

## AP US History Course Overview

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Advanced Placement history is a course that endeavors to give a thorough examination of the important events and people of the United States from pre-Columbian Native Americans through the 1990's. Since the AP test is in early May, we will have eight and a half months to grapple with more than four hundred years of history, and prepare for the writing portion of the test. Students will learn to read and interpret historical documents as well as develop the skills to write persuasive timed essays. The course moves rapidly, and requires a significant amount of independent work, requiring you to read and write more and at a faster pace than a standard history course. For the main text we will use *America's History* by James Henretta. We will also read a variety of supplemental readings that will be handed out to you as we move through the course.

**Areas of Study:** During the Fall Semester, we will examine early US History prior to the 20th Century chronologically beginning with pre-Columbian Native Americans and ending just before the Gilded Age. Other main areas of study include the Revolutionary War, the Constitution and Early Republic Period, Westward Expansion and the Civil War and Reconstruction. During the spring semester we will begin with the Gilded Age and then study various foreign and domestic topics of 20<sup>th</sup> Century America. As we approach the exam we will stop covering new material and begin reviewing the content presented throughout the year.

**Materials:** You will need to bring paper and pen to class each day to take notes. On test days, you will need a number two pencil. I recommend that you get a binder or folder specifically for this class and bring it with you each day. This will help you to keep yourself organized and will allow you to store notes, graded homework, class handouts, tests, and essays.

### Assignments and Grading:

**Homework/Class Participation (25% of the semester grade):** I recommend that you have a separate binder for this class and should bring it with you everyday. Your binder should have 4 dividers in it: one labeled **class notes**, one labeled **book notes**, one labeled **returned work**, and one labeled **class handouts**. Of course if you have a system to organize yourself that you prefer, feel free to use that instead. I will be checking your notebooks periodically and assigning a grade for your work.

**Multiple Choice Tests (40% of the semester grade):** Reading quizzes which will include both multiple choice and short answer questions covering the currently assigned textbook reading will be given nearly each week.

**Essays/ Short Answers (35% of the semester grade):** You will write essays regularly. These will be based on lectures, text reading and outside reading. Essays will follow the AP Long Essay (LE) or document based (DBQ) format, which will be discussed repeatedly in class.

**Semester Grade:** The work you do throughout the semester will be worth 85% of your semester grade. There will also be a comprehensive final exam at the end of each semester that will comprise 15% of your final grade.

Please keep all of the graded material that I return to you in the appropriate section of your binder. This will help you in two ways. First, you will be able to have an idea of your grade at any point in the semester - simply look at the grades you receive on each assignment and you should have a pretty clear picture of where you stand. The second reason to keep all of your work is to help you prepare for the AP exam.

If you are **legitimately** absent on a test or essay day and you knew about the test or essay, then expect to take the test the following SMART period. Unexcused absences will result in a zero.

### General Expectations:

- Be polite and listen. The rule of the class is that of mutual respect. I have no tolerance for rude behavior.
- You should try to not be absent from class, but in the case of an excused absence you may make up the work you have missed. You will need a classroom buddy in case you are absent. It would be difficult for me at the beginning of class to tell you what you missed, so you should ask your buddy. The leftover handouts will always be in the same place, so you do not need to ask me for them.
- If you are absent on the day of a test, a make-up test will be given during the SMART period following the test.

**SMART Period:** We have a perfect schedule to facilitate individual help in this class. Do not hesitate to use this time to help resolve individual difficulties you might have. If you find that on any given week you are not able to take advantage of SMART Period because of obligations for other teachers and classes, please feel free to come to me and schedule another time to meet.

**Finally--**I realize that this course requires a great deal of effort. I give you the words of Jimmy Dugan (Tom Hanks's character in *A League of Their Own*), who is responding to the resignation of his star baseball player because "it just got too hard": "It's SUPPOSED to be hard. If it wasn't hard, everybody would do it. The 'hard' makes it great."