

# Welcome to AP U.S. History

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**"Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."**

**James Madison**

**"History is above all the study of complexity. The capacity to live and come to terms with complexity may be the hardest and most important thing we have to learn, and we have to learn it over and over."**

**Hannah Gray  
President-University of Chicago**

**"American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful, and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it."**

**James Baldwin**

## I. Introductory Remarks:

I love US History. I always have. And a major reason is that unlike those unlucky students about whom Loewen writes I had great history teachers who taught me that the study of history can be an **empowering** enterprise. Perhaps the only thing that historians of all political persuasions actually agree on is the idea that the study of our nation's past can be a transformative experience for students. The type of citizen you become will invariably be influenced by the understanding you construct of our nation's story.

I hope to be able to convey that same sense of empowerment to you over the course of the next 36 weeks. My goal is not to shape how you understand history, but only to give you the skills and sense of perspective to construct **YOUR OWN** meaning from the events and ideas which we study. As Baldwin and Gray tells us in the above quotes, the story of our nation's past is always complicated and often filled with contradictions. Only by struggling to understand the nuances of our history and coming to grips with this dissonance can you become the active, engaged and productively skeptical members of a society which relies on its citizens to shape its progress.

## II. Criteria for success:

To that end you will EACH be expected to develop a very specific set of behavioral and academic skills meant to help you more deeply understand the material which we will be covering.

**A. Building an Academic Identity:** The following are characteristics of a successful student which you will be expected to develop over the course of the year. These qualities are meant to help you succeed in this course and beyond.

1. **Mindfulness**—each of you need to make a CONSCIOUS effort to focus on the work we are doing in class. Make a commitment to being “present” when we are together. This means...
  - a. Put your phones in the “phone receptacle” when you come into class
  - b. Use the time before the bell rings to get organized for class: Take out the material you need, boot up your chromebook, etc.
  - c. Come to class prepared to succeed. Have all of the necessary equipment and material. **(See Section II)**
  - d. Demonstrate some personal self-control. Avoid distractions and distracting behaviors. Class time is not the time to organize your binder, search through your backpack or make noise with your pens/water bottles or lunches.
  
2. **Engagement/Thoughtfulness**
  - a. Come to class regularly and on time.
  - b. Listen to, read and **FOLLOW** directions.
  - c. Complete your assignments and be prepared to share your thoughts (not answers) with your classmates.
  - d. “Do” your homework don’t “Finish” your homework. Take time and think about what you are writing. With that in mind your written responses should always be in **YOUR OWN WORDS!!!** Do not as you were taught in junior high school/grade school “find” the right answers and copy them down, but to think about what you are being asked and demonstrate your understanding of the material.
  - e. It is more important to **THINK>KNOW!!!** I am not looking for you to produce the “right” answer, but rather for you to produce a thoughtful, appropriate response to the material.

### **3. Self-Reliance/Independence**

- a. As much as I might like to, I am pretty sure your parents are not going to want to send me to college with you. Therefore, the most important thing I can help you learn is how to develop the confidence necessary to be an independent and successful learner.
- b. Learn to problem solve. If you are not sure about what to do about something, (directions/assignments/responses) **THINK** about what has been asked of you and then make a reasonable and proactive decision. (It is always better to do something than to throw up your hands and do nothing.)

### **4. Initiative/Responsibility**

- a. Your success in this class is up to you. I do not **GIVE** grades. I assess the degree to which you have met the standards we have established.
- b. If you have questions, problems, concerns, **YOU** should take the initiative and come to me so that we can work them out. I know that can be a scary situation, but I promise that if you seek me out one-on-one we will find a way to address whatever is on your mind.
- c. Likewise, you need to take responsibility for doing your work and more importantly making up your work when you miss class. (See specific section below.)

### **5. Perserverance/Resilience**

- a. These qualities are the two most often mentioned characteristics of successful people.
- b. No matter what your experience has been to this point, you **MUST** learn how to move through the challenges placed in your path.
- c. It is true when people tell you that you learn more from your mistakes than from your successes.
- d. Don't be afraid to try and fail. I promise you that as long as you continue trying and learning from you experiences you will ultimately succeed in this course.
- e. For those of you who are used to things coming easily to them give yourself the freedom to struggle with new and complex concepts and skills so that you can reach new levels of success.

B. **Academic Skills:** This year we are going to pursue a “skills based” assessment model (see specific evaluation handout). Below is an introductory list of the academic skills that will be developed and assessed over the course of the year.

#### **1. Analytical Writing**

- a. Students will be introduced and given regular opportunities to develop the skills of analytical writing. (Thesis statements, use of evidence, synthesis of historical significance.

