

AP United States History

The Course

The AP program in United States History is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in United States history. The program pre-pares 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. An AP United States History course should thus 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.

Student Selection

Admission to an AP course should depend upon a student's commitment to the subject as well as such formal credentials as high aptitude scores or outstanding grade records. Many students lacking outstanding credentials have successfully completed AP courses and obtained college credit or advanced placement through the AP Examination. The U.S. History course is generally offered to eleventh and twelfth graders; about 75 percent of the students who take the examination are eleventh graders.

College Courses

Introductory United States history courses vary considerably among individual colleges. Most institutions offer a survey course, with extensive chronological coverage and readings on a broad variety of topics in such special fields as economic history, cultural and intellectual history, and social history, in addition to political-constitutional and diplomatic history. Other colleges offer courses that concentrate on selected topics or chronological periods. However, both types of courses are concerned with teaching factual knowledge and critical analytic skills. Since there is no specific college course that an AP course in United States History can duplicate in detailed content and coverage, the aim of an AP course should be to provide the student with a learning experience equivalent to that obtained in most college introductory United States history courses.

Teaching the Course

Most AP courses are designed to give students a grounding in the subject matter of United States history and in major interpretive questions that derive from the study of selected themes. One common approach is to conduct a survey course in which a textbook, with supplementary readings in the form of documents, essays, or books on special themes, provides substantive and thematic coverage. A second approach is the close examination of a series of problems or topics through reading specialized writings by historians and through supplementary readings. In the latter kind of course, the teacher can devote one segment to a survey by using a concise text or an interpretive history. Whichever approach is used, students need to have access to materials that provide them with an overview of United States history and enable them to establish the context and significance of specialized interpretive problems. Although there is little to be gained by rote memorization of names and dates in an encyclopedic manner, a student must be able to draw upon a reservoir of systematic factual knowledge in order to exercise analytic skills intelligently. Striking a balance between teaching factual knowledge and critical analysis is a demanding but crucial task in the design of a successful AP course in history.

Class Expectations

1. Written Work

All assigned written work is to be handed in at the beginning of class on the day on which it is due. Assigned work turned in later in the class or later in the day will be penalized one letter grade. Absolutely no work will be accepted after the due date. Failure to hand in written work will be recorded as a zero in the gradebook. Students are reminded that written work includes taking notes in class. All students should keep a notebook for this class even though it will not be collected and graded.

Research papers should be sent with a friend in the event of an excused absence occurring on the day an assignment is due. All written work must be done neatly, with blue or black ink or typewritten, no frizzies, and using proper grammar and spelling. Work may be rejected or grades lowered if these standards are not met.

2. Excused Absence

If an absence is excused, the student must contact the teacher on the day of his return to get assignments, and schedule make-up work and tests. Students who fail to do so forfeit the right to make up missed work. Deadlines for make-up work are consistent with school policy. Late make-up work will not be accepted.

An excused absence is still an absence from class, and usually the class activity cannot be made up. Excessive excused absences, therefore, will result in a lowered class participation grade.

3. Unexcused Absence

Any work due on the day of an unexcused absence may not be made up and will be entered as a zero in the gradebook. Unexcused absences will lower the class participation grade.

4. Tardiness

Tardiness disturbs both the class and the teacher and is therefore a major offense. Because habitual tardiness results in missed class activity which cannot be made up, it will also result in a lowering of the class participation grade.

5. Grades

Homework- 30%

In-class essays, research papers, and DBQs- 30%

Quizzes and tests- 30%

Class participation/ Discourse- 10 %

Grades will be cumulative. The Final will count for 10% of the semester grade.

6. AP Exam

All students are expected to take the AP exam in May, although I cannot require it. Students who choose to take the exam, attend all of the review sessions, have fewer than 5 absences, and maintain an A or B for the semester will not be required to take the second semester final.

7. Classroom conduct

Cheating and plagiarism will be handled according to school policy. Bullying or harassment on any form will not be tolerated. Substitute teachers will be treated with respect equal to or greater than the regular classroom teacher. No headphones or cell phones will be permitted at any time. No food or drink other than bottled water.

8. Turnitin.com

All essays and some other assignments will be submitted to Turnitin.com, primarily for scoring and peer reviewing purposes, though the originality reports will be reviewed.

Unit 1: Exploration and Colonial America

1. Activity- The First Americans
2. The Three Colonial Sections- One Society or Three? **Due 8/26, 8/27**
3. Immigration- "The Settlement of the Virginia Colony" **Due 8/28**
4. Activity- "Indentured Servitude: Why Sell Yourself Into Bondage?" **In class 8/31**
5. Taking Sides: Was the Colonial Period a "Golden Age" for Women in America **Due 9/1**
6. Larger World/Diplomacy- "17th Century Colonial Commerce" **Due 9/2, 9/3**
7. Democracy in Colonial Wethersfield **Due 9/4**
8. Ideas That Shape a Nation: New England Puritans, Roger Williams **Due 9/8**
9. British Colonial Policy- A Tradition of Neglect **Due 9/9, 9/10**
10. Activity: Middle Passage **In class, 9/11**
11. Timeline: Chapters 1-6 **Due 9/16, 9/17**

Students will work in small groups to create a timeline of the events in these chapters. This timeline should be done on a long roll of paper (not toilet paper) with events appropriately spaced. The timeline should include the 25 (no more, no less) events that the group members decide were the pivotal events in the chapters.

