Introduction to Course
The AP English Language and Composition class, distilled to its purest form, is a class in persuasion. The term “persuasion” is used here in a most general sense and is closely tied to credibility, for without credibility there can be no persuasion, and there is no persuasion when there is no credibility. How does an author or speaker develop these associated skills of credibility and persuasion? After all, everything in our lives is attempting to persuade us that “it” is credible and worthy of our time and attention in some form, and that we should listen to and believe what “it” says. Therefore, it would seem worthwhile to develop these two skills.

First, this class will explore how humans attempt to show themselves as credible and therefore persuasive to other humans through the power of the written and spoken word. Second, this class will provide numerous opportunities for students to develop their own persuasive skills and credibility through the two mediums of writing and speaking.

Description of Course
The primary purpose of this course is four-fold:

1. Juniors in high school take U.S. history which traces the causes and effects of historical events as they relate to the United States. To complement their year-long U.S. history curriculum, this class will trace the pattern of rhetorical thinking in the history of the United States from the 1600’s to present day by reading works of non-fiction such as essays, speeches, political writing, journals, letters, historical documents, and other modes of discourse. (C6)

2. For students to engage in analytical responses either by full engagement of the writing process (pre-writing, rough draft, editing and revising, and publishing) (C3), or by single draft essays written under a time constraint.

3. For students to engage in their own personal writing, based on reading or experience or observation. (C4)

4. To prepare the students for success on the AP Language and Composition Exam (C1-10).

Unit 1 - Summer Reading and Writing

In-coming juniors, prior to beginning the course, are asked to complete an independent summer reading and writing program. This program will vary, but will generally consist of a three-pronged approach involving reading works of non-fiction and fiction, responding to those works through writing, and autobiographical and observational
personal journal writing. This summer’s assignment will be to read *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller and to write a synthesis essay which argues for the following thesis: *Those who don’t heed the past are doomed to repeat it* (C8). Secondly, students will also be asked to read several essays from *The Bedford Reader* and to respond appropriately to the essays. Thirdly, students will be asked to keep a personal experimental journal in which they experiment with the ten methods of paragraph development (C4).

Unit 2 - Beginning Phase of Course

High school students have never taken a course which concerns itself primarily with the art of persuasion. Therefore, during the first few weeks of the course, their paradigm needs shift to see that this course is NOT primarily a course which studies the elements of literature (though a steady diet of fiction should be sustained to enable their success as seniors in the AP Literature class), but is instead a course which investigates the arguments that the literature makes and the rhetorical strategies used by the authors to sustain those arguments. Because of this need for a paradigm shift, the course usually begins with a combination of reading and / or lectures about rhetoric. I like to open the class with a reading and discussion of Hepzibah Roskelly’s “What Do Students Need to Know about Rhetoric?” Secondly, students are asked to begin to think about the experiences with reading and writing. An assignment they are given at the beginning of the course is an essay in which they discuss their reading experience from the earliest book they remember to their current personal reading outside of school (C2). They are also given an essay to write in which they have to write an essay entitled “How to Write an Essay” (C2). These essays are designed to help the student to a) recognize the influence of reading in an individual’s life, and, b) begin to see that essay writing requires careful rhetorical decision-making.

Unit 3 – Puritan Thinking.

The following readings are required for this unit:

Content and / or Skills Taught:
1. How diction shows attitude toward subject matter.
2. How imagery, tone, and an awareness of audience worldview affects choices in imagery.
3. How humans are multi-faceted in their personalities.
4. How human weaknesses, such as paranoia and hypocrisy, are trans-generational.
5. Why some human weaknesses, though perhaps more visible, are, in fact, not as destructive as the more invisible human weaknesses.

