

2008-2009 Advanced Placement US History Syllabus
DeBakey High School for Health Professions
Dr. Sarah Loeb, Teacher, Room 316 (713) 741-2410
sloeb@houstonisd.org

I. Course Purpose

Advanced Placement US History is a college-level survey course. It provides juniors an opportunity to receive credit for their high school US History requirement and a full year course of college credit (6 or 8 hours). Curriculum, materials, expectations, and workload are designed to meet these objectives. Two factors determine a candidate's eligibility to receive college credit: student performance on the national exam AND the policy of the college the student attends. AP courses can be used to fulfill the requirements for the Distinguished Achievement Diploma at DeBakey HSHP.

II. Course Description

Advanced Placement US History is designed to provide students with the analytical skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with issues and events in American history and with intermediate and advanced college courses. Students will learn to analyze and interpret a variety of historical resources, as well as develop the ability to use documentary materials, maps, pictorial and graphic evidence of historical events. Students will learn to write detailed, factually accurate essays under considerable time pressure. Students will master the study skills needed for success in college in all subjects, including reading college texts, critical thinking, outlining, listening carefully, taking class notes, writing essay exams, giving oral presentations, and budgeting time and resources.

AP courses are taught and graded at the college level and require a high level of student commitment. Student responsibility is greater than previous honors courses. Students should plan to spend **AT LEAST TEN HOURS outside of class EACH WEEK** working on AP US History. The rule of thumb for college courses is that students should spend at least three hours outside of class preparing for every hour in class, and Dr. Loeb's prior AP students have confirmed the rule's truth. Careful budgeting of time is essential.

Before beginning the course, students must have certain skills and maturity. Students should be able to express themselves with clarity and precision, as well as read at an advanced level. They must be able to listen closely and take class notes. They must be able to summarize material they have read. Students must prepare for class each day, and come willing and able to participate. Above all else, students must be willing to work hard, long, and consistently. Because of the volume of material, students must remain caught up in the work.

III. Course Expectations and Evaluation

After each unit of material, students will take rigorous exams. The exams will include objective, multiple choice tests, document-based essay tests, and free-response essay tests. Tests will be timed and similar to the national AP exam given in May. Exams and major presentations will count for 80% of the six-week cycle grade. Daily work, including concept cards and chapter outlines, reviews, and class participation, will make up the remaining 20% of the grade. Students are expected to maintain an average of 80 in the class. Those markedly below this average at the end of the fall semester may be transferred into a regular US History course for the second semester. Students must maintain satisfactory conduct, including coming to class on time, to remain in the course.

Homework assignments

Assignments such as concept cards, chapter outlines, and timelines are to be **handwritten** in blue or black ink and turned in at the beginning of the class period on the day due. Unexcused late work is accepted up to the start of the next class period – with a 50% reduction in the grade.

Notebook

Students must maintain a notebook in a ringed binder with tabs for the required sections. The sections should include: handouts (starting with the syllabus and schedule), lecture/class notes, chapter concept lists, chapter study guide questions, review sheets, and the current unit's concept cards and outlines. The notebook is an important component of the course and a measure of student responsibility. Outlines and concept cards should be kept for review for exams.

Requirements for good standing in the course:

READ ALL OF EVERY ASSIGNMENT. There is NO substitute.

Prepare for each class.

READ each assignment ON TIME.

Avoid absences. Make up work promptly. Schedule orthodontist visits on other days/times.

READ the textbook!

Listen carefully in class and take notes.

READ.

Join a study group to discuss and drill, but **do your own** outlines and concept cards.

READ.

Prepare thoroughly for oral presentations.

READ.

Make concept cards. Prepare chapter outlines. Prepare timelines. Prepare review sheets.

READ.

Memorize the concept cards, time lines and review sheets.

READ.

Study outlines and memorize them.

READ.

Practice writing essay exam answers.

READ. There is no substitute.

Work every day on history. The material **cannot** be mastered in an “all nighter.”

National Exam

The College Board will give the AP US History Exam on Friday, May 8, 2009, from 8:00 am to noon at DeBakey HSHP. This 3 hour 5 minute exam determines the student's eligibility for college credit. Preceding the exam, the teacher will provide in-class review sessions and be available as a resource; however, preparing for the exam is each student's responsibility. The teacher strongly encourages students to plan for extensive individual and group study sessions to prepare for the exam. Students should carefully weigh how many AP courses to take at one time.

The College Board issues scores ranging from a low of 0 to a high grade of 5. Exam scores are available in mid summer. Generally, a 3 or higher is considered a passing score. Different colleges have varying policies as to what score they will accept for college credit. A few colleges will not give college credit for any AP exams. Many colleges allow students with modest scores to skip introductory history courses and take higher level courses. And many, many students who earn a 2 will find their high school AP history course gave them the skills necessary to do extremely well in college. In other words, the test score is not the full measure of the course's worth to the student.

Please note that the national average scores for the AP US History exam are the lowest of any of the AP exams that the College Board administers. Slightly more than half the students in the nation taking the exam earn a 3 or higher. In other words, students must work harder (and smarter) to pass this AP exam than any other. In past years, almost all of Dr. Loeb's students take the May AP exam, and over 90% pass it. Last year, her students earned an average score of over four!

The \$85 fee for taking the national exam is reduced to \$54 for all students by the State of Texas and Houston ISD, which subsidizes each exam fee. Additionally, for students who qualify **IN THE FALL** for free and reduced school lunches, the fee is reduced to \$13! Students are strongly **URGED** to apply for the free and reduced school lunch program at the start of the school year if there is any possibility they might qualify.

