

AP Seminar: 2019-2020

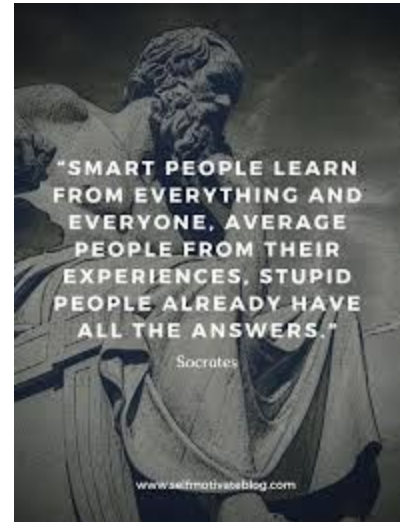
Mrs. Joy Ruckoldt
Room A109
Seminar: Room A219
Planning periods: 2 and 5
(847) 718-5710
joy.ruckoldt@d214.org

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

From College Board: 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. Using an inquiry framework, students practice reading and analyzing articles, research studies and foundational, literary and philosophical texts; listening to and viewing speeches, broadcasts, and personal accounts; and experiencing artistic works and performances. Students learn to synthesize information from multiple sources, develop their own perspectives in written essays, and design and deliver oral and visual presentations, both individually and as part of a team. Ultimately, the course aims to equip students with the power to analyze and evaluate information with accuracy and precision to craft and communicate evidence-based arguments.

From me: The overarching theme of this course is the idea of being “a little fish in a big pond.” This is to say that we live in an increasingly complex, rapidly developing, inter-connected, multicultural world that can often leave us feeling insignificant and powerless. At the same time, our country has a prevailing ethos of rugged individualism, the idea that with enough hard work and ingenuity, any individual can be a success. So which is it? Are we masters of our own destinies or are our fates largely determined by forces beyond our control? Exploring this large question through the lens of real-world topics – Feminism, consumerism, environmentalism (and many other –isms!) – we’ll discuss the extent to which the individual can control (or be controlled by) the social, political, historical, economic, and cultural forces that shape our society.

As we do so, I also want us to become familiar with yet another big-picture concept: the public discourse. The term “public discourse” refers to all of the debate that churn around political, economic, pop-culture (etc.) issues that captivate the public imagination. These debates happen in the media, in governmental bodies, on social media, in academia, and around the dinner table. AP Seminar is a place where you’ll enter into the public discourse, coming to recognize the terms of debate around important issues, while also identifying competing perspectives, evaluating the credibility of various arguments, and making your own contribution through writing, conversation, and presentation. It’s a big, wide-ranging conversation that’s happening in our culture, one that needs your voice!



AP CAPSTONE POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND FALSIFICATION OR FABRICATION OF INFORMATION:

From College Board: Participating teachers shall inform students of the consequences of plagiarism and instruct students to ethically use and acknowledge the ideas and work of others throughout their course work. The student's individual voice should be clearly evident, and the ideas of others must be acknowledged, attributed, and/or cited.

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 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 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.

From me: Additionally, any instance of cheating, plagiarism, or academic dishonesty will be dealt with through the framework laid out in our school's student handbook.

NECESSARY MATERIALS:

- Required readings/text for the day
- Folder/Binder containing all hard copy course resources
- iPad (necessary apps: Schoology, Notability, Google Docs, Google Slides, Quizlet, Adobe Spark Video, Pic Collage; Adobe Spark Post)
- Notebook (or section of binder) to use as your Reading Journal

ACCESS CODES:

BLOCK	SCHOOLGY	TURNITIN.COM	COLLEGE BOARD
1			
7			

GRADING:

Your FINAL GRADE = your SEMESTER GRADE (85%) + your FINAL EXAM (15%)

40% of the semester grade = FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS (Socratic seminars, reading journals, class-participation, in-class activities, peer review). These are more informal assessments; think of them as practice. Generally, these will be graded based on completion and my general impression of your effort.

60% of the semester grade = SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS (essays, presentations, annotated bibliographies). These are more formal assessments in which you are expected to demonstrate your mastery of course skills and tasks.

