

ADVANCED PLACEMENT US HISTORY KINGWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Instructor:

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Class Website www.scaliasworld.org



Action between USS *Constitution* and HMS *Guerriere*, 1812

First of all allow me to congratulate you on your decision to embark upon “the road less traveled” and enroll in AP US History (APUSH). 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.

APUSH is a two-semester college survey course. The guiding principle that you must keep in mind is that the course **is a college course**. The curriculum, instruction, and materials used are of a college pedigree; consequently student expectations **are not** consistent with those associated with an advanced or honors high school class. APUSH students must develop solid reading and writing skills along with a willingness to devote considerable time to homework and study. Emphasis is placed on critical and evaluative listening skills, analytical ability, writing skills, interpretation of original documents, and critical analysis of historiography.

It is the operational goal of this class that APUSH students be prepared to take the AP US History Exam in May. I encourage my students to avail themselves of this opportunity to gauge their proficiency with that of the rest of the nation, against whom they will be competing for college admission.

Course Goals: Students will:

- a. Master a broad body of historical knowledge
- b. Develop analytical skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with problems and materials in United States History.
- c. Demonstrate an understanding of the causal nature of historical chronology.
- d. Develop proficiency in historical writing, including argumentative essays and scholarly book reviews.
- e. Use historical data to support historical argument.
- f. Effectively use analytical skills of evaluation, cause and effect, compare and contrast.
- g. Participate effectively in classroom discussion.

Class Calendar:

Due to the changing nature of time allotted for classroom instruction in high school a schedule outlining class activities, assessments, etc. will be posted on the class website (www.scaliasworld.org) on a weekly basis. **It is the student's responsibility to familiarize themselves to the week's schedule and stay current; not knowing is an unacceptable excuse.**

Texts:

Due to the inherent nature of bias in most US History textbooks I typically do not use a singular text, opting instead for passages from a variety of texts from which students can obtain a more balanced and objective view of the subject matter. The instructor will provide these readings, typically in the form of a Word or PDF file posted on the website. Primary textual readings will come from (but are not limited to) the following texts:

George Tindall and David Shi *America: A Narrative History*
Walter MacDougall *Freedom Just Around the Corner 1700-1824*
Walter MacDougall *Throes of Democracy 1829-1877*
Alan Brinkley *American History*
Thomas Bailey *A Diplomatic History of the American People*
Charles B Mann *1491*
Charles B Mann *1493*
Henry Louis Gates Jr *Life Upon These Shores*

Outside Reading:

Additional required readings will include:

- Joseph Ellis *Founding Brothers*. ISBN 978-0-375-70524-3 (Fall semester)
- Charles B Dew *Apostles of Disunion* (Fall semester)
- Ranjit Dighe *The Historian's Wizard of Oz* (Spring semester)
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*Student mastery of these readings will be gauged through periodic reading quizzes, questions on summative tests, and a book review for each book (except *Founding Brothers*).

*The reading schedule is posted on the class website. All three books are available at local bookstores or through Amazon.com. (Amazon usually has these titles, in some cases for as little as .01 per copy used.)

Internet Access:

To accommodate students it is necessary to maintain a "virtual classroom" by virtue of the class website, located at www.scaliasworld.org. The class calendar, as well as ALL class assignments, handouts, due dates, and supplementary materials will be posted on the class website. The site is maintained on a weekly basis to reflect the pacing of the class; I make every effort to post reading assignments as soon as possible to allow students the opportunity to get started on the assignment. **WARNING: It is the students' responsibility to check the website each day; ignorance of a particular assignment, regardless of whether the student is present in class or not, is unacceptable.**

Grading Policy:

Kingwood High School (HISD) Rubric:

100-90= A

89-80= B

75-79= C

70-74=D

Below 70=F

- Formative Quizzes = 30%, Summative Tests = 70%
- Due to College Board sanction of this as “Advanced Placement” the Kingwood High retest policy does NOT apply.

Materials:

Students are expected to come to class prepared for the day’s work. Basic tools for this course include:

- Notebook (spiral or loose-leaf)
- Pen or pencil (PLEASE: blue or black ink and/or number 2 pencils)
- Loose leaf paper
- 3x5 notecards
- Hi-liters (Highly suggested. These are not mandatory but an excellent, worthwhile investment.)

