

# AP U.S. HISTORY COURSE SYLLABUS

Mr. Steven Mercado

2009-2010

The objective of this course is to increase the student's understanding of United States history with the goal of having each student pass the AP Examination. The course is divided into two semesters, *Discovery through Reconstruction* and *The Gilded Age to the present*. The areas of concentration include historical, political and economic history coupled with an intense study of cultural and intellectual institutions and their development. These areas will be studied from a variety of perspectives with the hope of providing a balanced view of history. **This course is taught at the college level.** The major difference between a high school and college history course is the amount of reading and depth of focus. Moreover, the AP curriculum stresses higher order thinking skills within a rigorous academic context. Thus, the student will be required frequently to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate primary and secondary historical sources in addition to memorizing, comprehending, and applying facts.

**Feel free to reach me if you have questions or concerns!**

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[www.HistorySage.com](http://www.HistorySage.com) or [www.homestead.com/chaffeyaphistory/menu.html](http://www.homestead.com/chaffeyaphistory/menu.html)

**Texts: The American Pageant** (13th Edition)

David M. Kennedy, Lizabeth Cohen, Thomas Bailey

**Supplementary Readings:** Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*

Various readings and handouts throughout the year

**Chaffey AP History Website:** [www.homestead.com/chaffeyaphistory/menu.html](http://www.homestead.com/chaffeyaphistory/menu.html)

**Grading Scale:**

A = 90 -100%

B = 80 - 89%

C = 70 - 79%

D = 60 - 69%

F = 0 - 59%

**Grade Categories:**

Essay Exams ..... 31.7%

Multiple Choice Exams..... 31.7%

Homework .....31.6%

Quizzes.....5%

**Exams:** Approximately ten multiple-choice/essay exams will be given during the first semester. The first semester final is cumulative. A cumulative midterm exam will be given at the end of the first and third quarters. The second semester calendar of assignments will be available after the Christmas holidays. Tests will be rigorous as they are intended to challenge the student at the Advanced Placement level. Moreover, tests are designed to give students frequent experience with the types of multiple-choice questions, free-response essays, and Document Based Questions (DBQ's) that will appear on the AP exam. Frequent exams also insure that students read the textbook and supplementary readings, consistently check for understanding, and take copious notes that are thorough and well organized.

**Lecture Notes:** Students are required to bring printed versions of the online lecture notes (at [www.historystage.com](http://www.historystage.com)) on the day that a new chapter is assigned in the textbook. Each student will receive a user name and password that will enable them to access the notes. There is no charge for Chaffey students! If a student is unable to print out the notes at home, the computer lab in North Hall is available. My suggestion is to print out the notes well in advance so that you're not scrambling to print them the day of the lecture.

**Homework Policy:** Assignments are due *on the date the reading assignment is shown* on the calendar. Late assignments will not be accepted after the 5<sup>th</sup> late allowance. All late work must be turned in the day after it is due. For excused absences, assignments are due the day the student returns to class unless prior arrangements have been made for emergencies. Students are expected to keep a well-organized notebook of all course-related materials (e.g. syllabus, lecture notes, study guides, homework, quizzes, exams, handouts, etc.) Note: Zinn assignments are all available online.

**Missed Exams:** Students who are absent legitimately on a day a test is given must make up the test on the day they return to class. An alternate exam will be given. If a student is absent for an extended period (e.g., more than five days), an appointment for making-up the test will be made. Complete loss of credit for an exam may result if the exam is not completed in a timely fashion.

**Participation:** Students are expected to contribute in class discussions and effectively participate in class activities. Many of the class sessions will be seminars. In order for seminars to work, student preparation and participation is critical. Students who are "on the border" between grades at the semester may be given the higher grade if their overall participation has been commendable.

**Most importantly, stay positive!** Although this course is extremely challenging, Chaffey students have succeeded far above the national average over the past nine years and have led the district in several of those years. You must believe in yourself and be willing to accept a few setbacks along the way in order to grow as a young scholar and as a person ("no pain, no gain"). Learn from your mistakes and setbacks, make adjustments, and try again. The prize at the end is worth it! You can do it!!

# AP NIGHT

## Points of interest for AP U.S. History

### U.S. History

- Content focuses heavily on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries
- Chaffey High has a 70% pass-rate over the past 14 years (the national pass-rate is about 50%). Chaffey's AP U.S. History scores are at the top or near the top of the district each year.
- The AP U.S. History Exam was the first AP test administered by the College Board and is considered the flagship course since over 250,000 students take the test each year. Many college admissions officials look at the U.S. exam closely because it is a good reflection of how a student compares to thousands of other students nation-wide.
- Students who pass the exam often receive exemptions from taking the class in college, thus saving time and money!
- The AP U.S. History Exam prepares students to excel in the SAT II exam as well.
- Many Chaffey students who have succeeded in the course have gone on to the best colleges in the state and country.
- Heavy emphasis on developing writing skills (this is one of the most beneficial aspects of the course). Students write over 20 essays throughout the year.
- The course is specifically geared to passing the AP exam.
- The first month is the toughest (because of the transition to a college-level course). The attached Calendar of Assignments (page 3 of syllabus) shows the assignments due during the first semester of the class.
- Students should plan to study for 1-2 hours daily for the class, on average.
- Summer readings are provided to give students a chance to get a leg up on the first month (1<sup>st</sup> 6 chapters of Kennedy and first 4 chapters of Zinn). Summer reading is not mandatory but strongly suggested for getting a jump on the first month of material.
- My website contains lecture notes for the whole year, study guides, practice tests, tutorials, and links to other valuable sites. This is a key component to my class! Teachers and students from around the country use the site regularly.
- I am an AP reader for the U.S. History and European History exams – this gives my students feedback from an actual grader.