

Advanced Placement United States History Belchertown High School

Academic Year 2009 - 2010

Teacher: Mr. O'Brien

E-Mail: lo'brien@belchertown.org

Voice Mail: (413) 323-9419 ext. 2319

Course Description:

Advanced Placement United States History is designed to provide students with the analytical skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with problems and materials in U.S. history. The ultimate objective of the course is to prepare students for intermediate and advanced college history courses by making demands upon them equivalent to those made by a full-year introductory college survey course. Students will learn to assess historical materials--their relevance to a given interpretive problem, their reliability, and their significance--and to evaluate the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship. Also, students will develop the skills necessary to arrive at conclusions based on informed judgments and to present their interpretations and supporting evidence clearly and persuasively in essay format.

The content of this course will cover the grand sweep of United States History, from 15th century pre-Contact indigenous cultures through the present. Students will use primary and secondary sources to examine common themes in American history such as social and political reform, foreign policy, cultural formation and economic development. In particular, students will be asked to study, analyze, and write on five major themes that can be found throughout the history of the United States:

- 1. economic transformations, including changes in trade, commerce and technology and the effects of capitalist development;**
- 2. politics and citizenship, including the growth of democracy, the development of the modern state and the contours of citizenship;**
- 3. American diversity, including the role of race, class, ethnicity, gender and religion in the history of the United States;**
- 4. reform, especially the diverse movements that have (and still do) focused on a broad range of issues from anti-slavery, education, labor, women's rights, civil rights, gay rights and government;**
- 5. globalization, particularly U.S. global hegemony, the development of markets, imperialism and cultural exchange.**

On May 7, 2009 students will take (and excel on!!!) the Advanced Placement exam in United States History. After the Advanced Placement exam you will complete a research paper on a local history topic, which will serve as their final exam grade for the course.

Course Objectives: Students will

1. know a broad body of historical knowledge;
2. demonstrate understanding of historical chronology;
3. use evidence and historical documents to support an argument;
4. interpret and analyze primary and secondary documents;
5. use higher order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and assessment;
6. prepare for and practice the skills needed to pass the AP History exam;
7. analyze, assess, and evaluate historical research;
8. create original historical research.

All coursework will be grounded in the philosophy set forth in the Belchertown High School Mission Statement: academic excellence and responsible citizenship will be fostered and pursued in a positive, safe, and respectful environment. In order to create a positive, safe, and respectful environment, students will be expected to follow and will be assessed on our school's Social and Civic Expectations, which are to:

- demonstrate respect for themselves and their school environment.
- contribute to a positive school climate.
- work cooperatively to achieve group goals or resolve conflicts.
- respect and appreciate the diversity of the entire BHS community.
- participate in activities that encourage leadership and service to school/community.
- understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democratic and multicultural society.

Course Texts:

Foner, Eric. *Give Me Liberty: An American History, Volume 2*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008)

Lorence, James J. *Enduring Voices (Document Sets to accompany The Enduring Vision), Volumes 1 & 2*. 4th ed. (Lexington, MA.: D.C. Heath and Company, 2000)

Madaras, Larry and James M. SoRelle. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in American History, Volumes 1 & 2, 9th ed.* (Guilford, CT: McGraw Hill/Dushkin, 2001)

Newman, John J. and John M. Schmalbach. *United States History: Preparing for the Advanced Placement Examination, 2nd Revised ed.* (New York: Amsco School Publications, 2006)

Painter, Nell Irvin. *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877 – 1919*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1989)

Schweikart, Larry and Michael Allen. *A Patriot's History of the United States: From Columbus's Great Discovery to the War on Terror*. (New York: Sentinel, 2004)

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present*. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995)

Work at Home and in Class:

This course, like any first-year college course, requires that students have the discipline and maturity to complete all textbook and monograph reading by the assigned due dates without the instructor having to constantly check for completion. The course outline below provides the complete schedule for the Foner text, Painter's *Standing at Armageddon*, and unit tests. In October I will distribute an addendum to this reading schedule that includes several monograph excerpts that you will access online through Moodle, an online course management software.

This schedule is provided to help you plan your work in this course around your busy schedule (and I do not mean that facetiously). If you complete this reading on time you will be able to: contribute intelligent comments to class discussion, develop your own interpretations of the past, compose complex thesis statements and essays, analyze related primary sources, score well on the Advanced Placement test and, most importantly, understand what the heck I am talking about in lectures. Since student reading levels in any high school course are so varied, there is no magical number of hours that I can prescribe in this syllabus as the normative amount of time you will need to devote to this reading. You simply have to read, take notes and be prepared to utilize that information in all of our class work.

