

# High School American Literature Course 2026-27

## (Regular, Honors, or AP Track)

amy.ruff@outlook.com

Amy Ruff's Home School Tutorials

(919) 219-4338

**Prospectus:** Amy Ruff will lead this journey into some of the most beloved works of American literature. Great minds will lead us from **heights of joy to depths of despair** across many genres, including:

- **Poems** by the enslaved Lucy Terry Prince & Phillis Wheatley
- **Novels** by Hawthorne & Steinbeck
- **Speeches & poems** by Native Americans
- **Short stories** by Vonnegut, Updike, & Asimov
- **Drama outings** to see **UNC's PlayMakers productions**, such as **Wilder's Pulitzer-winning *Our Town***

Along our path, we will:

- Identify **theme**
- Trace **plots**
- Analyze **conflict**

A few sights we're sure to encounter entail the following:

- The **fiber of femininity** as expressed in "The Wife of His Youth" & Longfellow's *Evangeline*
- **Spiritual struggles of conscience** viewed through the lens of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* & Potok's *Chosen*
- The **heart-wrenching prejudice** portrayed in Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* & Sinclair's *Jungle*

**Course Unit Value & Student Age:** Unweighted 1 unit English/language arts for advanced 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Materials – Refer to the [Am Lit Overview PDF](#):**

1. Detailing our **Works of Study** within an historical context, the **Am Lit Overview** includes the following:
  - \* label on lit works that **Amy emails** to students for reading, annotating, discussing, & writing
  - ⓘ label on lit works to **purchase** for reading, annotating, discussing, & writing
  - ⓘ label on lit works in the **Dover Thrift Poetry Anthology** for reading, annotating, discussing, writing
2. All registered students should receive the **Am Lit Summer Reading Letter & Exam**.

American Lit students **select & follow 1 of the 3 tracks** described below:

**Directions for Deciding Which Track to Take:** Am Lit students **select 1 of these 3 academic tracks to follow**.

- **Regular Track**
- **Honors Track**
- **AP Track**
- A student may start on a certain track but then decide to switch tracks at some point during the year.
- The course syllabus presents **RT, HT, & AP** homework in more detail than is explained below.
- Though listing **regular, honors, & AP** assignments below, **Mrs. Ruff defers to parents about what HW a student completes**, believing that parents are **in charge of & have the final say about the student's homeschool experience**; therefore, **any assignment may be omitted or customized as the parent sees fit or the student's schedule necessitates**.

**Regular Track (RT):** Assignments for RT students include the following.

1. In response to paper-prompt options, **write 3 papers of 3-7 pages** in length for which students are amply prepared by **Amy Ruff's In-Class Writing Workshops**.
2. Generate several **QWs (quick writes)** in response to specific **lit-analysis prompts**.
3. Follow the class **syllabus**.
4. **Read all lit works** by their due dates.
5. Take **class notes** in order to engage in **spirited class discussion** & easily accomplish 1-4 above.
6. **Follow RT directions** on the **Summer Reading PDF**.

**Honors Track (HT):** In addition to 2-5 above for RT, assignments for **HT** students include the following.

1. In response to paper-prompt options, **write 4 papers of 3-7 pages** in length for which students are amply prepared by **Amy Ruff's In-Class Writing Workshops**; however, **if the average of papers 1-3 = 95+%, then the HT student is excused from writing Paper #4—unless the parent decides otherwise**.
2. **Orchestrate a few small-group QWs**, practicing **collaborative & leadership skills** via **Google docs & slides**.
3. **Maintain a 90+% average**.
4. **Follow directions for HT students** on the **Summer Reading PDF**.

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**AP (Advanced Placement) Track:** In addition to 2-5 above for RT & number 1 for HT, assignments for AP students include the following.