A separate sheet of paper explaining why each of these events was pivotal must also be handed in.

13. Unit I Objective Test **9/14**
14. Unit I Essay/ DBQ **9/15**
15. Unit I Vocab Quizzes

Chapters 1, 2 **8/28**
Chapters 3, 4 **9/4**
Chapters 5, 6 **9/11**

Unit 2: The New Nation Forms

1. The Path to Revolution, 1763-1776 Due 9/23, 9/24
2. Historical Methods: Read Davidson and Lytle, After the Fact, Chapter Three, “Declaring Independence” Due 9/25
3. Taking Sides: “Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?” Due 9/28
4. The Articles of Confederation- The Challenge of Sovereignty Due 9/30, 10/1
5. Ideas That Shape a Nation: The Federalist, The Anti-Federalists. Due 10/2
6. The Constitution- Balancing Competing Interests. Due 10/5
7. The Development of Political Parties Due 10/7, 10/8
8. Politics- “The Causes of Shays’ Rebellion” Due 10/12
9. Precedent Reports: Important precedents were set regarding the operation of the United States government during the terms of the first six presidents. A small group of students will be assigned to the term of each of these presidents and will prepare a brief report of five to seven minutes on the important precedents set during that president’s term in office.

George Washington	James Madison
John Adams	James Monroe
Thomas Jefferson	John Quincy Adams

Due 10/13
10. Unit II Objective Test 10/16
11. Unit II Essay/ DBQ 10/14, 10/15
12. Unit II Vocab Quizzes

Chapters 7, 8	9/30, 10/1
Chapters 9, 10	10/7, 10/8

Unit III: America's Growing Pains

1. The Role of the Judiciary in the Creation of the National State. due 10/28, 10/29
2. Lifestyle Discussion:
Read Annual Editions, "The Secret Life of a developing Country (ours)," pp. 113ff.
Prepare a one page outline of the article before coming to class. due 10/30
3. Business and Labor- "Contracts in mid-19th Century Business" due 11/2
4. Economics: "Why Did Farmers Specialize?" in class 11/3
5. Ideas That Shape a Nation- Alexis de Tocqueville due 11/4, 11/5
6. The Evolution of Democracy from Jefferson to Jackson due 11/6
7. Taking Sides: "Was Jackson's Indian Removal Policy Motivated by Humanitarian Impulses?" due 11/9
8. Politics- "The Mexican War" due 11/11,11/12
9. Ideas That Shape a Nation: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass due 11/13
10. Westward Expansion- "A Force for Unity or Division?" due 11/16
11. Unit III Objective Test 11/23
12. Unit III Essay/ DBQ 11/20
13. Unit III Vocab Quizzes
Chapters 11, 12 11/4,11/5
Chapters 13, 14 11/11,11/12
Chapters 15, 16 11/18,11/19
14. Unit III Presentations due 11/17

Unit IV: War

1. Ideas That Shape a Nation- Abraham Lincoln due 12/2, 12/3
2. ~~Activity- Antebellum Roundtable~~
3. Historical Methods: Read After the Fact, Chapter Six, "The Madness of John Brown: the Uses of Psychohistory," pp. 147ff. due 12/4
4. Taking Sides- "Have Historians Overemphasized the Slavery Issue. . ." due 12/7
5. Compromise and Conflict- The Road to War due 12/9, 12/10
6. ~~Teaching With Documents- The Homestead Act~~

10. College Applications:

Groups will select one of the individuals from the Unit IV outline and complete an application to the extremely prestigious College of the United States (CUS) on her/his behalf. Applications will be submitted to the Admissions Committee (the class) for consideration. The Applicant will submit the application form, a transcript (record of accomplishments, academic and other) and three recommendations. The committee has spaces for 5 new students this year. Good Luck!

- due 12/11
11. Unit IV Objective Test (combined w/ unit V) 12/16-12/18
12. Unit IV Essay/DBQ 1/6, 1/7
13. Unit IV Vocab Quizzes

Chapters 17, 18 12/4

Chapters 19, 20 12/11

Chapter 21 (combined with chapter 22 from unit V) 12/15

Unit 5: Picking Up The Pieces

1. Taking Sides- "Was Reconstruction a Splendid Failure?" due 12/14
2. ~~Everyday Life- The Freedmen's Bureau~~
3. ~~Minority Experience- The Exodusters~~
4. Unit V Objective Test/ Semester 1 Final
5. Unit V Essay/DBQ
6. Unit V Vocab Quiz

Chapter 22