SAT II Exams: All students with at least an 85 average in the class should probably take the SAT II exam in May or June, 2009. Students forget too much to take this exam their senior years. SAT II exams are one hour exams given on Saturdays. The US History SAT II focuses heavily on political, diplomatic, and economic facts and much less on social and cultural issues.

Text

Brinkley, Alan. American History, A Survey. 10th Ed. McGraw-Hill College, 1999. ISBN 0-07-303390.

Units of Study

Students will study American history from the age of European Exploration (1492) until the present time. The AP exam focuses on material through the ending of the Cold War, about 1990.

Grades

Faithful completion of reading assignments, concept cards, chapter outlines, and timelines are key to success. Daily grades comprise 20% of the grade for each cycle. Exams, quizzes, and reports account for the remaining 80% of the grade for the cycle.

End of semester exams will have essay and objective components and will be structured like the national AP exam. **In mid April**, students will write 3 essays and take an 80 question multiple choice exam **covering course material of the entire year**. This will prepare students for the national AP exam, as well as serve as the majority of the spring semester final exam grade for the course.

Exams contain many questions that are not from the text book. Understanding the material read and grasping the lecture material are important, as is a certain amount of memorization and understanding of timelines. In keeping with AP national standards, tests are college level and differ significantly from the high school courses in difficulty in terms of scope, analysis, and detail. Test taking is a skill that will improve with time and conscientious effort.

Copying another's concept cards and chapter outlines **CANNOT** substitute for reading and doing the work. **AFTER EACH STUDENT HAS FINISHED HIS OR HER WORK**, it is highly acceptable to compare his or her completed work with that of others and to analyze and discuss them.

Tip: Many students will experience a period of adjustment to the level of reading and time commitment in this college level course. Skills will improve with student practice.

Letters of Recommendation for College, Scholarships, and Programs: Dr. Loeb is delighted to write recommendations because her students are so outstanding! Please give Dr. Loeb at least 3 weeks advance notice as writing these recommendations is extremely time-consuming.

Class Rules and Policies

Please refer to your student handbook for school policy concerning Tardies, Progress Reports, Detention, Dress Code, Gum, Eating in Class, and Cheating. In addition, please keep an atmosphere of respect for all in our classroom, and do not use profanity.

Students are not excused to the rest room for the first 20 minutes and last 20 minutes of class.

Electronic Devices. While exams and quizzes are in progress, no student is to have in their possession **any** electronic device, including phones, cameras, ipods, calculators, palm pilots, any computer device or game, etc, without prior approval of the teacher. Possession of an electronic device during an exam is grounds for a zero on the exam or quiz.

Tardies/Dress Code: Students who arrive after the bell rings or out of dress code will be sent **directly** to the Office to sign in with Vice Principal Bell. They will not be admitted to class without a note from Ms. Bell, with the exception of late buses.

Problems and Disabilities. Please let the teacher know of any problems or conditions that might interfere with your ability to participate fully in class, so appropriate steps may be taken to accommodate the problem. The teacher would also like to know of any temporary problems.

Tutorials: Students needing additional assistance with AP US History may attend tutorials. Tutorials are offered from 3:25 to 4:25 on Monday through Thursdays after school.

Completion of Work after an Absence (School Policy):

1. Students who are absent on the day an assignment is GIVEN will have three school days to make up the work.
2. Students who are absent on the day an assignment is DUE must be prepared to take the test or hand in the assignment the day they return to school.
3. The teacher may give extensions for students with extended illnesses or emergencies on an individual basis. Extensions will be given in writing with a new due date specified.
4. Extensions will not be given for lack of organization or planning by the student (e.g., inkless printers, crashed programs, forgotten materials, last-minute realizing you need help, etc.)
5. Students who are absent from class for any reason are responsible for the work they miss. Call more than one classmate to be sure your first source got the full and accurate assignment.
6. **Students who are at school for any portion of a school day must turn in work due that day to Dr. Loeb in Room 316 by 3:25 p.m. of that day even if they have an excused absence from US history class (field trip, dentist visit, school programs, etc.)**

I look forward to this year with you! -- Dr. Loeb

AP US History Syllabus Fall 2008
Parents and students must complete and Return to Teacher, Dr. Sarah Loeb, Room 316
sloeb@houstonisd.org , (713) 741-2410

We understand that the AP US History course covers material from the year 1492 to present, while the regular US History course covers material from 1877 to present. Students who decide not to take the AP course **MUST** change to the regular US History course at the start of the fall semester!

I have read the 2008-2009 Syllabus for AP US History and understand my responsibilities as a student in this course and the requirements to maintain good standing. I understand the course requires at least **ten hours** of work each week outside of class. I accept the intense challenge of the course and will follow course policies.

Student signature, followed by printed name

For Parents

I have read the course syllabus for AP US History and support the enrollment in this course of my daughter/son. I know that if I have any questions, that I am encouraged to contact the teacher, Dr. Loeb, by e-mail (sloeb@houstonisd.org) or telephone (713) 741-2410, with my questions or to schedule a conference.

Parents, please print the following information (to be used only by teacher to contact parents):

1. _____
Parent or guardian's signature, followed by printed name

Parent's address

Parent's home telephone number

Parent's work telephone number

Parent's cell telephone number

Parent's e-mail address

2. _____
Parent or guardian's signature, followed by printed name

Parent's address

Parent's home telephone number

Parent's work telephone number

Parent's cell telephone number

Parent's e-mail address