#### **2. Participation and Discussion**

- a. Students will be expected to contribute to our class discussions and group work. The development of concise, focused thinking will be practiced in both small groups and full class discussion. (**NOTE:** If you are an individual for whom talking in class creates anxiety, please come and see me as soon as possible so that we can develop some strategies to help you successfully meet this standard.)

#### **3. Content Acquisition**

- a. Students will be expected to demonstrate an accurate and nuanced understanding of the material being covered. In addition to the basic “factual” historical information, students will be expected to demonstrate and understanding of the significance of those events.

#### **4. Developing an Academic Identity (see above)**

### III. Equipment List:

In order to help you develop the aforementioned behaviors and skills the following “school supplies” will be required. **(If for any reason acquiring these supplies presents a problem, please see me as soon as possible so that we can figure out a way to help you get them.)**

- A. **Your chromebook.** We may not use it every day, but you need to have it in class and CHARGED at all times. If you are having or develop problems with your chrome book it is YOUR responsibility to take it to the tech department asap and get it fixed. You also need to tell me immediately so that we can address the problem.
- B. **A three-ringed binder** (2-3 inches)---The is an enormous amount of material and information to master in this class. Therefore organization and accessibility will be the cornerstone of your success in this course. It all begins with the binder.
- C. **Spiral Notebook**—You will need a spiral notebook (or looseleaf paper), for taking notes in class and while reading, and the other for completion of in-class assignments.
- D. **Section dividers**—I have no idea what these things are really called, but you know what they are. Those pages with the little plastic thingees at the edge.
  - 1. The section dividers should be labeled as follows...
    - a. **Instructions/Directions**—here you will keep the general instructional and procedural handouts that you will receive. (Like this one.) (green)
    - b. **Class Notes**—Fill this section with loose leaf paper or a spiral and keep your daily class notes here. Again to make it more functional make sure you **title and date each days notes**. This will make it easier to find the information you will need later.
    - c. **Unit/Daily Assignments**—put your assignment sheets, and daily homework and writing assignments in this section.
    - d. **Written work**—Keep completed (and returned) assignments in this section. Think of this as your “history portfolio.” By keeping track of your written work we can accurately assess your progress and make sure you are getting the feedback and instruction you need to improve your skills.
    - e. **Readings**—Put your reading handouts in this section so that you have access to them during class. This will increase your ability to participate and help you understand things more fully.
  - 2. **Textbook**—Textbook reading will be assigned for out-of-class time. Therefore, unless specifically requested you DO NOT need to bring you book to class. Keep it at home or in you locker depending on where you choose to read it.
  - 3. **4 x 6 Note Cards**—Not 5x7 or 3x5....Get a package of 4x6 note cards and bring them to class EVERY day because we will be using them often.

In the spirit of fresh starts, cooperation and success, and so we can all start the year on the right track, I will expect you to have all this stuff by Thursday. Please let me know if there is a problem.

## IV: Rules of the Road

What follows are a set of criteria for types of behavior. Please be sure to read the following section carefully because you are going to be held responsible for the information that follows.

- A. **Attendance**—You cannot succeed in this course if you are not in class. Since so much of what we do in this course is contingent upon our interacting with one another and using our cumulative intelligence to confront the complex issues under discussion, you WILL be expected to be in class. Your classmates, group mates and partners are relying on you to fulfill your responsibilities. Excessive absences both unauthorized and authorized will inhibit your ability to acquire and demonstrate the skills which are the focus of this course.
  
- B. **Tardiness**—Just a word about being late to class. I understand that the building is a mess. However, it is still your responsibility to get to class on time. **Consistent tardiness is not acceptable.** If you are having trouble getting to class on time please see me, but if tardiness becomes a habit I will be forced to contact the Deans and they will take appropriate action.
  
- C. **Student Attire**—Before you can respect others you must respect yourself. The guidelines issued by HPHS should be seen as an opportunity to make more self-affirming choices, and thereby challenge a trend in fashion which seeks to objectify both men and womyn. **I BEG YOU** not to put me in the position of having to issue “Fashion Citations” for inappropriate dress.
  
- D. **Phones, Food and Facilities**—As mentioned at the beginning of the course description, mindfulness and focus are crucial to your success in this class. With that in mind....
  1. Please get into the habit of putting your phone in the “phone holster” at the beginning of class each day.
  2. This course meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> period. With that in mind barring medical necessity there will be **NO EATING** in class.
  3. For similar reasons I expect you to be able to control you “basic urges.” Unless it is a necessity please plan on using the restrooms before and/or after class.
  
