

AP Seminar Syllabus

Course Overview

AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives. Students will engage in inquiry-based research, as well as serious independent thinking and reflection, to form their own perspectives and enter academic conversations about complex issues. Specifically students will:

- read and analyze articles, research studies, and foundational, literary, and philosophical texts
- listen to and view speeches, broadcasts, and personal accounts
- experience artistic works and performances
- synthesize information from multiple sources
- develop their own perspectives in written essays
- design and deliver oral presentations and visual presentations, both individually and as part of a team

Exploring different points of view and making connections across disciplines are fundamental components of the AP Seminar experience. Students will consider topics through a variety of lenses such as:

- Cultural and Social
- Artistic and Philosophical
- Political and Historical
- Environmental
- Economic
- Scientific
- Futuristic
- Ethical

Ultimately, the course aims to equip students with the power to analyze and evaluate information with accuracy and precision in order to craft and communicate evidence-based arguments.

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1- Sustainability	August 28- September 29
Unit 2- Social Media	October 2- November 3
Unit 3- Student Choice	November 6- December 8
Task 1- Team Project & Presentation	December 11- February 9
Task 2- Individual Essay & Presentation	February 12- April 20
AP Exam Preparation	April 23- May 4
AP Exam	MAY 8

****This outline is a tentative schedule of our academic year. It is subject to change as circumstances and needs arise.***

Course Texts & Resources

Barbara Wallraff & Mike Palmquist, *Joining the Conversation*

Nancy Wood, *Essentials of Argument*

Lee A. Jacobus, *Approaching Great Ideas*

UNIT 1- Sustainability

Essential Questions

- What do I know, want to know, learn or understand?
- How does the context of a problem or issue affect how it is interpreted or presented?
- What keywords should I use to search for information about this topic?
- What is the argument's main idea and what reasoning does the author use to develop it?
- Why might the author(s) view the issue this way?
- What biases may the author have that influence his or her perspective?
- How can I connect different perspectives? What other issues, questions, or topics do they relate to?
- How can I avoid committing plagiarism?
- What contributions can I offer to a team?
- How can I benefit on reflecting on my own work?

Learning Objectives Addressed In This Unit

Big Idea 1: Question and Explore

LO 1.1A: Identifying and contextualizing a problem or issue.

LO 1.2A: Retrieving, questioning, organizing, and using the prior knowledge.

LO 1.3A: Accessing and managing information using effective strategies.

LO 1.1B: Posing complex questions and seeking out answers that reflect multiple, divergent, or contradictory perspectives.

Big Idea 2: Understand & Analyze

LO 2.1A: Employing appropriate reading strategies and reading critically for a specific purpose.

LO 2.1B: Summarizing and explaining a text's main idea or aim while avoiding faulty generalizations and oversimplification.

Big Idea 3: Evaluate Multiple Perspectives

LO 3.1A: Identifying, comparing, and interpreting multiple perspectives on or arguments about an issue.

LO 3.2A: Evaluating objections, implications, and limitations of alternate, opposing or competing perspectives or arguments.

Big Idea 4: Synthesize Ideas

LO 4.1A: Formulating a complex and well-reasoned argument

LO 4.3A: Attributing knowledge and ideas accurately and ethically, using an appropriate citation style guide

Big Idea 5: Team, Transform, and Transmit

LO 5.1A: Planning, producing, and presenting a cohesive argument, considering audience, context, and purpose, and using appropriate media (e.g., essay, poster, oral presentation, documentary, research report/thesis).

LO 5.1C: Communicating information using effective techniques of design.

LO 5.2B: Fostering constructive team climate, resolving conflicts, and facilitating the contributions of all team members to address complex, open-ended questions.

LO 5.3A: Reflecting on and revising their own writing, thinking, and creative processes.

LO 5.3B: Reflecting on personal contributions to overall collaborative effort.

Unit Resources

Articles or Research Studies

Bjorn Lomborg, "Yes, It Looks Bad But..."

Larry Miller, "Sustainability: The New Holy Grail"

Julia Whitty, "Animal Extinction: The Greatest Threat to Mankind"

Jaymi Heimbuch, "How Cell Phones Are Changing the Face of Green Activism"
Foundational, Literary, or Philosophical Texts
Henry David Thoreau, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For"
Speeches, Broadcasts, or Personal Accounts
Al Gore, "An Inconvenient Truth" (Film)
Harry Truman, Inaugural Address, 1949 (Speech)
Artistic Work or Performances
REM, "Don't Fall On Me" (Song)
Joe Walsh, "Song for a Dying Planet" (Song)
Katsushika Hokusai, "Fine Wind Clear Morning," "The Great Wave" (Art)

