 Advanced Placement American History Syllabus

SRHS Social Studies Department, 2014-2015

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Welcome to AP U.S. History! You have chosen to take a demanding, COLLEGE LEVEL survey course in U.S. history. There is much that will be expected of you. You will read the entire textbook as well as numerous additional primary and secondary resource materials. You will be expected to analyze, reach conclusions, and to fully and firmly support those conclusions both orally and in writing. You will be expected to synthesize material to come up with new ideas about the history of the United States and its people. You will be expected to understand some of the new interpretations of the history of the United States and its people. You will be expected to do more than memorize names, dates and facts. You will use the factual information to construct a meaningful "larger" picture. The course will follow a chronological path but some topics or issues will bridge and overlap chronological periods for their political, economic and social perspective. You will look at trends and cycles over time. The course is meant to challenge your thinking about the history of this nation.   
  
Because of the special nature of Advanced Placement classes, students and their parents need to be aware of specific commitments required. After reading the following expectations and responsibilities, your signature indicates agreement to these requirements. Your parent or guardian must sign also, indicating his/her understanding and support of the requirements of APUSH, including the time commitment for the course and in taking the AP exam, the preparation and financial commitment to take the exam.

1. **Textbook and materials:** Pick up your textbook and calendar on your first day of class. All future calendars will be posted online. Again, it is imperative that you read this textbook and keep up with the reading assignments.   
   We will have two main book resources this year: **An Unfinished Nation** by Alan Brinkley and **United States History, Preparing for the Advanced Placement Exam** from AMSCO Publishing.

The publisher of Unfinished Nation maintains a web site for users of this textbook. You will be asked to go to this site from time to time. Check it out, <http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072424362/information_center_view0/>

A 2-inch (or 3-inch) three ring binder is required with 12-15 dividers, and it is recommended to keep a folder at home for each completed time period as you will need to review periodically and for the AP Test. In addition to this, students will also need to have highlighters, colored pencils and or markers for activities and projects.

You may also wish to buy an AP US History study book NOW. Do not wait until March or April. These study books are good at helping you review for tests as the year progresses, as well as the exam. The recommended title is: **AP U.S. History All Access** by Gregory Feldmeth. It is available for around $12 on Amazon.

1. **Student Responsibilities**: Please note that this is a class in which **YOU**, the student, must take primary responsibility for your success. One of the most important tasks for you is to **READ YOUR TEXTBOOKS AND ANY OTHER ASSIGNED MATERIAL!** Mr. Van Brimmer will not cover every item in detail. That is a physical impossibility given the short time we have to cover over 350 years of history. The online site contains power point slides and vocabulary lists for each chapter. Your reading assignments will be for the chapter ahead of what we are doing in class. Most quizzes will come from the reading and vocabulary and take place on Tuesdays or Thursdays. During the course of the year, you will need to read one to two chapters per week (approximately 40-60 pages), take notes both while reading and in class, do research outside of class, prepare special projects and presentations, read additional documents, write essays, and take multiple choice tests (with really hard multiple choice questions that require critical thinking, not fact recall). **You must be proactive and ask for help when you need it.** **You also need to remember that you *chose* to take a COLLEGE LEVEL course.**
2. **Course Content:** Advanced Placement United States History surveys the period beginning with pre-Columbian Native American societies and ending with international affairs and domestic changes in the post 1945 period to 2000. The College Board determines the course content outline. The course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of U.S. history and to provide students with the analytical skills and factual knowledge to deal critically with the problems and materials in United States history. The course will mostly follow a chronological path, however, some topics or issues such as the status and rights of women, the civil rights of Native Americans and African Americans and U.S. foreign policy, as well as developments in art and music, will bridge and overlap chronological time periods.   
   In addition to historical content, students should learn to assess historical materials – their relevance to a given interpretive problem, their reliability, and their importance – and to weigh the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship. The APUSH course develops the skills necessary to reach conclusions on the basis of informed judgment and to present reasons and evidence clearly and persuasively in essay format.   
     
   Another important skill that will be addressed in class is how to successfully address document-based multiple choice questions of the type found on the AP exam. Multiple choice questions will challenge students’ thinking by asking students to make accurate and thoughtful selections from among options which may range from incorrect to correct, but not as precise, as significant or accurate as another choice. A strong vocabulary is an important asset to successfully answering these questions. These questions usually demand that students pull together knowledge and understandings learned from several sources in order to make a reasoned selection for the answer. The questions test understanding, NOT recall; often a difficult task for students whose success has mostly been based on memorizing information.

