

The Nature and Character of Dual Credit and AP US History at Kingwood High School

I am pleased to have your son/daughter enrolled in Dual Credit/Advanced Placement U.S. History (DC/APUSH). Through this class, which is taught as a college course, my goal is to develop in your child higher levels of critical thinking skills by emphasizing analysis and evaluation, primarily through reading and writing. As a parent, please consider that this course will differ from traditional or high school on-level American history in the following ways:

1. Individual assessments will cover a significantly greater body of information and require a greater level of analytical reasoning than that to which students may have been previously exposed.
2. Homework consists primarily of reading assignments for which the student is responsible in order to master information. As this is a **READING INTENSIVE CLASS** expect to see your student reading each evening for this class. NOTE: If you do not see your child reading on a regular basis please ask your student if he/she has any US History reading assignments; chances are that they do.
3. Grades are based solely on mastery of the stated objectives. There are no "completion" grades, "busy" grades, or work assigned simply to "boost a grade." Everything we do in and out of class is done for a reason, a means to an end. College work is serious work requiring effort, maturity, and a sense of purpose. In class I strive to recreate a college environment; when my students walk into their first college freshman class, I want them to be overcome with a deep feeling of déjà vu.
4. **I am here to help your child succeed.** Part of my responsibility is to be open and honest with you regarding your child's progress in this class, be it good or struggling. As such, please keep in mind the rigor and demands of this class as opposed to your child's other classes/activities; while I want all of my students to do well I **do not** want to see any child suffering from stress or fatigue due to being overburdened.
5. **I do not** want my students held to unrealistic demands with respect to that which they can reasonably achieve. It does neither me nor your student any good whatsoever for a homework assignment to be completed for the sake of "just getting it done." As such I design my homework assignments, which will include reading with a written component . . . **typically a reading guide or questionnaire to check comprehension** . . . to help students develop time management skills. A typical reading assignment will require an average of 5 pages per night; this does vary depending on topic. These kids are, after all, teenagers, and only get one chance to be high school juniors. We as teachers owe them the opportunity to enjoy the experience free from an unrealistic, burden of homework.
6. Dual Credit/AP students are required to read two outside books to complement classroom instruction through the introduction of current historiography. These books are listed on the class website homepage.

Because DC/APUSH is a college course it can overwhelm many high school students. **Please keep this in mind when you establish expectations for your child's performance**, particularly during the first weeks of school. Please be aware: Rising juniors have to learn how to be college students and perform thusly; they are attempting to master a college history class without the benefit of any historical background by virtue of having completed a high school US History class. These are amazing, courageous, ambitious students who are to be commended for entering into this academic challenge. As such, he/she must be prepared for the work load that the class requires as well as the increased expectations of performance.

The AP Exam: It is always advantageous for any student, regardless of their status as DC or APUSH, to attempt the AP Exam. Because DC/APUSH at KHS is a college class, all of my students should be prepared to take it if they so wish. The Exam represents a major addition to a college transcript, provides an additional

level of confidence should a DC students decide to attend a school that does not accept DC credit, and serves as a logical conclusion to a year's worth of hard work. Each year I a majority of my DC kids take the exam; last year at AHS all of my DC kids that took the exam passed it.

Experience has shown that students maintaining a consistent A or B class average can reasonably expect to score a 3 or above on the exam (3, 4, 5 are considered passing benchmarks on the AP Exam). Conversely, statistics (as well as personal experience) show that students carrying C (or below) average exhibit a tendency to score in the 1 or 2 range. (Last year 97% of my DC/APUSH students that took the Exam adhered to this tendency.)

How can you help me? Please be involved: talk to your child about class; check the class website (scaliasworld.org) to keep up with assignments; check their grades . . . and please feel free to contact me concerning your child's progress.

Again, I am looking forward to the privilege of teaching your child this year; thank you for the opportunity.

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