



# A.P. US History Syllabus, revised 8/2019

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## Warning! Warning! Warning!

This is going to be one of the hardest courses you've taken so far, but I am confident that in the end you will not only be better writers, readers, and thinkers; but you will also come out of my class ready and able to get what you want. This is a college level course and I teach it that way. It will require a great deal of work, especially during the first few months. After some time, it will seem to ease up as you become more confident in your new skills. Never give up. True learning comes only from adversity and from getting things wrong. Do not be discouraged! If things seem to be getting too rough, talk to me immediately. You are required to take the Advanced Placement test in U.S. History at the end of this course. If you trust me and do what I ask of you, you WILL reach your fullest potential on that test and you will NOT FAIL IT. I have no doubts about that. I also do not doubt that the ride through APUSH will be bumpy at times, so buckle up...

## What Are We Going to Do?

We will look at the many perspectives (via primary and secondary sources) that have fueled the history of the U.S.A. and do so with a critical eye. Our goal is the goal of every scholar of history and that is **truth**. Historians want to know how things came to be the way they are, not just to know what went on long ago. This helps people make better decisions about the future. In a country that claims it is democratic, this kind of careful decision-making is very important and you must be well-armed with an understanding of how to find the truth so that your future decisions will be sound ones. Civics is at the heart of what we do here.

## We will also, along the way, learn

- how to write subjective and objective essays (so we can prove our points)
- how to ask our bosses for a raise (so we can live in mansions)
- how to have meaningful discussion and debate (so we can be expert politicians)
- the roles that economy, politics, and society had in the creation of modern America
- how to interpret maps, graphs, the work of others, and historical documents
- how to make a path to truth through hypotheses, inferences, and analysis
- how to master the skills necessary to succeed on the AP US history exam

You might even learn who I am.



## The official course description from AP (hold me to this):

The AP program in United States History is designed to provide students with the analytical skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in United States 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 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.

([www.collegeboard.org/ap](http://www.collegeboard.org/ap))

## How You Can Find the Teacher

I teach in Room 238. You can also often find me in Room 207 (I&S Office) when I am not in 238. You can drop things off in my mailbox downstairs or send me an e-mail. I check my mail often, but you should allow ample time for a proper response. You can make appointments to see me anytime by confirmed e-mail or in person. Let me know about any problems before they become too big.... And I should warn you, this happens quickly, especially in APUSH.

## Texts & Materials/Actions Needed to Succeed

[America's History, 8<sup>th</sup> Ed.](#) by James Henretta, et.al. \$125

American Studies for documents and readings in class

Handouts and Website Readings online TBA (Acrobat Reader, html)

2 Notebooks (One for notes and one to be kept in class as your "Open Book".)



I wrote your  
textbook.

**What to bring to class.** Every period, a student is required to be in his or her seat with a notebook (labeled with name, period, and subject), a working pen, and all other materials as directed by teacher during previous meeting. There should be no other materials on a student's desk or in their hands to maximize attention. I will teach you how to be disciplined if this is not done.

**Reading is very important** in the social studies. You are responsible for ANYTHING included in any reading (including captions and text features) even if I do not go over it in class. There will often be a quiz and there will always be discussion so be prepared.

## Evaluation & Grading Scale

**Please Note:** I HATE POINTS and parental and student obsessions with points. They take away from what the focus of a student should be, which is to learn. My goal is to see you through struggles and will reward you greatly for overcoming obstacles. I am satisfied by students who improve and NOT by points. Your grade is not your grade until the end of the semester. The number grade is never as important as the letter grade, which is determined holistically and not strictly mathematically.. Absolutely every student will get the grade that best fits a reflection of their progress.

### 90% of Semester Grade consists of the following:

**Proper Turn-in Procedure:** I need your full name, date due, assignment label, and period # on every assignment or I will not grade it and will toss it in recycling. This is strictly enforced.

**Writing: 35%** This includes summative and formative assessments that involve the writing process (i.e. essay writing, prep, DBQ work, source analysis.) These assignments must be done in the specified format in order to be accepted. Writings are graded based on AP's 9 point scale or in a 10 or 20 point scale. They have big influence on the grade since there are not too many of them. These involved assignments often require a longer time for assessment and feedback by the teacher.

**Practice: 25%** This includes formative assessments, which help a student learn. Practice is usually graded on a 3 or 5 point scale. Not every practice assignment is graded, but I cannot indicate which will be graded and which will not, in the hope that every assignment is taken as seriously as the next.

**Exams: 25%** Includes unit exams and other standardized quizzes and exams. Summative assessments are meant to prepare you for the AP test and will include many actual AP questions. Quizzes may vary in format. These assignments are usually graded quickly since they are the most important component of the grade. Cheating on these assignments will result in official disciplinary action.

**Participation: 15%** This includes seminar participation and leadership, class discussion, and attendance. Most participation is gained via Socratic Seminars, an activity formulated by past students. Leaders will be graded when their week to lead passes and participants will be graded on a 3 point scale during every scheduled seminar. (Additional info forthcoming on this grade.) Open assignments must be well-reasoned and in the appropriate format. Open notebooks are marked every ten or so weeks on a 20 point scale.

### 10% of Semester Grade consists of the following:

**Final:** A comprehensive final assessment will be given at the close of each semester. This grade is not always obvious on Aspen so please beware of the 90/10 percentages.

