



Grand Haven High School

AP US History

Course Number:

Grade Level: 10-12

Credits : 1

Prerequisite Courses : Suggested US History

Course Description

This course is designed to give you a look at history in order to develop the skills that will be required to do well in a college history class. This course is not meant as an advanced 10th grade American History class, but as a college history class in which the AP test at the end of the year is the target for students. The skills that will be needed to do well include critical thinking, reading from college level text and primary resources, study skills for mass amounts of information independently and writing skills.

Course Objectives

The other important thing to prepare you for is the Advanced Placement Examination in U.S. History—an optional test on which you can earn college credit. As time goes on, AP courses are becoming more and more important. To do well on an AP Exam takes a full year of effort and dedication. Since many college courses also have cumulative final exams that can count for 50% or more of your grade, preparing for this exam can be a great experience. The best time to start preparing is now.

Student Expectations

What can you expect?

Since this is a college level class, from this point on I will treat you as though you are college students. In other words, no “spoon fed” assignments and a lot of trust. I assume you are here because you want to learn and improve as students—how you go about that is your business so long as you are reaching your potential and don’t disrupt others. You can expect to spend about 120 minutes a day on American History. (Before you freak out completely, about 60 minutes of that is class time). By signing up for this course, you have agreed to take on a workload beyond what is required in a normal high school class. Some of this material will be quite stimulating. Some other stuff—well, you’re likely to find it to be a bit dull. All of it will be

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important to a final goal of scoring well on the AP EXAM in May and preparing you for COLLEGE. I expect that you will do your best to meet the requirements of a course such as this.

What goes on each day in class?

Class activities will be divided between lectures, activities based around reading and analyzing primary documents, individual research, small and large group discussions and other projects and activities. ALMOST EVERYTHING WE DO IN CLASS IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT YOU HAVE READ AND AT LEAST SOMEWHAT UNDERSTOOD THE PREVIOUS NIGHT'S READING ASSIGNMENT. ASK QUESTIONS!!!!

What can I do to be successful in this course? Although this can be a difficult course, there are a few simple principles that will help you.

- 1) READ CAREFULLY EVERY TIME THERE IS AN ASSIGNMENT. First off, this will help you get the most out of class assignments and activities. Secondly, every year when I speak to former students who have gone on to college, they tell me that the single most important skill to have in college is the ability to read well. Furthermore, when students from past years were asked "What advice would you give to students taking this course in the future," the number one response was "read every night." In this course, to truly do well (Earn a high score on the AP test) you will have to read. This will take discipline on your part as reading or not reading will not always directly reflect on your grade—I won't give you silly busywork just to make sure you are reading. However, you can't get the most out of class without it.
- 2) LEARN TO TAKE GOOD NOTES: Find a system that works for you and use it!!! I will have plenty of suggestions and we will spend a lot of time with this during the first semester.
- 3) ASK QUESTIONS AND PARTICIPATE IN CLASS. Simply reading on your own will only get you so far. What goes on in class is equally important to your success. As your teacher, I like to think I can be a valuable resource, but only if you make use of me. Please remember, there are no stupid questions.
- 4) DEVELOP GOOD STUDY HABITS. Know what works for you and go with it. Also, avoid cramming. The best time to start studying for your next test is today. The more you internalize each day, the more studying for tests becomes a matter of reviewing, not learning at the last minute. Cramming does not help you in the long term—unlike high school, in college large exams are not waived for students who meet minimal competency standards and these exams count for a significant portion of your final grade and in college grades actually matter. Therefore, starting today, don't think of tests as something you study for—think of them as something you PREPARE for—every day.
- 5) READ AND LEARN FOR MEANING, NOT SIMPLY FACTUAL INFORMATION. In your literature classes, you have to distinguish between plot and theme. To an extent, we do that in history as well. There are a certain number of facts, but making sense of those facts and determining what value and meaning they have is largely the task of the historian. (THAT'S YOU!!!) At this level, you can expect to be asked to do more than simply spit back plain facts. You need to see the forest and the trees.
- 6) TAKE AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH AND WORK CONSTANTLY TO IMPROVE AS A STUDENT: Your goal in this course should not merely be to earn a certain grade—it should be to become the best possible student. If all you want is an easy A, go take an easy course. A

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cheap “A” won’t help you once you get to college. Becoming a better student will. If you’re looking to prepare yourself for college, then make a commitment that you will never cut corners or settle for “good enough.”

7) **TREAT EVERY DAY LIKE YOU’RE PREPARING TO TAKE A FINAL EXAM:** One of the biggest differences between college and high school is that in college exams count for a significant portion of your grade and you’re not allowed to skip them for meeting very minimal requirements. A course like this is a great chance to start learning to how to build your course experience toward acing a big exam.

What if you need extra help, or have an issue with something we are doing in class?

I am here almost every day after school. Don’t hesitate to stop by whenever, or feel free to set up a specific time. I am aware that complications may arise which are beyond your control. If you are honest with me and willing to put in the effort, I promise that I will do my best to accommodate you.

Communication

The student will be provided with specific contact information such as course website, phone number, and email address. Students and parents may view course progress in the Parent Internet Viewer.

Materials

Henretta’s American History Beford, Freeman and Worth
Various Primary Resources

Scope and Sequence

Units to be covered

- 1.) Pre-colonial North America and Colonial America
- 2.) Revolution in America and the Early Government
- 3.) The New Republic to the Jacksonian Era
- 4.) Early industrialism, westward expansion, the South and Social change
- 5.) Regionalism and Civil War
- 6.) Reconstruction and the New South
- 7.) Progressivism, Expansionism and WWI
- 8.) Modern America and The Depression
- 9.) WWII and Origins of the Cold War
- 10.) Modern America – changes through wars, civil rights and modern thought

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