



Dominican International School
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COURSE SYLLABUS

School Year	2025-2026
Subject	Advanced Composition
Grade Level	12
Teacher	Leon Henrico
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This year-long Advanced Composition course is designed for motivated 12th-grade students who wish to refine their critical reading, writing, and argumentation skills in preparation for college-level work. The course is structured around the core principle that academic writing is a form of entering a conversation. Students will learn to listen carefully to what others are saying ("they say"), summarize different viewpoints accurately, and articulate their arguments clearly and persuasively ("I say"). Throughout the course, students will engage with various challenging texts on contemporary issues, practice advanced research techniques, and develop a sophisticated writing voice. The curriculum emphasizes drafting, peer review, and substantial revision, culminating in a major researched argument paper.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze and Summarize Complex Texts: Identify and articulate the central arguments, claims, and evidence in sophisticated nonfiction essays and articles.
- Enter Academic Conversations: Frame their arguments in response to the ideas of others, using techniques for agreeing, disagreeing, and qualifying.
- Craft Sophisticated Arguments: Develop clear, nuanced, and well-supported theses, while also anticipating and responding to counterarguments (naysayers).
- Conduct College-Level Research: Locate, evaluate, and synthesize various sources to support a central argument, moving beyond a simple for/against dichotomy.
- Master Rhetorical Strategies: Effectively use quotation, paraphrase, metacommentary, and transitional language to create cohesive and persuasive essays.
- Develop a Personal Academic Voice: Blend formal academic conventions with their own authentic style.
- Revise with Purpose: Engage in substantial, thoughtful revision to improve the clarity, organization, and impact of their writing.

PRIMARY TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER RESOURCES:

- Textbook: They Say I Say (TSIS) 6th Edition by Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, Russel Durst, Laura, J. Panning Davies
- Little Seagull Handbook (LSH)
- Digital resources on Norton digital platform

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Please always check Google Classroom for homework and announcements.

Expectations for Student Behavior and Participation

- Attend all classes regularly and punctually
- Actively participate in class discussions and group activities, contributing thoughtful questions and insights
- Complete all assignments and projects by the due dates, managing time effectively
- Students who do not meet their homework deadlines will be placed in Project I.
- If a student has been absent when a homework assignment is set, it is his/her duty to find out what homework is due, and complete it by the required deadline.
- If a student is absent for a test, they will receive a **0** score, unless they have a **very good** reason for being absent.
- Respect diverse opinions and perspectives during discussions, practicing active listening
- Maintain academic integrity in all work, avoiding plagiarism and properly citing sources
- Bring required materials to class daily (textbook, notebook, writing utensils, charged laptop/tablet)
- Engage in respectful and constructive peer feedback during workshops and presentations
- Utilize school hours for additional support when needed, taking initiative in learning
- Demonstrate growth mindset and willingness to revise work based on feedback
- Contribute to a positive classroom environment that fosters intellectual curiosity and mutual respect
- Respect your teachers, fellow students and their property.
- Keep your seating space and classroom clean and neat.
- Only a water bottle is allowed during class; no eating or drinking of other liquids.
- Ask permission to leave the class.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Please always check Google Classroom for homework and announcements.

Major Essay Assignments

Assignment 1: Responding to an Argument

- **Goal:** To accurately summarize a single author's argument and articulate your own response to it. This foundational essay focuses on the core "They Say / I Say" moves.
- **Skills:** Summarizing, quoting, framing, and responding (agreeing, disagreeing, or a combination).
- **Sources:** You will select one of the essays read in the first few weeks of the course to analyze and respond to.
- **Length:** 3-4 pages

Assignment 2: Entering a Conversation

- **Goal:** To analyze a debate between two or more authors and stake out your own position in relation to their arguments.
- **Skills:** Synthesizing multiple viewpoints, distinguishing what you say from what they say, and using metacommentary to clarify your argument.
- **Sources:** You will work with two or more provided texts that present conflicting or related viewpoints on a specific topic (e.g., student loans, gender dynamics).
- **Length:** 4-5 pages

Assignment 3: Describing a Larger Conversation (Annotated Bibliography & Analysis)

- **Goal:** To research a topic of your choice and map the conversation surrounding it. This assignment serves as the research foundation for your final paper.
- **Skills:** College-level research, source evaluation, annotation, and summarizing a field of debate without yet making your own full-blown argument.
- **Sources:** You will find, evaluate, and annotate **5-7 credible academic and popular sources** on your

chosen topic.