Major Assignments and/or Assessments
1. Through a close reading of “A Narrative of the Captivity” students will analyze, through her diction, Rowlandson’s attitude toward her Indian captors (C2).
2. Students will imitate the “plain style” of the Puritans by keeping a five-day journal of their own in which they pretend to be a friend of Mary’s who has also been taken hostage by marauding Indians (C4).
3. Through careful analysis of Edwards’ imagery and through listening to how his sermon was delivered, students will show why Edwards’ sermon created the desired effect in its audience (C6).
4. Students will contrast Burr’s attitude toward her father (Jonathan Edwards) with that of the audience during his sermon (C2).
5. Students will show how the paranoia of The Salem Witchcraft Trials mirrors the paranoia of the “Red Scare” during the fifties (C8).
6. Using The Scarlet Letter as a study in human psychology, students will write a reflective/argumentative essay in which they show that living openly with weaknesses “confessed” is healthier on the human spirit than living behind a mask of hypocrisy and self-protection (C3).

Unit 4 – The African-American throughout History

The following readings are required for this unit: Frederick Douglass: The Narrative of Frederick Douglass; Richard Wright: Native Son; James Baldwin: Go Tell it on the Mountain; Malcolm X: The Autobiography of Malcolm X; Olaudah Equiano: The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano Martin Luther King, Jr.: “I Have a Dream” and “Letter from the Birmingham Jail.”;

Content and/or Skills Taught:
1. text analysis
2. use of rhetorical strategies
3. speaker/writer, audience, subject, purpose, tone, diction, imagery, syntax
4. text structure analysis
5. speech analysis
Major Assignments and / or Assessments:
1. Students will analyze Baldwin’s use of flashback as the chief rhetorical technique in *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (C6).
2. Students will write a cause and effect essay analyzing how environment results in personality through close reading of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (C2).
3. Students will analyze tone, imagery, and selection of detail, to evoke sympathy in the plight of Olaudah Equiano (C2).
4. Students will analyze “I have a Dream” and “Letter from the Birmingham Jail” for ethos, pathos, logos, and other rhetorical strategies.
5. Unit will culminate in an argumentative / synthesis essay which will answer the following question: Considering all the sources you have read in this unit, to what degree has Martin Luther King Jr.’s “dream” become a reality? (C2, C8)

Unit 5 – Literary History

Now that the students have been guided through the Puritan period of history of the United States and a study of the African-American experience of U.S history, they will embark on their own study of an assigned historical literary period.

Content and / or /Skills Taught:
Students will understand that all writing, both non-fiction and fiction, is not written in a vacuum. Writing is the result of social, political, religious, martial, familial and cultural pressures borne upon the writer to cause him to write a certain way and make certain diction and syntactical decisions resulting in a work of written “art”.

Major Assignments and / or Assessments
1. Students will give oral presentations per an assigned literary time period, ranging from Rationalism through the Post-Modern Period (C5, C8).
2. Each student will then select a piece of writing, either fiction or non-fiction (preferred) and write essays showing how the piece of writing they have selected is a produce of intellect under the synthesis of the “pressures” listed above. Their essays will pay special attention to the arguments made by those writers and the rhetorical decisions which guided their arguments (C2).

Unit 6 – Satire

Introduction / Rationale
It is safe to say that many times on the AP test there have been essays in which students have been asked to analyze the rhetorical strategies used by satirists. Therefore, it is mete that students are taught the rhetorical strategies of satire.

Content and / or Skills Taught:
Students will understand the four hallmarks of satire: parody, incongruity, hyperbole, and irony (situational, verbal, and dramatic). They will understand the two types of satire, Juvenalian and Horatian, and they will understand the two chief ingredients of satire: humor and a target. They will read works by Mark Twain, Donald Bartheleme, Jonathan Swift, and will study works in current satirical publications such as The Wittenberg Door and / or The Onion. Students will also be asked to watch current satirical television shows (such as The Colbert Report or The Daily Show) and students will analyze current satirical cartoons from newspapers.

