

POLICY STATEMENT:

DUAL CREDIT AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT US HISTORY AT KINGWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

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First of all allow me to congratulate you on your decision to embark upon “the road less traveled” and enroll in Dual Credit United States History and/or Advanced Placement US History. By electing to take this class you have chosen to study and learn at an elevated level, even though you already know that this is NOT an easy class. For your perseverance and determination I commend you.

To succeed in this class you must know what type of monster you are attempting to slay. In taking these classes you are, for all practical purposes, skipping your junior and senior years of high school, as well as your freshman year of college. **Please keep in mind that this is a college survey class, and NOT college preparatory; consequently the expectation is college level work.** Because you will not have the advantage of three years of advanced skills and the intellectual maturity inherent in college sophomores, you will have to acquire them along the way. The official College Board course description, which applies to both AP and DC states:

“The [class] is designed to provide students with the analytical skills and enduring understandings 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. *The 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 an essay format.*”

OK . . . so just what does this entail?

1. **This is a reading-intensive course.** Introductory and second-year college courses are taught upon the precept that the student already has some knowledge of American history by virtue of his/her high school experience. To compensate for that deficiency, the student will have to acquire that proficiency largely from reading sources. These sources will include (but not be limited to) the textbook as well as ancillary readings provided by the instructor. In addition, the course requires analysis of perspective in historiographical material.
2. **This course requires mastery of historical essay writing.** You will be expected to not only write college-level analytical essays, but write them in a variety of styles including timed essays, Document-Based essays, and short answer forms. All writing will adhere to proper form and documentation styles.
3. **This course requires analytical reasoning skills** with which you will engage historical arguments, assess their merits, and state and defend your argument. You will need to develop a sense of historical perspective, learn to avoid the dangers of “presentism,” as well as learn to examine the historiographic record to identify merit, objectivity, and bias.
4. **This course requires a solid work ethic and time management skills.** The student will have to devote some time each night to the class, particularly with the reading load. **THIS IS A VITAL, REQUISITE SKILL FOR ANY LEVEL OF COLLEGE WORK.** Do yourself a favor: learn it NOW!

These are but a few of the requisites for this class; obviously they are a bit intimidating. However, no competent instructor can expect their high school students to master these skills without proper training,

guidance, and instruction. As such, substantial emphasis will be placed on the development of these and other skills which are vital for success at the college level.

As a practicing historian I harbor a deep passion for the study of history, so much so that I have made historical instruction, research, and writing my life's work. I will be asking a lot from you requiring your maximum effort. However, I am a firm believer in the doctrine of reciprocity; I demand as much from myself to provide you with the skills necessary for your success.

For this class to succeed, I must insist on several non-negotiable rules.

- **RESPECT**. This class will be conducted upon the basis of mutual respect for teacher, student, and each other. We cannot learn from each other if we do not respect each other. **Disrespect in my classroom will not be tolerated.** I will not allow the immaturity of a few to impair the learning of others; I expect you to behave in a manner consistent with your status as not only college students but as KHS juniors as well.
- **TRUST**. To succeed in this class we must trust each other. You must understand and accept that every assignment you are given is done so for a reason; there is no "busy work" or "punitive" work. Neither of us have time for such foolishness.
- **INTEGRITY**. I will NOT TOLERATE cheating in my class. Honesty in your work is imperative. The study of history is a noble endeavor, the integrity of which I am charged to defend. I take this responsibility seriously. Cheating is defined as (but is not limited to) giving and receiving information on assessments, out of class assignments, or in-class assignments, "community assignments" unless pre-approved by the instructor, and above all, plagiarism.
- **EFFORT**. This is the most important physical component of the class. All I can ask from you is **your utmost effort**; give it to me and you will be successful. If you shortchange your effort, you shortchange yourself, which always shows in your grades.

In my mind, Theodore Roosevelt said it best:
"It is hard to fail, but it is far worse to have never tried to succeed."