1. Follow directions for AP students on the **Summer Reading PDF**.
2. Maintain a **93+% course average**.
3. **Present** during class **team analysis of plot, character, & thematic summaries** per the syllabus.
4. **Write 5 TAPEs (Timed AP Essays)** of 40 minutes each that respond to prompts on some of the Am Lit works being read. These TAPEs help prepare students to take the AP English Literature & Composition Exam or the AP English Language & Composition Exam (offered in early May in local public & charter schools); as an extended preparation experience, some students follow the AP track for a few years in Amy Ruff's lit classes before sitting for the AP Eng Lit &/or the AP Eng Lang Exams. The course syllabus details AP HW.

**Testimony:** I taught all five students from a lovely family—whose eldest child wrote this testimony:

*Mrs. Ruff's English classes **prepared me exceptionally well for the writing demands of Harvard.***

*I thrived in my required freshman writing course, earning an A.*

*Specifically, I found **my ability to structure a paper to far exceed that of my peers.***

*Now, **as a senior, I am known among my peers as an excellent editor** and have edited several senior theses....*

*However, to say Mrs. Ruff's courses improved only my writing ability would be insufficient.*

*The **benefits of her courses have extended beyond English classes.** All courses at Harvard require the ability to think clearly and formulate a sound argument.*

***I attribute my success at Harvard, in large part, to Mrs. Ruff's development of my critical-thinking skills.***

*~ K.J.V., **Harvard 2017** (Majors in Economics and Computer Science)*

**Bio:** Amy Ruff lives with her husband Brian next to her **beloved alma mater, Duke University**. When not spending time with her **precious grandchildren**, Amy enjoys teaching, tutoring, & test prepping students **in person** as well as **online** in her areas of specialty: **SAT, ACT, & APs (AP Eng Lang & Lit, AP Hx, AP Psych); literary analysis; research & composition; Spanish; psychology; philosophy & religion; executive-function & study skills.**

Having completed her **BA at Duke University with double majors in English & religion**, Amy also earned a **Certificate in Duke's rigorous interdisciplinary Women's Studies Program**. While an undergraduate & after graduation, Amy worked in **editing for the Duke University Press** & continues to **freelance edit**.

**Intuitive and seasoned at identifying & developing the potential in her students**, Amy's **energetic & engaging style** enables students to **grow in their knowledge of subject matter** while also **honing their critical-thinking skills & elevating their character**. Having **homeschooled her own children** through high school, Amy continues to **support the homeschooling community by offering group-class tutorials**.

Counseling students to **align self-understanding with their envisioned future**, Amy has aided many to **make wise choices** for their **post-high-school paths**. She has assisted students to **succeed on test prep & applications for acceptance** into a range of schools. From **Harvard, Duke, & Stanford** to **UNC & NCSU** to **community colleges across NC**, Amy's students **thrive in diverse academic, artistic, athletic, trade, & professional pursuits**.

Of **Argentine-Italian descent & hailing from Italian roots in Pittsburgh, PA**, Amy attended boarding prep school on a **full scholarship & received a college scholarship from the Spanish National Honor Society**. Amy continued her **Spanish studies at Duke** & served on **short-term missions as a Spanish interpreter**. From the **rudiments of grammar & vocabulary** to encounters with **cooking & dancing**, Sra. Amy's students **learn to love Latina language & culture!**

Always eager to serve her community, Amy is a supporter of **The Honor Foundation** (helping special-ops retirees, like Amy's deceased big brother who was a decorated Navy SEAL), volunteer with **local nonprofits**, board **VP for Feather in a Cap** drama troupe, & graduate of **REI (Racial Equity Institute) training**.

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**Class Time/Location/Dates:**

- Am Lit is **Tues 10-1115 AM 8/25-12/15/26 & 1/5-5/11/27** with breaks **10/13/26 fall, 11/24/26 Thanksgiving, & 3/9/27 spring.**
- Am Lit is at **Grace Church in room #118:** 200 Sage Rd, Chapel Hill, across from Lowe's near 15-501/I-40.