Major Assignments and / or Assessments
1. From reading The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, what human institutions did Mark Twain criticize and what rhetorical strategies did he use to criticize those institutions? (C6)
2. In the short story “Game” how does Donald Bartheleme use the satirical strategies of incongruity, hyperbole, parody, and irony to show the insanity of mankind during the Cold War? (C2).
4. Students will choose a social problem, and, using the rhetorical strategies of satire, will write their own satire (C2). An additional requirement for this satire is that a student-designed satirical cartoon that relates to their social problem be appropriately embedded in the text (C7).
5. Students will respond in a timed write to the AP prompt “Magna Soles” (C6).
6. Students will give mini-presentations on a satirical cartoon (C4).

Unit 7 – Synthesis Essays / Research Paper (C8)

Many students at the high school level confuse a “research” paper with a “report of information” paper. They think that they are doing “research” when in actual fact all they are doing is choose a topic, finding out information about it, organizing it so that it is presentable, using in-text citations according to the MLA format, and attaching a works cited page at the end. This is possibly sufficient for a lower-level course, but at the AP level, students must go one step further – they must demonstrate the ability to defend,
qualify, challenge, and ultimately synthesize their sources by developing a working, argumentative, supportable thesis statement, which must be supported throughout the essay (C8).

Though the way this unit is shown here makes it seem as though a consecutive number of weeks is carved out to teach this essay, the students are actually working on synthesis essays throughout the school year. By the time the AP test is administered, the students will have written approximately five to eight, or one to two per quarter.

Content and / or Skills taught
This unit “teaches research skills, and in particular, the ability to evaluate, use and cite primary and secondary sources.” This unit “assigns projects such as the researched argument paper, which goes beyond the parameters of a traditional research paper by asking students to present an argument of their own that includes the analysis and synthesis of ideas from an array of sources” (C8).

Major Assignments and / or Assessments
1. To orient the students with the format of the AP exam, their first synthesis essay will be the sample essay taken from AP Central which asks the students to “defend, challenge, or qualify the claim that television has had a positive impact on presidential elections.”

The synthesis essays for the rest of the school year are either student-driven or, if an issue arises that is of social or political import, teacher driven.

Student-Driven
Once to twice per quarter, students are then asked to take a stand on arguable issues that interest them. They are instructed that these papers must “go beyond the parameters of a traditional research paper” and must “present an argument of their own that includes the analysis and synthesis of ideas from an array of sources.” The development of these essays will be as follows:

a) choose a current controversial issue
b) determine your opinion on that issue
c) locate five sources which both support and oppose your opinion on that issue. One of your sources must be a picture or a statistical chart (C6).
d) annotate your sources specifically analyzing and determining why and how your sources support or do not support your opinions.
e) Write an argumentative essay, citing your sources, using the MLA editorial style, in which you develop your argument, making sure to synthesize and integrate your sources into the body of your essay. Counter-arguments must be considered, and where necessary, concessions must be observed in your writing.

**Teacher-Driven**

I have given the following teacher-driven synthesis essays this year. Next year’s teacher-driven essays will, of course, be different (a-d above still applies to the following essays):

1. Using the MLA format editorial style of research, choose the best exit strategy for the United States to extract itself from Iraq. Evaluate all the exit strategies, but show why the one you chose is the most viable for a) The United States, and b) for maintaining peace in the Middle East (C8).
2. Using the MLA format editorial style of research, defend, qualify or challenge the notion that NCLB education bill has been “good for kids” (C8).
3. Using the MLA format editorial style of research, defend, qualify or challenge the following argument: If Iran is allowed to develop weapons of mass destruction, it will use those weapons on neighboring countries” (C8).

**Unit 8 - Speech Analysis and Presentation**

**Introduction / Rationale**

Speeches are often found on the AP Language and Composition Exam; therefore, careful analysis of how speeches are developed is crucial to the success of students as they prepare for the exam.