Activities & Assessments

- Introduce Quest framework and use lenses to investigate the theme of sustainability
- Define argument by analyzing message of Monty Python "Argument Clinic" video
- Practice analysis skills and close reading of arguments developed in at least three Sustainability texts
 - Critical reading – preview, skim, scan, reread, question
 - Analyze main idea, tone, context, perspectives, line of reasoning, evidence
 - Evaluate, counterarguments, concessions, refutations, rebuttals
- Identify and compare perspectives in at least two sustainability texts through written analysis
- Participate in group discussions to find common themes and differences in sustainability texts
- Peer taught skill lessons and peer evaluations
- Debate sustainability value by quoting and paraphrasing material with proper attribution
- Reflective writing – use learning logs to reflect as part of an ongoing inquiry process and peer review to revise writing
- Exit slips to show reflection

UNIT 2- Social Media

Essential Questions

- How might others see a problem or issue differently?
- Why might the author view an issue this way?
- What biases may the author have that influence his or her perspectives?
- Does this argument acknowledge other perspectives?
- What are the implications and/or consequences of accepting or rejecting a particular argument?
- How does this conclusion impact my community and me? Or my research?
- What am I taking for granted? How do I acknowledge and account for my own biases and assumptions?
- What common misconceptions might my audience have?
- How do I adapt my argument for different audiences and situations?
- How do my communication choices affect my credibility with my audience?

Learning Objectives Addressed In This Unit

Big Idea 1: Question and Explore

LO 1.1A: Identifying and contextualizing a problem or issue.

LO 1.1B: Posing complex questions and seeking out answers that reflect multiple, divergent, or contradictory perspectives

LO 1.3A: Accessing and managing information using effective strategies

LO 1.3B: Evaluating the relevance and credibility of the source of information and data in relation to the inquiry

Big Idea 2: Understand and Analyze

LO 2.1B: Summarizing and explaining a text's main idea or aim while avoiding faulty generalizations and oversimplification

LO 2.2A: Identifying, explaining, and analyzing the logic and line of reasoning of an argument

LO 2.2B: Describing and analyzing the relevance and credibility of evidence used to support an argument, taking context into consideration

LO 2.2C: Evaluating the validity of an argument

LO 2.3B: Evaluating potential resolutions, conclusions, or solutions to problems or issues raised by an argument

Big Idea 3: Evaluate Multiple Perspectives

LO 3.1A: Identifying, comparing, and interpreting multiple perspectives on or arguments about an issue.

LO 3.2A: Evaluating objections, implications, and limitations of alternate, opposing or competing perspectives or arguments.

Big Idea 4: Synthesize Ideas

LO 4.1A: Formulating a complex and well-reasoned argument

LO 4.2A: Interpreting, using, and synthesizing qualitative and/or quantitative data/information from various perspectives and sources (e.g. primary, secondary, print, non-print) to develop and support an argument

LO 4.2B: Providing insightful and cogent commentary that links evidence with claims

LO 4.3A: Attributing knowledge and ideas accurately and ethically, using an appropriate citation style

LO 4.4A: Extending an idea, question, process, or product to innovate or create new understandings

LO 4.5A: Offering resolutions, conclusions, and/or solutions based on evidence while considering consequences and implications

Big Idea 5: Transform, and Transmit

LO 5.1A: Working as an individual to plan, produce, and present a cohesive argument considering audience, context, and purpose, and using appropriate media (e.g. essay, poster, presentation, documentary, research report/thesis)

LO 5.1B: Communicating an argument in an evidence-based written essay adhering to established conventions of grammar usage, style, and mechanics

Unit Resources

Students will find resources about social media to practice their ability to find credible sources in their research. These resources will be used by the class to continue to practice the skills needed for success in the class. Resources will include:

Articles or Research Studies

Foundational, Literary, or Philosophical Texts

Speeches, Broadcasts, or Personal Accounts

Artistic Works or Performances

Activities and Assessments

- Search for information effectively using online databases and advanced search tools
- Create and revise research questions for an individual project and presentation
- Evaluate credibility of sources
- Identify cause and effect, definition, and problem/solution organization

- Create an annotated bibliography (6-8 sources) – focused on one lens of social media
- Identify and compare perspectives in at least two texts through debate
- Participate in group discussions about cause and effects of issues surrounding social media
- Find evidence that is sufficient, accurate, relevant, current, and credible
- Avoid plagiarism and understand ethical use of ideas
- Participate in team-building activities prior to creating individual work
- Collectively determine group roles and assignments for individual feedback
- Vary elements of delivery to emphasize information and engage audience
- Use learning logs to reflect
- Video presentation and watch video for self-evaluation
- Team Multimedia Presentation (8-10 minutes) – focused on one aspect of social media
- Team written report

UNIT 3- Student Choice

Essential Questions

- How does my research question shape how I go about trying to answer it?
- What information do I need to answer my question?
- What keywords should I use to search for information about this topic?
- Why might the author view the issue this way?
- What biases may the author have that influence his or her perspective?
- How do I know if a source is trustworthy?
- From whose perspective is this information being presented, and how does that affect my evaluation?
- How can I connect the multiple perspectives? What other issues, questions, or topics do they relate to?
- Are there other conclusions I should consider?