- **Product:** An annotated bibliography with a 2-3 page introductory essay that describes the major questions and viewpoints within your chosen topic's conversation.

Assignment 4: Joining a Conversation You've Researched (Final Research Paper)

- **Goal:** To construct a sophisticated, source-based argument that contributes to the academic conversation you explored in Assignment 3. This is the culminating project for the course.
- **Skills:** Developing a strong thesis, integrating a variety of sources to support your claims, anticipating and refuting naysayers, and adopting an authentic academic voice.
- **Sources:** Builds on the research from Assignment 3, requiring a total of **7-10 sources**.
- **Length:** 8-10 pages

Process Work & Other Assessments

This portion of your grade reflects your active engagement in the work that leads to the final essays. It is designed to encourage thoughtful preparation, collaboration, and revision.

- **Drafts:** First drafts are required for all major assignments and are graded on a completion basis. Submitting a thoughtful, complete draft is essential for getting effective feedback.
- **Peer Review Workshops:** Active and constructive participation in peer review sessions is mandatory. You will be assessed on the quality and helpfulness of the feedback you provide to your classmates.
- **Research Proposal (for Assignment 4):** A one-page proposal outlining your research question, preliminary thesis, and plan for finding sources.
- **Source Analysis:** A short assignment where you evaluate two potential sources for your final paper, assessing their credibility, bias, and usefulness.

In-Class Activities & Participation: This includes contributions to class discussions, small group work, and exercises from the textbooks. Regular, informed participation is key.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Academic Dishonesty means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that contravenes the standards of ethical integrity expected at DIS.

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following:

- Purposely incorporating the ideas, words of sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof without appropriate acknowledgment and representing the product as one's work;
- Representing another's intellectual work, such as photographs, paintings, drawings, sculpture, research, or the like, as one's own, including failure to attribute content to an AI.
- Employing a tutor, using Artificial Intelligence without acknowledgment, getting a parent to write a paper or do an assignment, and paying for an essay to be written by someone else and presented as the student's work.
- Committing any act that a reasonable person would conclude, when informed of the evidence, to be a dishonest means of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work.

Any act of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic zero on the entire assignment/learning task.

1st QUARTER – TENTATIVE COURSE CONTENT

(NB: Depending on time and interest, the teacher may delete and/or add other selections.)	
Week / Date	Topic / Projects / Assessments
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 1 Aug 12th to 15th 4 Days of Class 12~ First Day/ Digital PSAT/NMSQT Registration 15~ Opening Mass & Assumption of Our Lady 8:00</p>	<p>Entering the Conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>They Say / I Say</i> (TSIS): Chapter 1 ("They Say") & Chapter 13 ("Entering Class Discussions") ○ Sean Blanda, "The 'Other Side' Is Not Dumb" • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "W-1: Writing Contexts" ○ "W-2: Academic Contexts"
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 2 Aug 18th to 22nd 18~Induction of Class & Student Council Officers, NJHS, DYM, and House Captains 18~St. Dominic de Guzman Feast Day Celebration</p>	<p>The Art of Summarizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TSIS: Chapter 2 ("Her Point Is") ○ Kurt Gray, "The Psychology of Political Polarization" • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "W-6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing" • Write: One-paragraph summary of either Blanda's or Gray's essay.
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 3 Aug 25th to 29th</p>	<p>The Art of Quoting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TSIS: Chapter 3 ("As He Himself Puts It") ○ Yascha Mounk, "The Everyday Patriotism of Diverse Democracies" • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "W-7: Quoting" ○ "P-3: Commas" (for integrating quotes)
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 4 Sep 1st to 5th 5~House Ceremony</p>	<p>Three Ways to Respond & Assignment 1 Draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TSIS: Chapter 4 ("Yes / No / OK, But") ○ David Brooks, "The Triumph of the Ukrainian Idea" • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "W-4: Developing a Thesis" <p>Write: Assignment 1 First Draft Due</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 5 Sep 8th to 12th 8~ Mass & Birthday Mother Mary& VIP Induction</p>	<p>Distinguishing Your Voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TSIS: Chapter 5 ("And Yet") ○ Paola Ramos, "Finding Latinx" • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "S-2: Active Verbs" ○ "S-5: Emphasis" <p>Write: Revise Assignment 1, focusing on voice markers.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 6 Sep 15th to 19th</p>	<p>Planting a Naysayer</p>