Attendance:

Attendance in this class is essential. You cannot pass this course if you do not come to class; much of the material is provided through lecture and class discussion. Students should make arrangements to obtain a copy of lecture notes, handouts, etc (it is a good idea to partner with a classmate; be sure to get his/her phone number) to cover them in case they miss class. **IT IS NOT INCUMBENT UPON THE INSTRUCTOR TO PROVIDE COPIES OF LECTURE NOTES.** Should a student miss a quiz or a test, makeup work will be guided **STRICTLY** by the Kingwood High School Late Testing Policy (posted on the website home page). Any other accommodations for missed work must be worked out with the instructor.

Electronic Apparatus Policy:

As pursuant to Kingwood High School policy:

- Use of personal electronic devices such as smart phones, MP3 players, etc. is not allowed in class unless stipulated by the teacher.
- While I do not have a problem laptop computers and tablets, they **MUST** be utilized for class work only. Violation of this rule will lead to loss of the privilege.
- Unauthorized **taping or filming of class is strictly forbidden.**
- Consequences of the violation of this policy will strictly adhere to Kingwood High School policy.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is defined as the unauthorized use or close imitation of the work, language, and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work through failure of credit allocation or failure to cite sources. Any use of any material, particularly from web-based informational material, which is not cited or otherwise recognized as the intellectual property of someone else, is **unethical and illegal**, and will not be tolerated.

It should go without saying that students are expected to do their own work in and outside of class. The majority of written work, such as timed essays, will take place in class; however to insure the academic integrity of outside assignments all outside work will be submitted through the plagiarism check software **Turnitin.com**. No outside assignment will be accepted outside of a Turnitin submission.

Should an incident of plagiarism or cheating occur consequences will adhere strictly to Kingwood High School policy.

Class Expectations:

To succeed in this class you must know what type of monster you are attempting to slay. In taking APUSH 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 **two semester college survey class**, and NOT college preparatory; the expectation is college 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 course description states:

“APUSH 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. 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 both oral and written formats.*”

Class Requisites:

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 APUSH student will have to acquire that proficiency largely from reading sources. These sources will include (but not be limited to) textual readings, ancillary readings, and outside monographs.
2. **This course requires mastery of historical writing.** You will be expected to not only write analytical essays, but also book reviews which focus on the student’s ability to investigate, evaluate, and critically expound upon current historiography. All writing will adhere to stylistic criteria provided on the appropriate rubric; book reviews will follow the dictates of the provided rubric as well as form and documentation styles as listed in the Chicago Manual of Style.
3. **This course requires analytical reasoning skills** with which the student can assess, develop, and defend historical argument. Students will need to develop a sense of historical perspective through the avoidance of presentism, as well as learn to examine the historiographic record to identify and address 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. Procrastination, especially in light of the workloads from other classes, is hazardous to the student’s academic health.

These are the curricular requisites for this class; I understand that they are a bit intimidating. However, no competent instructor can expect their high school students to master these skills without proper training 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. For example, I cannot reasonably expect a college essay or book review from my students before they have learned exactly what they are and how to write them.

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 demand as much from myself to provide you with the skills necessary to deliver. Consequently the instructor-student relationship is reciprocal by design.

The Non-Negotiables:

1. **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.
2. **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 "punishment work." Neither of us have time for such foolishness.
3. **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, "community assignments" unless pre-approved by the instructor, and above all, plagiarism. A good rule of thumb when wondering of what you plan to do is allowed: When in doubt, ask . . . never assume. **"I didn't know" is an unacceptable excuse.**
4. **EFFORT**. This is the **most important component of the class**. All I can ask from you is your utmost effort; give it and you will be successful. If you shortchange your effort, you shortchange yourself, a trend that always reveals itself in your grades.

In Conclusion:

APUSH IS NOT WHAP.

I anticipate an exciting year and am looking forward to getting under way. If you or your parents have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Welcome aboard. Let's do this.

Joseph M Scalia BA, MA