Learning Objectives Addressed In This Unit

Big Idea 1: Question and Explore

LO 1.1A: Identifying and contextualizing a problem or issue

LO 1.1B: Posing complex questions and seeking out answers that reflect multiple, divergent, or contradictory perspectives

LO 1.3B: Summarizing and explaining a text's main idea or aim while avoiding faulty generalizations and oversimplification

Big Idea 2: Understand and Analyze

LO 2.1B: Summarizing and explaining a text's main idea or aim while avoiding faulty generalizations and oversimplification

LO 2.2A: Identifying, explaining, and analyzing the logic and line of reasoning of an argument

LO 2.2B: Describing and analyzing the relevance and credibility of evidence used to support an argument, taking context into consideration

LO 2.2C: Evaluating the validity of an argument

LO 2.3B: Evaluating potential resolutions, conclusions, or solutions to problems or issues raised by an argument

Big Idea 3: Evaluate Multiple Perspectives

LO 3.2A: Evaluating objections, implications, and limitations of alternate, opposing, or competing perspectives or arguments

Big Idea 4: Synthesize Ideas

LO 4.1A: Formulating a complex and well-reasoned argument

LO 4.2A: Interpreting, using, and synthesizing qualitative and/or quantitative data/information from various perspectives and sources (e.g., primary, secondary, print, non-print) to develop and support an argument

LO 4.2B: Providing insightful and cogent commentary that links evidence with claims

LO 4.3A: Attributing knowledge and ideas accurately and ethically, using appropriate citation style

LO 4.4A: Extending an idea, question, process, or product to innovate or create new understandings

LO 4.5A: Offering resolutions, conclusions, and/or solutions based on evidence while considering consequences and implications

Big Idea 5: Transform, and Transmit

LO 5.1A: Working both as an individual and as a team to plan, produce, and present a cohesive argument, considering audience, context, and purpose, and using appropriate media (e.g., essay, poster, presentation, documentary, research report/thesis)

LO 5.1B: Communicating an argument in an evidence-based written essay adhering to established conventions of grammar usage, style, and mechanics

Resources: Students will provide their own resources for this unit based on the chosen topic. Resources will include:

- Articles or Research Studies
- Foundational, Literary, or Philosophical Texts
- Speeches, Broadcasts, or Personal Accounts
- Artistic Works or Performances

Activities and Assessments

- Use lenses to investigate a theme chosen by class
- Create and revise research questions for an individual written report
- Search for information effectively using databases and advanced search tools
- Read closely to analyze main idea, tone, context, perspective, line of reasoning, evidence
- Recognize inductive and deductive reasoning and logical fallacies
- Evaluate credibility of sources
- Identify and compare perspectives through Socratic Seminar and written analysis
- Collect compelling evidence that is sufficient, accurate, relevant, current, and credible
- Quote and paraphrase material with proper attribution
- Avoid plagiarism and understand ethical use of ideas
- Use peer reviews and evaluations to revise writing
- Use learning logs to reflect as part of an ongoing inquiry process
- Individual multimedia presentation (6-8 minutes)
- Individual written report

Classroom Grading Scale

A (90-100)	Consistently demonstrates extensive knowledge of content and concepts. Communicates learning with a high degree of clarity and accuracy, makes insightful connections and applies skills in new situations to create high quality, original work.
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B (80-89)	Consistently demonstrating proficient knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Frequently communicates learning with a considerable degree of clarity and accuracy. Frequently applies skills and makes connections in order to create high quality work.
C (70-79)	Demonstrates adequate knowledge and understanding of the required content and concepts. Occasionally communicates learning with some degree of clarity and accuracy. Applies skills to familiar situations and creates satisfactory work.
D (60-69)	Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the required content and concepts. Communicates learning with lack of clarity and/or accuracy. Creates work that needs improvement and skills are limited.
F (59 or below)	Did not demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding of the required content and concepts. Did not communicate learning with clarity or accuracy. Did not apply skills and work is incomplete or of poor quality.

Class Assessments

- Individual Essays/Projects/Presentations and Peer Evaluations
- Group Essays/Projects/Presentations
- Daily Participation

End-of-course Assessment

Assessment	Summary of Task	% of AP Score	Due Date
Task 1: Team Project & Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual research report (1200 words) • Team multi-media presentation (8-10 minutes) and oral defense 	20%	Feb 2, 2018
Task 2: Individual Essay & Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual written argument (2000 words) • Individual multimedia presentation(6-8 minutes) and oral defense 	35%	April 10, 2018
End-of-Course Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and analyzing argument (3 short answers) • Evaluate and compare arguments (essay) • Synthesis (essay) 	45%	May 8, 2018

AP Capstone Plagiarism Policy

A student who fails to acknowledge the source or author of any and all information or evidence taken from the work of someone else through citation, attribution, or reference in the body of the work, or through a bibliographic entry, will receive a score of 0 on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Assessment Task. In AP Seminar, a team of students that fails to properly acknowledge sources or authors on the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that component of the Team Project and Presentation.

A student who incorporates falsified or fabricated information (e.g., evidence, data, sources and/or authors) will receive a score of 0 on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Assessment Task. In AP Seminar, a team of students that incorporates falsified or fabricated information in the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that component of the Team Project and Presentation.