The readings for this unit include the following: Readings from *Lend Me Your Ears*, edited by William Safire; “Speech to the Virginia Convention” by Patrick Henry; “The Declaration of Independence” by Thomas Jefferson; “The Gettysburg Address” by Abraham Lincoln; “I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King; Other speeches might include confessional speeches (such as Clinton’s “confession” during the Monica Lewinsky scandal), State of the Union addresses given by current presidents; “Pearl Harbor” versus “Twin Towers”;

**Content and/or Skills Taught:**

1. Students will learn how Aristotle’s triangle of ethos, pathos, and logos is used in the delivery of speeches.
2. Students will learn different rhetorical delivery techniques such as anecdote, personal narrative, statistics, examples, hypothetical situations, etc…
3. Students will learn various syntactical structures such as parallelism, periodic, loose, balanced, simple, complex, compound, and compound-complex sentences can be used to achieve effective rhetorical delivery.
4. Students will learn audience awareness and sensitivity in the delivery of political documents.

Major Assignments and / or Assessments:
1. Students will write an essay showing how Patrick Henry, through use of logos, pathos, ethos, and other rhetorical strategies, was able to convince the Virginian Convention to go to war with Britain (C6, C10).
2. Students will write an essay explaining why Thomas Jefferson’s use of parallelism in “The Declaration of Independence” is the pre-dominant rhetorical strategy (C6, C10).
3. Students will analyze Jefferson’s political reasons in excising certain parts of “The Declaration” (C6,10).
4. Students will write a comparison / contrast essay arguing that Abraham Lincoln’s “The Gettysburg Address” was far more effective than speeches given by a current-day politician (C6, 10).
5. Students will present a speech to their classmates in which they must use logos, pathos, ethos, and the syntactical structures that they have learned in this unit. The best speeches are then entered into a local speech contest. The topic of the speech varies. Last year the students had to determine why self is not as important as service; this year’s speech topic asked the students to show how they were leaders in their community (C3, C4, C10).

Unit 9 – Letter Writing

Introduction / Rationale
Letters are often found on the AP Language and Composition Exam; therefore, careful analysis of how letters are developed is crucial to the success of students as they prepare for the exam.

Content and / or Skills Taught:
1. Students will learn the difference in audience and therefore purpose between private and public letters.
2. Students will analyze the use of certain rhetorical strategies in letter writing, such as irony, rhetorical questions, argument, tone, diction, purpose, audience awareness, persona, etc.

Major Assignments and / or Skills Taught:
1. Students will write an essay in which they analyze strategies used by Lady Montagu as she gives her daughter advice on how to raise Montagu’s grandchild (C 2, C5).
2. Students will write an essay in which they analyze strategies used by Lord Chesterfield as he attempts to subtly bend his son’s will to his own (C2,C5).
3. Students will write their own letter to a son or daughter yet to be born. These letters will be mailed in ten years by their instructor (C2, C4).

Unit 10 - Science / Nature Writing

Introduction / Rationale
Nature and scientific writers are often found on the AP Language and Composition Exam. These passages are usually in the form of a description of some natural phenomenon in which the writer assumes a certain tone or attitude as he or she describes his or her natural phenomenon; therefore, careful analysis of how these writers develop their descriptions is crucial to the success of students as they prepare for the exam.

The following readings are used in this unit: Never Cry Wolf by Farley Mowat with HOLT study guide (essays one and two below are from the study guide); Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer; several AP essay prompts including writing by John Muir and Annie Dillard.

Content and / or Skills Taught:
1. imagery / sensory language
2. tone / attitude toward subject
3. use of specific diction
4. “distance” from subject (not literal, but scientific)
5. organization (order of importance, chronological, spatial, etc…)
6. factual description
7. dialogue and /or monologue
8. narration
9. figurative language – personification, metaphor, simile, etc…

Major Assignments and / or Assessments:
1. Students will compare and contrast Mowat’s description of the human slaughter of the caribou with his observation of the wolves’ caribou hunts (C6).
2. Students will analyze Mowat’s use of the rhetorical strategy of anecdote and how it affects his credibility as a person and writer (C6).
3. Students will maintain a ten-page journal in which they observe and document natural on-going natural phenomena in their own environs. Students will then take one of their journal prompts and develop it into a fully-processed essay (C3, C4).
4. After reading Into Thin Air, the students will come to some conclusions as to how man’s survival instinct becomes paramount, yet self-deceiving, when the human body is put under excruciating physiological duress (C6).
5. Students will compare and contrast Dillard’s interpretation of a flock of birds with the interpretation given by John Muir (C6).