Finally, a tremendous amount of emphasis will be placed on the writing process as 60% of your score on the APUSH exam is tied to written response. You may feel at times you are taking another Language Arts writing class. But academic writing for history (as well as science, math, government and other social and political sciences) is NOT the same as you are used to in English class. We call this “writing for a different purpose” and Mr. Van Brimmer will break down the process and guide you through it to make it as simple and clear as possible.

1. **Course Outline**:
   1. The Meeting of Cultures
   2. Transplantations and Borderlands
   3. Putting Down Roots: Colonial Society
   4. Eighteenth Century America
   5. The American Revolution
   6. The Republican Experiment
   7. Democracy and Dissent
   8. Jeffersonian Vision
   9. Nation Building and Nationalism
   10. Triumph of White Man’s Democracy
   11. Slaves and Masters
   12. The Pursuit of Perfection
   13. Age of Expansionism
   14. The Sectional Crisis
   15. Secession and Civil War
   16. Agony of Reconstruction
   17. The West
   18. The Industrial Society
   19. Urbanization
   20. Politics of the 1890s
   21. Imperialism
   22. The Progressive Era
   23. Teddy Roosevelt to Wilson
   24. World War I
   25. Transition to Modern America: The 20s
   26. FDR and the New Deal
   27. America and the World: 1921-45
   28. Cold War Begins
   29. Affluence and Anxiety: The 50s
   30. The Turbulent 60s
   31. Rise of New Conservatism (1969-1988)
   32. Twenty-First Century, 1989-2009
2. **Homework, Classwork, Quizzes and Tests**: APUSH is a demanding course requiring daily work outside of class. Students planning to earn a grade of "A" or "B" will discover that 12-16 hours of outside work per week is the norm. Begin planning and preparing NOW to take the exam in May.   
     
   The class will be structured to teach you the skills required for success both on the exam and for life-long learning. Multiple choice and essay questions in the course will be chosen from past AP exams or written in the language and style of typical AP questions and time will be spent in class learning how to address these types of questions. Time in class will also be devoted to learning how to write a response to a Document Based Question (DBQ), as well as to short essays of the type found on the exam and in the college classroom. Much time will be devoted to learning how to think like a historian might think about events, issues, people, etc. In order to get the most out of classroom instruction; keeping up with the reading is essential!   
     
   In addition to reading the textbook, assignments include supplementary readings of important documents or excerpts from commonly tested books, research projects, oral presentations, group discussions, simulations, research projects, quizzes, essay tests, critiques of documentary programs and others. Major assignments will be given with specific due dates assigned in advance to allow students to organize their time. You will always have at least one week’s notice before a **major** test. **Quizzes may be announced ahead of time, but some may be unannounced –** so be prepared. Tests and quizzes may include the following: Vocabulary, Main concepts, Cause and Effect relationships, important Dates, Map skills, and Identification of key people, inventions, literature, music, etc.

Test and quiz formats may include: Multiple choice, written response, document based questions and essay questions. Exams will be given at the conclusion of each semester and are **comprehensive.**

Late work, if acceptable at all, will be graded down by 50%, unless there are extenuating circumstances and prior arrangements are made with the teacher.   
  
You must **KEEP UP WITH THE READING** in order to have review time before the AP test. This is critical!   
  
Participation: It is very important that you participate in all activities in a positive, constructive manner. This means that you are in class, on time and work productively and cooperatively at all times. For some activities, participation points will be directly awarded. At all times, the level of your participation will greatly affect the outcome of your learning and therefore your success in the course. Please come prepared with your material each day and work to your best ability each day. Sitting idly, doing homework from another class, reading unrelated materials or just plain chatting socially are not ways to succeed and may result in the confiscation of those materials.

1. **Make-up Work and Extra Credit**: After an excused absence, it is the student’s responsibility to find out what has been missed. Failure to make up work missed will result in "0" points. If an absence occurs on a day when a class assignment is to be completed during the period, a different assignment WILL be given to students with an excused absence. Quizzes following reading and note-taking assignments, if missed due to an excused absence that covers more than one or two periods, may be made up by special arrangement with the teacher. Tests are to be made up the day you return from a one or two day absence. Being absent the day before a scheduled test does NOT excuse you from taking the test the day it is scheduled. An absence of only one or two periods on the day of a scheduled test does NOT allow you to make up the test.   
     