19~Athletics/Sports Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TSIS: Chapter 6 ("Skeptics May Object") ○ Bryan Betancur, "It's Time to Drop 'Latinx'" • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "W-5: Arguing" (on counterarguments) • Write: Assignment 1 Final Draft Due
Week 7 Sep 22nd to 26th 23-25~Pre-Exam Days 26~Teacher's Day Celebration & Teachers' Appreciation Initiative/Peace Pole 26~Grade 12 Career Educational Trip	Saying Why It Matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: TSIS: Chapter 8 ("So What? Who Cares?") • In-Class: Review for exams.
Week 8 Sep 29th to Oct 3rd 2 Days of Class 1-2 ~Q1 Exams 3~Record Day	Quarter 1 Exams
Week 9 Oct 6th to 10th No Classes 6~Moon Festival 7-9~Teacher's Conference 10~Double Ten	Teacher's Conference

2nd QUARTER – TENTATIVE COURSE CONTENT

(NB: Depending on time and interest, the teacher may delete and/or add other selections.)	
Week / Date	Topic / Projects / Assessments
Week 1 (10) Oct 13th to 17th 13~ Second Quarter Begin 13~Visit of Mother Mary to Classrooms	Introducing Assignment 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TSIS: Chapter 14 ("Reading for the Conversation") ○ Carine M. Feyten, "The Boys Are Doing Just Fine" ○ Richard V. Reeves, "No, the Boys Are Not Doing Just Fine" • In-Class: Introduce Assignment 2: Entering a Conversation.
Week 2 (11) Oct 20th to 24th 20~ Jubilee: Marian Exhibit 24 – Book Fair	Connecting the Parts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TSIS: Chapter 9 ("As a Result") ○ Charles Fain Lehman, "The Student Loan Trap" & another relevant article. • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "S-4: Transitions"
Week 3 (12) Oct 27th to Oct 31st	Drafting & Peer Review

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Student drafts for Assignment 2. • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "W-3: Reading Strategies" ◦ "W-10: Peer Review" • Write: Assignment 2 First Draft Due
Week 4 (13) Nov 3rd to Nov 7th 3~ Feast of St. Martin de Porres Mass	The Art of Metacommentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: TSIS: Chapter 11 ("But Don't Get Me Wrong") • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "S-1: Clear and Simple Language" • Write: Revise Assignment 2.
Week 5 (14) Nov 10th to 14th	Finding Your Academic Voice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: TSIS: Chapter 10 ("Academic Writing Doesn't Mean Setting Aside Your Own Voice") • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "S-6: Word Choice" • Write: Assignment 2 Final Draft Due
Week 6 (15) Nov 17th to 21st 21 - YSC Contest	Introduction to Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: TSIS: Chapter 15 ("Research as Conversation") • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "R-1: Doing Research" ◦ "R-2: Finding Sources" • In-Class: Introduce Assignment 3; library/database instruction.
Week 7 (16) Nov 24th to 28th 25-27~Pre-Exam Day 28-Gr.12 Q2 Exam	Research and AI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ TSIS: Chapter 19 ("When Your 'They Say' Is a Bot") • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "R-3: Evaluating Sources"
Week 8 (17) Dec 1st to Dec 5th 4 Days of Class 1-Gr.12 Q2 Exam 5~Christmas Fair	Write: Find two sources for Assignment 3 and analyze them.
Week 9 (18) Dec 8th to 12th 2 Days of Class 8~Foundation Day Mass, cake ceremony, and Class Party (half day) 11-12 ~Q2 Exams	In-Class: Peer review workshop.
Dec 15th to Jan 2nd	Christmas Break

3rd QUARTER – TENTATIVE COURSE CONTENT

(NB: Depending on time and interest, the teacher may delete and/or add other selections.)

