-test performance has not been significantly affected as she has lost only 3 points out of 200 in that area. Based on these results, it seems as though the homework is either too challenging or the exam is too easy. As for math, Margaret seems to be doing well on homework but struggling a little as it comes to test time. Even though she received high marks on each of the exams, they each show room for improvement. Based on this result, it seems as though Margaret needs more practice or clarification before the exam in order to show better proficiency in math. Additionally, Margaret has lost some points for participation in math showing a small need to improve her participation. The lack of participation may have contributed to her inability to reach maximum proficiency on the exams.

Even though Margaret’s report card reveals high marks in science and math, her English and social studies grades have various places for improvement. In English, where she is currently earning a C-, she has shown consistent progress with both her journaling skills and her tests grades. However, with a grade of a C-, she still shows a considerable need for improvement; however, whatever changes she has made over the course of the semester, I urge her teachers and parent to encourage. If she continues in a similar manner, I expect her next semester grade to be even better. With additional supports like some kind of afterschool English program or even more one-on-one time with her teacher, I believe her English performance will greatly improve.

As for her C+ in social studies, based of the point values for all categories, her biggest problem lies in participation and test averages. She seems to been doing well on the homework, but her scores there are not leading into her tests scores. Additionally, because her participation is so low, it is severely affecting her final grade. I would encourage the parents to set up a meeting with her and her teacher to find out what exactly is the problem. Based on these results, there may be some kind of problem between her and the teacher that prevents her from participating in class, and thus thoroughly learning the material.

After looking at her ISAT scores, her seems to vary some. Her science performance exceeds most of the nation and scores well into exceeds expectations, which compares to her progress in class. However, in math which her report card represented as above average, the ISAT scores only reflect mediocrity compare to the nation’s average and compared to the standard’s expectation. Thus, it seems as though her classwork does not fully reflect the material on the ISAT.

Her reading and writing scores both need improvement as her report card also suggested. However, since this ISAT shows only one test scores, we do not know if she has made the same kind of progress here as she has in class. Strangely, her reading response shows a solid response as she earned the full grade but her multiple choice answers severely held her back. Based on those results it seems as though she has the right communication skills in English, but not the strategies to find the right answers in a multiple choice prompt.