- E. **Academic Honesty**—Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. For those of you who are not sure what constitutes academic dishonesty here is a list. **Please read this so that we have no confusion about what is acceptable and what is NOT.**
  1. **Academic dishonesty includes:**
    - a. Sharing homework responses including annotations.
    - b. Cheating on tests or quizzes either in the classroom or in the Test Center or at home (should the experience be a take-home test).
    - c. Using Sparks Notes or **other sources** to decipher literature when specifically asked not to—including the internet.
    - d. Turning in other students’ papers or essays as your own.
      - i. Plagiarizing in any form. This means taking credit for the written work of others. The forms of plagiarism range from not citing properly (or at all) to turning in Internet written papers.
      - ii. Sharing test or quiz information with students in other classes. (Whether for this class or another.)
      - iii. Turning in identical answers to assignments after “working together” is also a form of plagiarism. Working together is fine. Just be sure to put the responses into **YOUR OWN WORDS!**

## V. “TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS”

### 1. Homework Completion

- a. As discussed in the assessment handout, completing and turning in your daily assignments is the foundation of all learning and development in this class.
- b. First and foremost it is YOUR responsibility to keep track of the work that is assigned, complete it and turn it in on time. (For those of you who need concrete definitions: ON TIME=before the class period begins.)
- c. We will be using the on line “classroom” this year and ALL written assignments are to be submitted to the classroom before you get to class.
- d. On occasion students will be instructed to print assignments to bring to class. It is expected that those assignments will be printed out before class and turned in at the end of the period.
- e. Individual missing work will not be penalized (no points remember) but a consistent pattern of not turning in assignments will have a negative impact on the student’s overall assessment

### 2. Unfinished Work

- a. There will be no such thing as **LATE WORK** in this class.
- b. If you miss class for any reason other than illness, the expectation is that your work will be completed on time. (i.e. You have field trip on Tuesday and you have a RRQ assignment due that day as well. I will expect your work to be turned into the classroom before class on Tuesday.)
- c. If you are ill it will be your responsibility to see me as soon as you return to class to make arrangements for finishing your missing work.

### 3. “Exceptions to the Rule”

- a. Life is full of unexpected realities. With that in mind all “rules” have a certain flexible reality....
  - i. If the assignment requires a reading that the student does not have, the student will have an extra day to complete the work.
  - ii. If the student has had a prolonged absence due to sudden family or health issues (not vacation/college visit/extracurricular activity) the student needs to contact me so we can work out a viable plan.
  - iii. If the student knows there is going to be a prolonged absence due to family/health issues then they need to see me **AS SOON AS** possible to make a plan.

### 4. Test/Essay Make Up

- a. If students are absent on the day of an exam, they have 5 school days to make up the test in the testing center.
- b. If students are absent the day an essay is due, theyI will expected to turn that essay in as soon as you return to class.

# **FINALLY!!!**

## **COME AND SEE ME!!!**

If you are having trouble with ANY aspect of this course I promise you that WE can work out a manageable solution. Your success in this course is important to me. It is the beginning of a new year, a fresh start. You are not in this alone. If you **try**, I promise to provide the assistance and consideration you need to handle the challenges which await us.

I may not always be able to recognize your need for assistance, therefore the final responsibility which I bestow upon you is that if you need help, **please** tell me, **I PROMISE** we will address your concerns in a positive, nurturing atmosphere and arrive at some specific strategies aimed at solving the problem together.

The following are a list of my “non-teaching” periods.

**Periods: 3, 4, 7, 8.**

**I do not yet know which lunch periods I have on Wednesday & Thursday, but will share that information with you as soon as I get it.**

**For the first 6 weeks of school, I will be at STUNTS rehearsal every day so that time after school is available.**

Otherwise I can be reached at...

[mrosenzweig@dist113.org](mailto:mrosenzweig@dist113.org)



**“LET’S HAVE SOME FUN!!!”**

# PLEASE RETURN BY FRIDAY

It is important to me that we are all (teacher, students, and parents) on the same page in terms of **EXPECTATIONS AND PROCEDURES** as we begin the school year. With that in mind the students have been asked to share this course description with you.

When you are finished going over the information included in this course description, I would appreciate it if you would print YOUR STUDENTS name on the line below and sign on the last line and have your student return this page to me, by Friday.

For Students:

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read the course descriptions and understand the expectations and conducts of behavior that will determine my success in this course.

For Parent:

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read the course descriptions and understand the expectations and conducts of behavior that will determine my student's success in this course.

More than anything else, I want each student to have a positive and successful experience in this class. There is a lot to learn and many important skills to develop. Working together I am sure we can enhance each student's chances to gain the personal and academic confidence that will prepare them for the future. PLEASE feel free to contact me. For a variety of reasons, EMAIL is the most expeditious means of communication, but if you want to use the phone, please understand that my response while prompt, will be less "immediate." In interest of facilitating the most effective and direct communications possible, I would also appreciate it if you could provide the following information.

Parent's home email \_\_\_\_\_

Best phone number to use to contact you \_\_\_\_\_