Dale High School

AP U.S. History Course Syllabus

Instructor: Mr. Curt Wilkins

The Advanced Placement United States History (APUSH) survey course is designed to provide students with the analytical skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal with the problems and materials in U.S. History. The program prepares students for intermediate and advanced college courses by making demands upon them equivalent to those made by full-year introductory college courses. Students will learn to assess historical materials – their relevance to a given interpretive problem, reliability, and importance – and to weigh the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship. The APUSH survey course will develop the skills necessary to arrive at conclusions on the basis of an informed judgment and to present reasons and evidence clearly and persuasively in essay format.

APUSH is a demanding introduction to American history and culture that assumes a high level of interest and competence. Because this course is similar to a first-year college course, students must expect that the workload will be heavier than most regular high school courses. The analytical thinking, writing, and reading skills those students develop in APUSH will equip them for college and lifelong learning. In order to succeed, students need to be motivated and keep up with the demands of a college level course. By taking the AP Exam, at the end of the course, students have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have, indeed, learned college level material and are prepared to enter advanced college courses.

Course Objectives:

Students will:

• Master a body of historical knowledge  • Demonstrate an understanding of historical chronology  • Use historical data to support an argument or position  • Differentiate between historiographical schools of thought  • Interpret and apply data from original documents, including cartoons, graphs, letters, etc.  • Effectively use analytical skills of evaluation, cause and effect, compare and contrast  • Work effectively with others to develop products and solve problems  • Prepare for and successfully pass the APUSH exam

Course Textbook: This textbook will serve as a pacing guide and initial interpretation of historical events throughout the course.

Course Organization

APUSH integrates social, political, religious, intellectual, technological, economic, and diplomatic history in order to convey the experiences of particular groups within the broader perspective of the American past. At the same time, it connects events and issues from the past to the concerns of the present. History shows Americans continuously adapting to new developments as they shape the world in which they live. Often, ordinary Americans from a diverse range of backgrounds are thrust into extraordinary circumstances and the result is an exciting study in the “American Experiment.” APUSH prepares students to become “students of history” by including the following points of emphasis:

- Chronological organization
- Geographical literacy
- Point of view
- Political dynamics
- Economic patterns
- Social and cultural trends
- Intellectual developments
- Influences on the arts

Hence, this course is designed to provide a college level experience and preparation for the AP Exam in May 2011 (cost to be announced annually). An emphasis is placed on interpreting documents, mastering a significant number of factual information, and writing critical essays. This course will fulfill the United States history graduation requirement.

The course will emphasize a series of key themes throughout the year. These themes have been determined by the College Board as essential to comprehensive study of United States history. The themes will include discussions on American culture, demographic changes over the course of America’s history, economic trends and transformations, environmental issues, the development of political institutions and the components of citizenship, social reform movements, the role of religion in the making in the United States and its impact in a multicultural society, the history of slavery and its legacies in the hemisphere, war and diplomacy, and finally, the place of the United States in an increasingly global arena. The course will trace these themes throughout the year, emphasizing the ways in which they are interconnected and examining the ways in which each helps to shape the changes over time that are so important to understanding United States history.

Essential Questions (EQ)

Class discussion and response will focus around “Essential Questions” which have been created in order to help students understand “the big picture” concerning different facets of the themes pertaining to the historical eras. The essential questions will help student focus their responses with regard to discussions, writing, and interpretation of historical scholarship.

Writing Component

All students will respond to Document-Based Questions (DBQs) and Free-Response Questions (FRQs) in order to demonstrate their ability to analyze and interpret primary sources (documents) and key themes throughout U.S. History. These essays will prepare students for the essay section(s) of the APUSH Exam. Essays will be given in class, while timed, and in take-home format approximately every 2-3 weeks.
TEACHING STYLE AND STRATEGIES: At the beginning of each chapter or unit, students will receive relative assignments including study questions, chapter I.D.’s, chapter note templates, etc. Students may also receive a workbook with chapter assignments for the entire year. These workbooks will be taken up periodically and randomly to check for completeness. Students will receive a grade based upon their completeness. Almost every class period will include lecture and discussion of the text and supplemental reading assignments; consequently, it is imperative that students remain current with their reading. Quizzes and other assignments will also be used to make sure students remain current on their reading requirements. In addition to discussion, lectures will be an opportunity for students to take notes. It has been my experience that students who take notes tend to perform better on exams. AP* U.S. History is a college-level course and will be taught as such. While students will be required to know the facts, events, people, places, etc. in this study, students will also be required to analyze, compare and contrast, evaluate, and synthesize the material presented in this course. In other words, students will be asked to study and understand history on a deeper level than expected in the average high school class.