**CPS Grading Scale:** **A** 89.5-100 **B** 80-89.4 **C** 70-79.4 **D** 60-69.4 **F** the toilet-60 *CPS policy on excessive absences may result in a failure... so show up!*

**Taft AP/IB grade point policy:** *This AP class may reward college credit and is taught at a slightly modified college level. Because of this Taft awards the following grade points. **A** 6 (a super duper A) **B** 5 (a super A) **C** 4 (like a regular A) **D** 1 (like a regular D) **F** 0*

**Cheating**, plagiarism, or other dishonest means to get your work done will result in a zero grade for the assignment and will require me to report the incident for disciplinary action. This is very serious! If you need help with citations, please let me know, before you find yourself in the stocks. (See class website for details on citations.) Look honest during tests. Keep your eyes to yourself and raise your hand with any questions. During class there should be no active electronic communication or photos being taken without permission. Anything you write for should be your own work. If I suspect dishonesty, you will receive a grade of ZERO and you will be referred for disciplinary sanction.



**You may see me** about your grade or if you have specific questions about an evaluation, but this should be done outside of class. I will post grades regularly for you to track your status.

## Attendance and Making Up Missed Work

**Turning in Work:** Work must be submitted in the appropriate bins. All work should be labelled with the complete student name, period, and some label indicating which assignment it is. No work can be typed without teacher permission. Anything that does not meet these guidelines will be returned ungraded and can be resubmitted as late work.

**Attendance Mistakes:** If student sees a mistake, they should notify teacher by e-mail explaining the situation and which period and date are in question.

**Tardiness:** If you arrive to class after the bell rings you are tardy. Walk into class quietly, sign the tardy book, if available, and have a seat. Hanging out beside the door in the hallway does not constitute being in class. You are on time if you are AT YOUR DESK when class begins.

**Missing work due to absences:** I do not care much about whether an absence is excused or not, the point is that you were not in class to receive valuable information. A field trip does not count as an absence, so turn in your work the day it is due if you are on a field trip. Upon return, see the teacher AFTER CLASS. Check assignments while you were away. It is your responsibility to make up missing work. You will fail a test if you do not schedule a makeup test the day of your return. After absent work is turned in it will be graded on a delayed basis, but is given priority over other late work.

**Due to laziness, forgetfulness, or hungry dogs:** I want you to learn from your mistakes and so I will accept late practice or writing assignments if I get it within 24 hours from when they were originally due. Just write GRACE at the top of the paper. You can do this 2 times first semester and 1 time second semester, but often there are civic education opportunities that can earn a student an extra grace. After you spend your "graces," you will be required to fill in a CLAF form, available on the website, and submit it with any late work and your grade will be reduced by 50%. This work will be evaluated before the end of each semester and is graded on a delayed basis. A grace can also be used to redo any practice or writing assignment. Any late work not submitted properly will not be graded and will be wantonly tossed into recycling.

**Stuff Happens:** You will find that I am very reasonable if you have any issues and attempt in a mature and responsible fashion to take responsibility for any dilemmas that may pop up. Let me know if you have any special issues you feel I should know about as soon as you can. If you are feeling discouraged, please see me before you are buried in regret.

## Reading Schedule

It is your responsibility to follow the reading schedule carefully and to keep up with any adjustments made to the schedule. These updates will be posted visually and verbally highlighted in class.

## Addendum

It is important for me, as a teacher, to teach. After getting to know the needs of my classes and students I often make amendments to the syllabus and course rules and inform you of these changes at the turn of the semester. These will be posted publicly and announced.

## In the classroom...

We are all professionals here and this room should be a safe place to explore new ideas. You are to treat each other with respect so we can all learn. Everyone has a right for their opinion to be heard in the classroom. There should be no heckling, stonings, witch hunts, etc. When someone is talking we should be listening to their concerns before responding. History and the social studies can evoke very strong passions for which we should be ready.

Swearing, curses, and other insensitive comments are not tolerated at all. It will result in official disciplinary action if I hear it because it is not the sort of thing that should be coming out of the mouth of a scholar. We should respect the personal property and space of other students. I do not tolerate sleeping, loud yawning, or eating in the classroom. All bodily fluids and personal effects should be kept tidy and personal. Dress in the Taft dress code. On test days you are not allowed to wear clothing that relates to our subject matter. Follow directions concerning cell phones, recorders, audio players, and other fun stuff you got at Best Buy.

Note that I will treat you like adults with the respect and responsibilities attached to that status. You are responsible for your own actions and inaction. It might be tough at first, but you will learn to deal with it. If you are unable to cope with this, you may find that this will be a very tough semester.



## Columbus Was A Nervous Guy

When Christopher Columbus began his voyage he was unsure about how long it would take him to get to other side of the ocean. No one he knew had ever made the trip before and he was a bit worried about dying at some point due to starvation, mutiny, or giant sea monsters. He was unsure and nervous as he made his way across the ocean and expressed such in his journal. In the end he found Hispaniola and the effects of his effort contributed to the development of the modern world (for good or bad.) When you are in the midst of learning something new and strange it is normal to feel uneasy and nervous. That is what actual learning feels like and in the end it is well worth the trouble. So go with the flow and trust the process....

Section	Question Type	Number of Questions	Timing	Percentage of Total Exam Score
I	Part A: Multiple-choice questions	55 questions	55 minutes	40%
	Part B: Short-answer questions	4 questions	50 minutes	20%
II	Part A: Document-based question	1 question	55 minutes	25%
	Part B: Long essay question	1 question	35 minutes	15%