Week / Date	Topic / Projects / Assessments
Week 1 (19) Jan 5th to 9th <u>4 Days of Class</u> 5~Record Day 6~Third Quarter Begins 9 ~ New Year Mass	Using Personal Stories & Drafting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: TSIS: Chapter 7 ("Using Personal Stories") • Write: Assignment 3 Draft Due In-Class: Peer review workshop.
Week 2 (20) Jan 12th to 16th	Substantial Revision and Citation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: TSIS: Chapter 12 ("Revising Substantially") • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "W-11: Editing and Proofreading" ◦ "MLA-1: In-Text Citations" ◦ "MLA-2: Works Cited"
Week 3 (21) Jan 19th to 23rd	Finalizing Assignment 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Emma Barnes, "The Fast and the Fashionable" • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "MLA-3: Sample Works Cited List" ◦ "MLA-4: Sample Paper" • Write: Assignment 3 Final Draft Due
Week 4 (22) Jan 26th to 30th 26 ~ Feast Day of St. Thomas Aquinas 26-30~ Catholic Week Activities	Writing in Different Fields <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ TSIS: Chapter 17 ("Writing in the Sciences") & Chapter 18 ("Writing in the Social Sciences") • In-Class: Introduce Assignment 4: Joining a Conversation You've Researched.
Week 5 (23) Feb 2nd to 6th 1-4~WASC Mid-Cycle Visit	Proposing Your Final Argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Gather sources for Assignment 4. • Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "R-4: Synthesizing Ideas" • Write: Proposal for Assignment 4 Due
Week 6 (24) Feb 9th to 13th 13~House Valentine's Mini Fair 13~ Chinese New Year Celebration	Developing a Working Thesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write: Working Thesis Due • In-Class: Thesis workshop.
Feb 16th to Feb 20th	Chinese New Year

Week 7 (25) Feb 23rd to 27th 4 Day of Class 23-26~IOWA Assessments 24-26~ Pre-Exam Days 27 ~ Memorial Day Holiday	Source Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "W-8: Avoiding Plagiarism" Write: Source Analysis Due
Week 8 (26) March 2nd to 6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Class: Workshop on integrating and evaluating sources.
Week 9 (27) March 9th to 13th 4 Days of Class 13&16 – Q3 Exams	Exams

4th QUARTER – TENTATIVE COURSE CONTENT

(NB: Depending on time and interest, the teacher may delete and/or add other selections.)	
Week / Date	Topic / Projects / Assessments
Week 1 (28) Mar 16th to 20th 4 Days of Class 16 – Q3 Exams 17~ Fourth Quarter Begins 20~ House Movie Night and Club Fair 21~ Spring Fair	Drafting the Researched Argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "W-5e: Organizing an Argument" Write: Assignment 4 Draft Due <p>In-Class: Idea workshop for the final project.</p>
Week 2 (29) March 23rd to 27th	Advanced Peer Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Class: Full-session peer review for Assignment 4, focusing on research integration and clarity.
Mar 30th to April 6th	Easter Break
Week 3 (30) Apr 7th to Apr 10th 4 Days of Class 8 or 9~Easter Mass	Final Revisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Re-read TSIS: Chapter 12 ("Revising Substantially") Reference (LSH): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review sections on Punctuation ("P"), Grammar ("G"), and Style ("S") as needed.
Week 4 (31) Apr 13th to 17th	Final Touches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Class: Individual writing conferences.
Week 5 (32) Apr 20th to 24th 20-24 ~ AP Mock Exams	Final Submission & Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write: Assignment 4 Final Draft Due In-Class: Begin presentations of final research projects.

<p>Week 6 (33) Apr 27th to May 1st <u>4 Days of Class</u> 1~ Labor Day</p>	<p>Presentations & Course Wrap-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Class: Continue presentations and conduct final course reflection.
<p>Week 7 (34) May 4th to 8th 4-14~ Final Exams (K, 5, 8, 12 only) 4-15 ~ AP Exams</p>	Exams
<p>Week 8 (35) May 11th to 15th <u>4 Days of Class</u> 13-14~ Q4 Exam 15~ Record Day 11-15 ~ AP Exams</p>	Exams
<p>Week 9 (36) May 18th to 22nd 19-22 ~ Student Clearance 18~ Baccalaureate Mass 21~High School Field Trip</p>	School Wide Activities
<p>Week 10 (37) May 25th to 29th <u>4 Days of Class</u> 26~House Culminating Activity 26~ Gr. 12 Graduation 27~ Class Party 28~ ~ Students Last Day 29~ Teachers/Staff Meeting</p>	School Wide Activities