Unit 11 – Journalistic Writing

The journalistic piece Hiroshima by John Hersey, will be used for this unit.

Content and / or Skills Taught:
1. the difference between subjective and objective reporting
2. diction
3. connotation and denotation
4. subject – verb - object pattern of journalistic sentence development.

Major Assignments and /or Assessments:

1. Students will keep a journal in which they follow the effects of one of the six survivors about whom Hersey writes. The journal will include factual details about the chronology of the character’s life, and the emotional and physical effects of the atomic bomb on the character’s life (C4).
2. Students will then write an essay in which they analyze Hersey’s journalistic writing style, and evaluate why such a style is effective as one considers the subject matter of mass extermination of over a hundred thousand civilians (C6).

Unit 12 – The Rhetoric of Comedy

Introduction / Rationale
If students can see that every facet of life possesses a “rhetoric”, and that the skills of the rhetoric of one discipline can be transferred to another discipline, then acquiring the analysis skills of the more difficult rhetoric can be more manageable if first acquired in the easier rhetoric. Thus, the rationale behind this mini-unit: The rhetoric of comedy.

Content and / or Skills Taught:
1. subject matter
2. tone, diction, style, delivery, imagery, language, audience, clothing, credibility, world view analysis, body language, timing.

Major Assignments and / or Assessments:
The students will write an essay on a comedian or comedienne of their choice whose content is PG-13 or less. Thesis of essay will be a general statement of how and to what degree the comedian gets the audience to laugh. The essay needs to contain and evaluation of the rhetorical devices used by the comedian to get the audience to laugh. The above criteria (number 2 above) are used as points of paragraph development (C3, C6).

Unit 13 – The Rhetoric of Photography and the Rhetoric of Advertising

Introduction / Rationale
Students need to be made aware that their minds are organisms that can be used and controlled by others. This unit will help them to see the rhetorical strategies used by photographers and the advertising propaganda that goes into advertising.

Content and / or Skills Taught:
Propaganda techniques specific to the advertising industry and photography industry such as sex appeal, snob appeal, authority, plain folks, peer pressure, humor, nature, cuteness, newness, etc…

Major Assignments and / or Assessments:
1. Write a description of the photograph. Focus on its emotional impact on you. Feel free to use the following outline to help you if you wish.
   I. Circumstances of photograph
   II. - IV. Description of photograph with emphasis on your emotional reaction.
Organize by order of importance? Spatially? By your various reactions?

V. How photograph changed you? Any new insights about life? (C7)

2. Students will write an essay in which they analyze the “gimmicks” (rhetorical strategies) used by the advertiser to attempt to sell the product through photography or video (C7).

3. The students will then respond to the 2001 Q3 prompt which asks that the “support, refute, or qualify Sontag’s claim that photography limits our understanding of the world” (C7).

Unit 14 - Novel Unit

Introduction / Rationale
Though the AP Language and Composition Class deals mainly with non-fiction (C1), it is still important that students are being prepared for their next English class (AP literature); furthermore, creative writers of course make rhetorical and stylistic decisions as they write their novels. Some of the more salient strategies include tone, diction, imagery, and selection of detail. Finally, all writers, non-fiction and fiction, espouse a world view, and thus make rhetorical decisions to demonstrate the credibility of that world view.

Content and / or Skills Taught:
tone, diction, imagery, selection of detail, purpose, world view

Major Assignments and / or Assessments:
Once a quarter, students will choose from a range of novels from the canon of American literature and will write the following essays:

1. The first essay will analyze what world view the author is espousing, and will defend, challenge, or qualify that world view (C2).

2. The second essay will take a particularly salient part of the novel, annotate it and analyze it for its use of rhetorical and stylistic devices (C6).