UNIT ONE: HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW? (Weeks 1 – 5)

To start off the year, we'll take a look at the AP Seminar exam, including its performance tasks and May exam structure. We'll also explore some of the foundational concepts in AP Seminar such as QUEST, its Learning Objectives, and course outcomes. As we do this, you'll also participate in some team building activities and read a few essays that introduce you to the larger idea of the "public discourse" and how you might participate in it.

We live in a society where knowledge is increasingly up for grabs. Our political discourse is overwhelmed with misinformation and outright lies. People question the expertise of scientists when it comes to issues like climate change and vaccines. And social media is increasingly manipulated to propagate conspiracy theories: 9/11 "truthers," Sandy Hook deniers, and Illuminati believers. In this unit we'll explore how knowledge and fact have become unstable concepts in our culture. And we'll consider how we can be good, critical consumers of information in our age of misinformation, conspiracy thinking, and politicization of fact.

***Texts/Sources:**

- Tara Westover *Educated* (read as summer reading) / Memoir / Cultural & Social
- Elizabeth Kolbert, "Why Facts Don't Change our Minds" / Book Review / Political & Historical
- Sean Blanda "The 'Other Side' Isn't Dumb" / Commentary / Cultural & Social
- Mathew Hustson, "How Memory Became Weaponized" / Essay / Cultural & Social
- Melinda Wenner Moyer, "People Drawn to Conspiracy Theories Share a Cluster of Psychological Features" / Essay / Scientific
- Richard Feynman, "The Uncertainty of Science" excerpt / Essay / Scientific
- Stephen Colbert, "The Word – Truthiness" / Video / Cultural & Social
- The Onion, "Area Man Passionate Defender of What He Imagines the Constitution to be" / Satirical Essay / Cultural & Social

Formative Assessments:

- **ARTICLE ANALYSIS:** working in a small group, you and your team will analyze an article to identify the following what question the article is answering? Who are the stakeholders? What are the possible solutions and what are the limitations to each? Groups will then present their work to the class. The activity is meant to model key QUEST skills, fundamental to the course.
- **QUEST Posters:** working in small groups, your team will analyze one component of the QUEST (Question/Explore, Understand/Analyze, Evaluate Multiple Perspectives, Synthesize ideas, and Team, Transform, Transmit) framework, deciding on an image and a sentence that best characterize that component. These foundational concepts will frame the approach we take in AP Seminar.
- **Reading Journals** – after reading and annotating each assigned article, you will write an informal response, engaging the article’s ideas, claims, or arguments. Be prepared to read your journal responses to your classmates in small group and whole class settings. As you listen to your classmates’ responses, you will annotate your own response, expanding on and developing ideas in your initial draft.
- **Socratic Seminars** – During these student-led discussion, you will be expected to contribute thoughtful questions and observations about the unit’s texts, making connections between them as well as to other students’ observations. You will also turn in written work that incorporates textual support for your arguments.
- **Reverse Outline** – using one of the unit’s readings, create a reverse outline that maps out the structure of the author’s argument. In each section, describe the author’s main point and the claims, evidence and reasoning used to support and develop that main point.

Summative Assessment:

- **Synthesis Essay (modeled on Part B of End-of Course Exam)** – Consider the sources from Unit One carefully, focusing on a theme or issue that connects them and the different perspective each represents. Then, write a logically organized, well-reasoned argument that presents your own perspective on the theme or issue you identified. You must incorporate at least three of the sources provided and link the claims in your argument to supporting evidence. You may also use the other provided sources or draw upon your own knowledge. (800-1000 words)

UNIT TWO: LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD (Weeks 6 – 9)

In this unit, we will engage ideas of wealth, consumerism, income inequality, and materialism. American culture increasingly defines success in terms of wealth and social

status, but at what cost? We'll explore how factors such as marketing, social media, and celebrity influence cultural attitudes toward wealth and consumerism. The visual artist Barbara Kruger created a famous graphic that read: "I shop, therefore I am." To what extent are our identities shaped and defined by our choices as consumers? And to what extent do corporations, celebrities and cultural mores influence those choices?