TESTING AND EVALUATION: Unit Tests- Each chapter or unit will be followed by an exam. Exams will include I.D.’s from a list provided to students, 25 to 50 multiple choice questions, and various essay questions including free-response questions (FRQ) and document based questions (DBQ) from prior AP tests. Through the course of the year, each student will complete a minimum of 6 DBQ’s and 10 FRQ’s. A minimum of four of each (DBQ or FRQ) will be timed the same as the AP* Exam. Multiple choice questions will be worth 3 points, I.D.’s 5 points, and essays 20 points. Daily Assignments: Daily assignments will include a wide variety of activities including: study questions; interpreting maps, graphs, and tables; analysis and interpretation of primary and secondary source documents; analysis and interpretation of visual sources such as works of art, political cartoons, etc. Each of these assignments will be given a point value based upon its size, significance, complexity, etc. Students will be made aware of a point value at the time each activity is assigned. As stated previously in the syllabus, chapter packets will include a variety of daily assignments.

LATE WORK, ABSENCES, AND MAKE-UP WORK- No credit will be given for late work. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class which has been designated as the due date. Students are responsible for assignments missed as a result of absences and have the day of their return to acquire the assignments they missed and the following day to turn in the assignments they missed and/or make up any tests missed. If there are extenuating circumstances, students are responsible for making other arrangements with me.
CLASSROOM RULES
MR. CURT WILKINS-ROOM 9

1. BE PREPARED FOR CLASS- BRING TEXTBOOK, PAPER AND ALL OTHER CLASSROOM SUPPLIES AS SPECIFIED.

2. PRACTICE APPROPRIATE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR. PAY ATTENTION, DO NOT TALK OUT OF TURN, STAY IN YOUR SEAT, KEEP HANDS TO YOURSELF. IN OTHER WORDS, PRACTICE WHAT YOU WERE TAUGHT IN KINDERGARTEN.

3. OBSERVE ALL STUDENT HANDBOOK RULES.

4. NO FOOD OR DRINK IN THE CLASSROOM.

5. PLACE CELL PHONE IN ASSIGNED CUBBY WHEN YOU ENTER THE CLASSROOM.

6. DO NOT COMPLAIN ABOUT THE ROOM TEMPERATURE.

7. KEEP THE CLASSROOM TIDY.

8. DO NOT LAY YOUR HEAD ON YOUR DESK OR SLEEP.

9. TREAT SENSITIVE ISSUES LIKE RACE, RELIGION, MORAL VALUES, ETC. WITH MATURITY AND SENSITIVITY.

10. THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS TO EVERY RULE. COMMON SENSE WILL BE USED TO DETERMINE ALLOWABLE EXCEPTIONS. STUDENTS SHOULD TALK TO ME WHEN THEY FEEL AN EXCEPTION SHOULD APPLY.
MR. CURT WILKINS
CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

A. WORK FROM BELL TO BELL EVERYDAY. YOU HAVE NO TIME TO WASTE.

B. HAVE A MATURE APPROACH AND ATTITUDE ABOUT YOUR EDUCATION. YOUR EDUCATION IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ENDEAVORS OF YOUR LIFE.

C. DO YOUR BEST- BE ORGANIZED, NEAT, AND THOROUGH.

D. NO EXCUSES- JUST GET IT DONE.

E. READ ON YOUR OWN. WE DO NOT HAVE TIME TO READ EVERYTHING WE NEED TO IN CLASS.

F. IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING, GET HELP!

G. ATTEND CLASS. IT HAS BEEN MY EXPERIENCE THAT THOSE WHO MISS CLASS FREQUENTLY DO NOT DO WELL IN MY CLASS. IT DOES NOT MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHETHER THE ABSENCE IS EXCUSED OR NOT IN TERMS OF ITS IMPACT ON ACHIEVEMENT.

H. STAY ON THE TOPIC OF THE DAY. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, THEY SHOULD BE RELATIVE TO OUR STUDY.

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES:

a. Three ring binder
b. Lined notebook paper
c. Pens and pencils
d. Map pencils-small box (for history classes only)
e. 1 box of tissue
f. Supply pocket for binder

g. Calculator (for ACT Prep only)