**Registration & Tuition:** As follows, the non-refundable **registration** is due by **May** & tuition as **½ in June** & **½ in Jan:**

- **Venmo** [www.venmo.com/Amy-Ruff-8](http://www.venmo.com/Amy-Ruff-8)      • **Zelle** under 919-219-4338      • **Mail check** 1101 Anderson St 27705
- **\$75 reg/\$850 tuition regular track**      • **\$100 reg/\$900 tuition honors track**      • **\$150 reg/\$1000 tuition AP track**

Names: Student's \_\_\_\_\_ Parents' \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_ Emails: \_\_\_\_\_

Phones: Student's \_\_\_\_\_ Parents' \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Introduction to Psychology 845-10 AM</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/900 <input type="checkbox"/> AP \$150/1000		
<b>American Lit 10-1115 AM</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Track \$75/850 <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/900 <input type="checkbox"/> AP \$150/1000		
<b>Spanish I Registration/Tuition</b> <b>1-2 PM Tues at Grace Church</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Track \$75/800 <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/900	<b>Spanish II Registration/Tuition</b> <b>1115 AM-1210 PM Tues at Grace Church</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Track \$75/850 <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/950	<b>Spanish III Registration/Tuition</b> <b>Day/Time TBD</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Track \$75/900 <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/1000
<b>Middle School Composition 1210-1 PM Tues at Grace Church</b> <input type="checkbox"/> One Track Reg/Tuition \$100/1000		
<b>Introduction to Literature 2-3 PM Tues at Grace Church</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Track \$75/850 <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/900		
<b>YSA Young Spanish Adventure on Tues at Grace Church 3-345 PM</b> <input type="checkbox"/> One Track Reg/Tuition \$100/800		
<b>YWA Young Writers Adventure on Tues at Grace Church 345-430 PM</b> <input type="checkbox"/> One Track Reg/Tuition \$100/900		
<b>Spanish IV TBD Day/Time</b> <b>Registration/Tuition</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/1000
<u>Times for Amy's 2026-27 Classes – Hybrid classes are conducted in person &amp; via Zoom (per student preference) *at Grace Church (unless specified otherwise):</u>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• *Tues/845-10 AM <b>Intro Psych</b> (regular &amp; honors tracks; 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades)</li> <li>• *Tues/10-1115 AM <b>American Lit</b> (regular, honors, AP tracks; 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades)</li> <li>• *Tues/1115 AM-1210 PM <b>Spanish II</b> (regular &amp; honors tracks; 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades)</li> <li>• *Tues/1210-1 PM <b>Middle School Composition</b> (one track; 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grades)</li> <li>• *Tues/1-2 PM <b>Spanish I</b> (regular &amp; honors tracks; 6<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grades)</li> <li>• *Tues/2-3 PM <b>Intro Lit</b> (regular &amp; honors; 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grades)</li> <li>• *Tues/3-345 PM <b>YSA Young Spanish Adventure</b> (ages 7-10)</li> <li>• *Tues/345-430 PM <b>YWA Young Writers Adventure</b> (ages 7-10)</li> <li>• TBD time/place <b>Spanish III</b> (regular &amp; honors tracks; 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grades)</li> <li>• TBD time/place <b>Spanish IV</b> (honors track only; 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades)</li> </ul>		<u>Class Calendar 2026-27 Middle/High School:</u>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>8/25/26</b> First Fall Tues 2026 Class</li> <li>• <b>10/13/26</b> NO Class for Fall Break</li> <li>• <b>11/24/26</b> NO Class for Thanksgiving Break</li> <li>• <b>12/15/26</b> Last 2026 Tues Class</li> <li>• <b>1/5/27</b> First 2027 Tues Class</li> <li>• <b>3/9/27</b> NO Class for Spring Break</li> <li>• <b>5/11/27</b> Last Class (<b>Comp ends 4/27/27</b>)</li> </ul>
<b><u>YWA/YSA 2026-27 Class Calendar:</u></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>9/8/26</b> First Fall Class    • <b>10/13/26</b> NO Class Fall Break    • <b>11/24/26</b> NO Class Thanksgiving    • <b>12/1/26</b> Last Class</li> <li>• <b>1/12/27</b> First Class    • <b>3/9/27</b> NO Class for Spring Break    • <b>4/6/27</b> Last Class</li> </ul>		