*Texts/Sources:

- Lauren Greenfield, *Queen of Versailles* / Film / Cultural & Social
- Toni Cade Bambara, "The Lesson" / Short Story / Artistic & Philosophical
- Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (excerpt) / Essay / Cultural & Social
- Barbara Ehrenreich, "Serving in Florida" / Essay / Economic
- Marie Winn, "Television: The Plug-In Drug" / Essay / Cultural & Social
- Matt Labash, "The Meme Generation" / Essay / Futuristic
- PBS Frontline, *Generation Like* / Documentary / Cultural & Social

Formative Assessments:

- Reading Journals – after reading and annotating each assigned article, you will write an informal response, engaging the article's ideas, claims, or arguments. Be prepared to read your journal responses to your classmates in small group and whole class settings. As you listen to your classmates' responses, you will annotate your own response, expanding on and developing ideas in your initial draft.
- Socratic Seminars – During these student-led discussion, you will be expected to contribute thoughtful questions and observations about the unit's texts, making connections between them as well as to other students' observations. You will also turn in written work that incorporates textual support for your arguments.
- Research Question Pitches – you will make a short 1 – 2 minute "pitch" of a research question related to our unit's texts. In the pitch, state the question, explain how it relates to our unit's texts, and describe how the question supports analysis from various perspectives. From these "pitches" you will choose one to collaborate on with a group, completing the annotated bibliography and small group multimedia presentations.

Summative Assessment:

- Annotated Bibliography – answering a research question generated from an idea from our unit two texts, locate, summarize and evaluate five (5) sources that address the question from different perspectives. Each entry in your annotated bibliography should include an MLA citation, a summary of the source material, and a short evaluation of the source's credibility.
- Small Group Multimedia Presentation – drawing on information from our unit's texts as well as sources from your annotated bibliography, collaborate with a small

group to create a multimedia presentation that answers a specific research question around an issue related to Unit Two. Your presentation should be 6-7 minutes in length, include contributions from each group member, contextualize the research question, and thoughtfully answer it drawing on information from various sources representing various perspectives. Each group member will be expected to answer an oral defense question at the conclusion of the presentation.

UNIT THREE: SHOULD WE ALL BE FEMINISTS? (Weeks 10 - 14)

In this unit, we will explore the idea of Feminism (generally defined as the belief in the legal, political, personal, economic, and social equality of the sexes), through a number of lenses, including those of history, science, literature, and personal narrative. The word Feminism provokes strong reactions among people of all political stripes and has come to be defined in different ways by different people and groups. We'll unpack controversies around the idea of Feminism, exploring how various thinkers, artists, and commentators have conceived of this revolutionary idea. We'll also consider the extent to which our lives and identities are determined by gender roles.

***Texts/Sources:**

- Chimamanda Adichie, "We Should All be Feminists" / TED Talk / Cultural & Social
- Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman" / Speech Transcript / Political & Historical
- Betty Friedan, *Feminine Mystique* (excerpt) / Essay / Political & Historical
- Kate Chopin, "Story of an Hour" / Short Story / Artistic & Philosophical
- Stephen Jay Gould, "Women's Brains" / Essay / Scientific
- Barbara Tannen, "There is No Unmarked Woman" / Essay / Science
- Roxane Gay, "Bad Feminist," / Essay / Cultural & Social
- Marjane Satrapi *Persepolis* / Graphic Novel / Artistic & Philosophical

Formative Assessments:

- Reading Journals – after reading and annotating each assigned article, you will write an informal response, engaging the article's ideas, aesthetics, claims, or arguments. Be prepared to read your journal responses to your classmates in small group and whole class settings. As you listen to your classmates' responses, you will annotate your own response, expanding on and developing ideas in your initial draft.
- Socratic Seminar – as we read *Persepolis*, you will be assigned to participate in one of two Socratic seminars. During this student-led discussion, you will be expected to contribute thoughtful questions and observations about the text, making connections to other texts from the unit as well as other students' observations.
- MLA Scavenger Hunt – Locate and highlight various features of MLA documentation and formatting on a sample MLA essay (e.g. find a place where the author paraphrases information from an outside source). This activity is designed to

familiarize you with conventions of MLA style so that you can imitate those features in your own research writing.