In class you will be expected to take notes on lectures, participate in class discussion, analyze a considerable number of primary sources and evaluate a variety of written and visual interpretations of the past. The function of class lectures will be to present historical interpretations that either enhance or differ from those presented in your secondary reading. The purpose of the seminar style discussions will be to ensure your understanding of what you have read in the various texts, as well as to gain insights into course content that will help you excel on all aspects of the AP test and expand your broader historical understanding. In order to excel on the AP test, we will be analyzing and interpreting a significant number of primary sources, as well as perfecting essay writing skills. The bottom line is simply: **to get the most out of classroom instruction, you need to keep up with the assigned reading.**

Primary Sources and Document Based Questions (DBQ):

In *An Intelligent Person's Guide to History*, the British historian John Vincent asserts that "History is about evidence. It is also about other things: hunches, imagination, interpretation, guesswork. First and foremost, though, comes evidence: no evidence, no history." Primary sources are the evidence upon which historians construct their interpretations of the past. In this course, students will learn to analyze, assess, and interpret primary sources ranging from, but not limited to maps, newspaper articles, photographs, political cartoons, speeches, letters, diaries, data collections, and government documents; they will then use those primary sources to construct their own interpretations of the past. Lorence's *Enduring Voices* will be used frequently to provide primary sources for students in this course. Samples of the primary source document sets we will study in each unit are included in the overview below, to give students a sense of this critical aspect of the course.

Within each unit students will work on at least one document based question. Document based questions are intended to have students practice writing, primary source analysis, and higher order thinking skills in one (not so simple) task. During a unit students may be asked to outline an essay response to a DBQ, write a full essay, or work with a partner or small group to brainstorm a potential DBQ response. The final AP examination will include one DBQ that all test-takers must answer. During the course of the year students will work individually, in small groups, and as a class to master the

skills of primary source analysis and the integration of primary source content in essay writing.

Exams:

As noted in the course outline below, students will take an exam that will involve answering one of two possible essay questions. Since the AP test is a timed examination, students must become acquainted with working under time constraints. Therefore, you will only have the forty-four minutes of class to complete a test.

Quizzes:

The first section of the AP test requires that students answer 80 multiple-choice questions in 55 minutes. In order to be fully prepared for that section, you will take a multiple-choice question quiz every day we have APUSH during lunch period, either during the first or fourth lunch period.

Analytical Essays:

Prior to taking Advanced Placement U.S. History, students must read chapters one through three of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* and chapters one and two of Larry Schweikart's and Michael Allen's *A Patriot's History of the United States* and write a 5 to 7 page essay comparing and contrasting their respective interpretations of American Colonial history. This essay will count as a test grade in the first grading quarter.

In subsequent units, students will read part of Nell Irvin Painter's *Standing at Armageddon*, along with some other interpretive essays and monograph excerpts. These narrative interpretations of America's history will provide interesting counterpoints to the account provided in our standard texts. Students will be asked to write short essays analyzing Painter's and the other readings, which, like your summer essay, will count as a test grades. More information on those assignments will be provided when we get our Moodle account up and running.

Final Paper/Project:

After the AP exam is administered in May, students will be required to complete a final research paper or project on a topic of their choice (with my approval) that will involve significant primary source research.

Grade Components:

- **Exams 65%**
 - This component includes essay tests, DBQ essays, and analytical essays.
- **Quizzes 10%**
 - This component includes multiple choice quizzes.
- **Home and Class work 25%**
 - This component includes class participation, thesis statement and essay outline exercises, and abstract writing.

***** All grades will be updated on iPass on Monday*****

Course Outline

U.S. I review (September 3rd to October 9th)

Test: Friday, October 9th

Reconstruction & The Gilded Age (1865 – 1890s)

- October 13th: Foner, chap. 15 (entire chapter)
- October 21st: Foner, chap. 16 (pp. 591 – 620)
- November 2nd: Foner, chap. 16 & 17 (pp. 620 - 654)

Test: Friday, November 13th

Progressivism at home and abroad (1890s – 1920)

- November 16th: Foner, chap. 17 (pp. 654 – 661)
Foner, chap. 18 (pp. 674 – 689)
- November 23rd: Foner, chap. 18 (pp. 689 – 713)
- December 7th: Foner, chap. 16 (pp. 661 – 671)
- December 14th: Foner, chap. 19, (entire chapter)

Test: Wednesday, December 23rd

The Rise of Modern America (1920 – 1945)

- January 6th: Foner, chap. 20
- January 19th: Foner, chap. 21
- February 1st: Foner, chap. 22

Test: Friday, February 12th

From the Post-War Liberal Consensus to a New Right (1945 – 1989)

- February 24th: Foner, chap. 23
- March 8th: Foner, chap. 24
- March 22nd: Foner, chap. 25
- April 5th: Foner, chap. 26
Foner, chap. 27 (pp. 1048 – 1082)

Test: April 16th

AP Test Review – 2 weeks