   **Extra Credit is not available in APUSH.**
2. **The AP Exam in U.S. History:** The goal of this course is for students to be prepared to take the national college level Advanced Placement Examination administered in May. While the AP exam is not required for completion of this class, nor does taking it impact your grade in the class, most of how the class is structured and taught is to prepare students specifically for the AP exam. Colleges are now more interested in seeing that you completed the whole AP course by taking the exam – even if you only receive a score of "2." Students successfully completing this exam may receive advanced placement and/or credit at many colleges and universities. Individual colleges and universities, often at the department level determine what constitutes a "passing" score. Preparation for this exam as well as course requirements will include striking a balance between learning factual knowledge and increasing critical thinking skills of analysis, interpretation, synthesis, and evaluation. The 2015 Advanced Placement Examination in United States History is Friday, May 15th, at 8 a.m.
3. **Preparing to take the AP exam is basically the responsibility of the student**. Supplemental information, including sample questions, documents and student samples with scores and reader comments is available at www.collegeboard.org/ap. You will also receive plenty of sample materials in class, including a notebook full of materials, practice AP exams previously given (with answers) and some graphic organizers. However should you decide to purchase a study guide, there are many available through local bookstores. Be aware, however, that none of the commercial products provide questions that are comparable in difficulty to the real test questions.   
     
   Many students recommend that you also take the SAT II in U.S. history in June (after the AP exam it will seem like a breeze) or before the AP exam in May (as a "tune up" for the exam). **Preparing to take any of these tests is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**. Suggestions for preparation, a review binder full of "good stuff" and possibly some study sessions will be provided, but **the ultimate responsibility is YOURS.**
4. **Grading Policy**: Student grades will be assessed on a point system. Every assignment, test, quiz or project will be assigned a point value. A student may determine an overall grade by dividing the number of points earned by the total possible points available.

Students who share class work or test answers without express permission from Mr. VB will *earn* a **ZERO**.

Students should try not the miss class for any reason. There is no replacement for time missed in class. Make up work may not cover all that was missed in a period. So participation work cannot be made up.

Letter grades will be determined in accordance with the grading policy of the Indian River County School District:

A (90 - 100)

B (80 - 89)

C (70 - 79)

D (60 - 69) Yikes! Let’s hope not,   
F: Less than 60%

1. Remember, in the beginning of the year, particularly, your grades may not be what you have become accustomed to. This is a tough class, with lots of new skills to learn, and a big step up from what you are used to, particularly if you have not taken an AP History class before. If you are really working at developing these new skills and you have sought assistance from your teacher, hang in there. You should see improvement soon. Talk things over with your teacher if you are having difficulties. **Remember though, you must put in the time and you must put in the effort to try new strategies.** You must learn to DO APUSH, just like you DO math or science. Too often students approach history as something that is done to them and that they can just passively absorb the information. Not so! **EXCELLENCE IS NOT EASY OR AN ACCIDENT, IT IS A HABIT!**  
     
   Keep a written record of your points and keep all work that has been graded and returned to you. ALL notes and other handout materials are to be kept in your notebook. Do not throw anything away. When your notebook gets too full (which it may), take the work out and file by unit in a safe place at home. You will need to access these materials in order to effectively study for the AP exam. You should review your notes regularly, not just the night before a test.
2. **Class Rules**: Students are expected to adhere to the following; Be on Time, Be Prepared, and Be Respectful.

Students are to bring paper, pencils and pens (blue or black ink only for essays) and any other working materials to class daily. On occasion students may check out materials from the classroom to use at home. Prompt return of those materials is essential. Any materials checked out will be the responsibility of the student in whose name they were checked out. This could include financial responsibility if not returned, or returned in damaged condition.

1. **Contacting your teacher**: Mr. Van Brimmer is available most days after school. If you are coming for help, please mention it during class that day. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to ask. We can even do a group tutorial on a particular subject or skill. Practice AP US History Tests and other resources are available online and Mr. Van Brimmer will schedule an after-school session to help you get set up and learn how to use those online resources.

Your signature and the signature of your parent or guardian constitute your commitment and agreement to do your very best in APUSH. It also says that you and your parents understand and accept the time and work commitment necessary for you to do your very best. Keep this page available for reference in your notebook.

The undersigned have read and understood Mr. Van Brimmer’s Advanced Placement American History Syllabus for the school year 2012-2013.

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Print Parent/Guardian Name Parent/Guardian Signature Date

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Print Student Name Student Signature Date