Summative Assessment:

- Synthesis Essay – based on ideas developed through readings, discussion, and written responses, create an open-ended research question that you answer in the course of an essay response. Your response should synthesize information from at least six (6) sources, two of which must be from the assigned readings; the other from your own research. Essays should be about 1200 words in length and follow MLA formatting.
 - As part of this assessment, you will also write a brief self-reflection examining your perceived successes and struggles as you work on your initial drafts. Based on your self-reflection, I'll provide you with targeted feedback (both written and verbal) that you can use on subsequent drafts.

UNIT FOUR: ON THE ENVIRONMENT (Weeks 15 – 18)

Issues around the environment – global warming, plastics in the ocean, endangered species – seem simultaneously urgent and too widespread for meaningful individual action. They also tend to provoke political controversy. Think, for example, about the debates that erupt around oil production, alternative energy sources, or the conflicts between economic development and environmental conservation. In this unit, we'll explore issues connected to nature and humanity's relation to it. Based on our readings and prior knowledge, we'll develop specific research inquiries, which you'll choose from in order to create an individual multimedia presentation.

*Texts/Sources:

- Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (excerpt) / Essay / Environmental
- Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Read History: so learn your place in Time" / Poem / Artistic and Philosophical
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (excerpt) / Essay / Artistic and Philosophical
- Joyce Carol Oates, "Against Nature" / Essay / Environmental
- Emily Dickinson, "I dreaded that first Robin so" / Poem / Artistic and Philosophical
- Bill McKibben, "It's Easy Being Green" / Essay / Environmental
- Richard Conniff, *Counting Carbons* (excerpt) / Essay / Scientific
- Indur Goklany, "Is Climate Change the 21st Century's Most Urgent Environmental Problem?" / Research Article / Scientific
- Daniel Glick, "Geosigns: The Big Thaw" / Research Article / Scientific

Formative Assessments:

- Reading Journals – after reading and annotating each assigned article, you will write an informal response, engaging the article’s ideas, claims, or arguments. Be prepared to read your journal responses to your classmates in small group and whole class settings. As you listen to your classmates’ responses, you will annotate your own response, expanding on and developing ideas in your initial draft.
- Socratic Seminar – as we read *Persepolis*, you will be assigned to participate in one of two Socratic seminars. During this student-led discussion, you will be expected to contribute thoughtful questions and observations about the text, making connections to other texts from the unit as well as other students’ observations.
- Plagiarism Scenarios Worksheet – we’ll look at a series of situations that may or may not constitute instances of plagiarism. Through small group and whole class discussion, we’ll arrive at an understanding of when and how it is necessary to credit sources. I’ll also provide examples of effective direct quoting, paraphrase, and summary to serve as models in your own writing.

Summative Assessment:

- Annotated Bibliography – answering a research question generated from an idea from our unit four texts, locate, summarize and evaluate four (4) sources that address the question from different perspectives. Each entry in your annotated bibliography should include an MLA citation, a summary of the source material, and a short evaluation of the source’s credibility.
- Individual Multimedia Presentation – drawing on information from our unit’s texts as well as sources from your annotated bibliography, create a multimedia presentation that answers a specific research question around an issue related to Unit Four. Your presentation should be 5 – 7 minutes in length, explain any prior knowledge/conceptions you had about your topic, contextualize the research question, and thoughtfully answer it drawing on information from various sources representing various perspectives. You will be expected to answer an oral defense question at the conclusion of the presentation.

UNIT FIVE: PERFORMANCE TASK #1 – Team Project and Presentation (Weeks 19 – 24)

During the first six weeks of semester two, you will be working to complete Performance Task #1 for the AP Seminar exam. During this time you will write an Individual Research Report and work collaboratively to create a Team Multimedia Presentation and Defense.

Recommended completion date is February 28th (Deadline = April 30th)

UNIT SIX: PERFORMANCE TASK #2 – Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation (Weeks 25 – 32)

During this time, you will be working to complete Performance Task #2 for the AP Seminar exam. You will write an Individual Written Argument, create (and present) an Individual Multimedia Presentation, and conduct a brief Oral Defense. All of this will be done in response to material and ideas from the AP Seminar Stimulus Pack.

Recommended completion date is April 15th (Deadline = April 30th)

After completing Performance Task #2, we will prep for the closed portion of the exam, which takes place in May.

*Readings and sources are subject to change