

AP Seminar: Conversations for Change

2019-2020 Syllabus

Weymouth High School



Course Description:

AP Seminar is a foundational course that introduces students to the skills they will need to be successful AP students. Students engage in analysis and conversations of academic and real-world topics that interest them. Using an inquiry framework, students practice analyzing articles, research studies, and philosophical texts, viewing speeches and experiencing artistic 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 in order to craft and communicate evidence-based arguments. Students who take and pass the AP exam for AP Seminar will be eligible to take AP Capstone their senior year. Students who pass the AP exams for AP Seminar, AP Capstone and four additional AP courses will earn an AP Diploma from the College Board.

Student Learning Outcome - Scholarship

AP Seminar students are on a Q.U.E.S.T. to become scholars. In this quest, they will develop skill sets to:

- **Q**uestion and Explore – Students will challenge and expand the boundaries of their current knowledge.
- **U**nderstand and Analyze – Students will contextualize arguments and comprehend authors' claims.
- **E**valuate Multiple Perspectives – Students will consider individual perspectives and the larger conversations of varied points of view.
- **S**ynthesize Ideas – Students will be able to combine knowledge, ideas, and their own perspective into an argument backed by evidence.
- **T**eam, Transform and Transmit – Students will collaborate, reflect, and communicate their arguments in a method suited to their audience.

Course Themes

In AP Seminar: Conversations for Change, students learn to become scholars so that they can begin to craft evidence-based solutions to some of the most pressing problems facing our world today. Students explore issues in four major areas: the proliferation of technology, poverty, inequality and climate change. Through analysis of stimulus packets and independent research, students will build the skill set necessary to join and contribute to positive conversations that can help make a difference in our world. They will explore these issues from multiple perspectives and lenses as well as across curricular areas. They will go beyond the constant drivel of political and media propaganda or hate speech to become scholars that can be the change.

Requirements for Success in this Course:

Classroom citizenship - To meet with success, students must be active citizens in the class. Active classroom citizens:

- Attend class. Students are expected to attend class. Please be mindful that absences – unexcused OR excused – are still absences. Students should avoid scheduling appointments, both in and out of school, that result in missing class.
- Come to class prepared. Prepared students bring supplies, assignments and an optimistic and determined spirit.
- Collaborate effectively. Collaborative students listen to others, respond respectfully, and contribute to a culture of scholarship.
- Work. Successful students work when they are tired and they don't feel like it. They take notes without prompting and ignore the notifications on their phones. Due to the workshop nature of AP Seminar, it is especially crucial that students use all class time productively.
- Stay organized. Successful students organize physical files, electronic files, and most importantly, their time.
- Complete assignments by due date. Students are provided a calendar noting due dates for the entire year; by planning in advance and managing their time, they can manage the workload for this course in a healthy manner. Handing in late work just puts students behind on the next assignment.
- Reflect. Learning is a journey, that often takes a winding road. Successful students reflect on personal progress, develop plans for improvement, and celebrate areas of progress and success.

Policies

- In the professional world, employees are expected to meet deadlines. If extenuating circumstances prevent this, they must communicate with their employers in a professional manner. Likewise, in this class, no late work will be accepted without an after-school student/ teacher conference. Students must schedule this conference within three days of the original due date; all meetings will be scheduled at the instructor's convenience.
- Deadlines for submission of College Board performance tasks are determined by the College Board, and as such are non-negotiable.

AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information

This course adheres rigorously to the AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information: "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."

Course Work

AP Seminar students are on a Q.U.E.S.T. to become scholars, and each day students will actively practice skills from the Q.U.E.S.T. process as they explore challenges currently facing the world. Class will function as a workshop for students to hone their Q.U.E.S.T. skills. In a given class period, students can expect to engage in start-up activities in their learning journals, read articles related to the course themes, discuss various perspectives, work in groups, construct arguments, and write arguments. Students can expect to be scholars every day.

Assessments

- **Learning Journals:** Students will engage in daily start-ups to practice key skills. As this is a formative assessment, they will be assessed on their willingness to thoughtfully engage the material without reference to their accuracy.
- **Classroom Citizenship Metacogs:** Students will complete a weekly metacognitive reflection of their classroom engagement. This reflection will be due every Friday and will be worth 25 points.
- **Active Reads:** During each unit, students will complete Active Reads that measure their ability to
 - Identify the author's argument, main idea, or thesis.
 - Explain the author's line of reasoning by identifying the claims used to build the argument and the connections between them.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of the evidence the author uses to support the claims made in the argument. (6 points)
 - Connect the reading to another class reading
 Active Reads will be scored in accordance with CB EOC Part A rubric
- **Presentations:** During each unit, students will present their perspective on an aspect of the unit topic. While presentations will vary in length and format, students are required to explore multiple perspectives and present evidence-based arguments. Presentations will be assessed using College Board criteria from Performance Tasks 1 and 2.
- **Essays:** During each unit, students will compose research-based essays. While essays will incorporate a varying number of sources and vary in length, all essays will be assessed using College Board criteria from the End of Course Exam Part B and Performance Tasks 1 and 2.

AP Score

During the AP Seminar course, students complete the following assessments: two performance tasks and an end-of-course exam. All performance tasks must adhere to College Board policies to ensure the validation of student scores. Performance tasks will begin starting in Unit 4 and 5.

Performance Task #1: Team Project and Presentation (20% of AP score)

Task Overview: Students work in teams of three to five to identify, investigate, and analyze an academic or real-world problem or issue. Each team designs and/or considers options and evaluates alternatives; develops a multimedia presentation to present the argument for their proposed solution or resolution; and provides a defense to questions posed by the teacher.

Scoring:

- Individual Research Report (1,200 words): Internally scored, externally validated
- Team Multimedia Presentation and Defense (8–10 minutes, plus defense questions): Internally scored

Performance Task #2: Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation (35% of AP score)

Task Overview: The College Board’s AP Program will annually release cross-curricular source materials (texts) representing a range of perspectives focused on a single theme or topic. Students use these texts to identify a research question of their own; conduct research; analyze, evaluate, and select evidence to develop an argument; and present and defend their conclusions. The final paper must refer to and incorporate at least one of the provided sources.

Scoring:

- Individual Written Argument (1,200 words): Internally scored, externally validated
- Individual Multimedia Presentation (6–8 minutes): Internally scored
- Oral Defense (two questions from the teacher): Internally scored

Performance Task #3: AP Seminar End-of-Course Exam (2 Hours) (45% of AP Score)

Task Overview:

During the AP Exam administration window, students take the AP Seminar End-of-Course Exam. The exam consists of four items: three short-answer questions and one essay question.

Scoring:

- Three Short-Answer Questions (analysis of argument in a single source or document): Externally scored
- One Essay Question (synthesizing and creating an evidence-based argument): Externally scored

Instructional Resources

To meet the course objectives, current media, magazines, journals, newspapers, and other secondary and primary sources will be incorporated.

Information used to address a problem may come from various print and non-print secondary sources (e.g., articles, other studies, analyses, reports) and/or primary sources (e.g., original texts and works or personally collected data such as experiments, surveys, questionnaires, and interviews). Students will be expected to use technology to access and manage information from online databases (e.g., GALE and Google Scholar) that grant access to secondary and primary sources.