Unit 15 – Timed Essays

Throughout the school year students will be engaged in writing timed essays to emulate the pressures of the AP examination. Efforts are made to make the timed essays correlate to the units that are being taught at the same time. For example, when we are studying the African-American experience (Unit 4), the students will be asked to write two timed essays, one analyzing a lecture given by Maria Stewart, the other analyzing a speech by Alfred Green. Also, during the nature writing unit, students will write an essay
comparing and contrasting Annie Dillard and John Muir. They will also write a timed essay comparing and contrasting two different views of the Mississippi River (C4). Times essays will be assigned twice a month during the first semester and three to four times a month in the months leading up to the examination.

Unit 16 – Vocabulary Development

Content and / or Skills Taught: Vocabulary development

Major Assignments and / or Assessments:
1. At the beginning of the school year, students are given a vocabulary list of 640 words that are most commonly used on the SAT and the PSAT. It is expected that these words are integrated into a student’s personal writing (C10). They are tested on these words once a week.
2. For some assignments (The Scarlet Letter, for example), students are required to maintain a vocabulary log in which they write down unfamiliar words and attempt to integrate them into their own writing (C10).

Unit 17 – Grammar

Throughout the school year, students are taught “a variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination.” What they are taught will depend on the essay. For example, when studying the speeches, they will be taught the more salient grammatical features of speech-making such as repetition, parallelism, periodic sentences, etc…(C10). Similarly, when studying John Hersey’s Hiroshima, they will be taught the salient features of journalistic writing and will engage in imitation exercises of Hersey’s writing style (C4).

Unit 18 - Multiple Choice Practice

Throughout the school year, students will be subjected to a steady diet of multiple choice questions which will simulate the AP examination environment. The reason for this is two-fold: 1) so that I can see where there are areas of weakness in student performance and so subsequently modify my lessons accordingly; 2) to give the students practice working with multiple choice questions thereby increasing their success rate on the actual AP examination. There are various sources for these multiple choice tests: “AP Central Website,” “Applied Practice” instructional materials, and student-generated multiple-choice questions.
**Evaluation / Rubrics**

The pattern of essay development in my class is as follows:

1. Students will hand-write a rough draft.
2. Students will submit a typed rough draft for peer and teacher editing and revising. Often this revision stage will require several drafts.
3. Students will finally submit a typed final draft using the MLA format (12 point Times New Roman font)
4. Since writing is a recursive activity, if the essay is unsatisfactory, at the teacher’s discretion, the student may be allowed to edit, revise, and submit the essay again for teacher evaluation.
5. After finishing essays, students are required to complete a metacognitive response form which helps them to reflect on their writing process for that particular essay.
6. Several times throughout the year students will collaborate on writing assignments. The grouping of students is deliberate: sometimes I group the weaker writers with stronger writers; sometimes I group weaker writers with other weaker writers, and the stronger writers with others of their ilk.

Generally, a rubric is provided with every writing assignment. All timed essays use the same 9-point AP rubric. Rubrics of the formal typed essays are tailored to the particular essay that the student is being asked to write (C3).

**Other Textbook / Course Materials**

The following list is a submission of books, containing fiction and non-fiction, which have not been listed in the above units, but that are used in the course:

*The Bedford Reader*, 2000 edition  

**Other Course Materials (C10)**

I have developed a 100 page “booklet” containing important AP materials acquired at two week-long AP conferences, during the summers of ’02 and ’05. Some of the more important elements of the booklet are as follows:

1. How to annotate essays  
2. Several lists of tone words designed to develop a tone vocabulary  
3. Definitions of rhetorical devices / terms commonly seen on the AP test.  
4. Lists of stylistic errors which detract from maturity of style.
5. Lessons on connotation and denotation
6. Lessons on transitional devices and methods
7. Lessons on syntactical analysis
8. Lessons on how to develop different sentence types
9. Lessons on coordination, subordination, appositives, etc..
10. Lessons on sentence types: Identification of them, how to develop them and when to use them.