

APUSH Syllabus B

Introduction to the Advanced Placement Program

The Advanced Placement Program started in the mid-1950s as a result of the pressures the Cold War put upon American education. America needed a well-educated populace to combat the “communist menace.” It became a common belief that if the nation was to be competitive, it needed to add challenges to its high school curriculum. The first AP exams were administered in May of 1954. Only 27 schools participated in the 1954 exam. The first APUSH exam was administered in 1956. In 2023, approximately 16,300 schools throughout the world took part in AP exams. While there are exams covering 39 subject areas, the AP exam with the largest number of participants usually is the APUSH exam. Over 409,000 students took the APUSH exam in 2023 and this figure is growing. On average 62.9% of students who took an AP exam pass each year. However, the average global pass rate for AP US History is only 58.7%. Yes, this is a difficult exam, but I have had students pass every year I have taught APUSH (71.9% in 2020, pre-pandemic). If you dedicate yourself to studying, ordering specific factual information and learning how to write Long Essays, Document Based Questions, Short Answer Responses and the stimulus based Multiple Choice you will be able to pass the APUSH exam too!

The following material will help you understand our APUSH class timeline and the exam grading process:

Colleges and the AP Exam

There are many advantages to taking the AP exams. Advanced Placement can give you college credit for courses you have already taken in high school. Thus, for the first time in many students' lives they can become a financial asset to their family. You can also receive as many as six semester college credits with a successful exam. Colleges differ as to how they allocate their credits. It depends on your score and the college policy. Check with the colleges of your choice to determine their criteria.

Advanced Placement classes can develop the study skills and habits of mind necessary to be a successful college student. Studies have shown that AP students perform remarkably better in college classes than those students who have not taken an AP course. AP courses will also give you a better chance at university admission. Colleges look favorably upon students who have taken AP exams. For each AP course a student takes, that student receives an extra .1 on your GPA for UC and CSU schools. At the same time, just taking an AP class without taking the exam is a waste of time (yours and mine). Remember your transcripts change to US History Honors if you do not take the AP exam. Thus, it is very important for you to take an AP exam if you are taking an AP class. Even if you do not score a 3 or higher, the colleges will look more favorably upon you, than if you took an honors class.

Signing Up for the AP Exam¹

The following are key dates to remember for the Advance Placement exam.

August Everyone in APUSH needs to join the class section online at the college board website (myap.collegeboard.org). If you did not make a college board account before then you will need to make an account first. Mr. Groven will provide you with a specific code for his APUSH class section. This will provide the college board with a better count for how many are taking the exam, how many graders they will need and start the payment process sooner. Payment for AP exams will be in the fall. Talk to your parents about this early, so they are not surprised and can fill out the Free and Reduced Lunch Program application. If you qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program you will qualify for an AP fee reduction. A \$40 late fee will be charged if a test is canceled, a test is ordered late, returned unused, or registration is after November 16th.

Period 2 Code:

Period 3 Code:

September: Administration receives the exam order forms and fee reduction forms.

November: The order form listing the number of exams must be sent from each school to the ETS (Educational Testing Service). If you did not register for Mr. Groven's AP class online, you will not be able to take the exam. The usual cost of the exam is \$97. The ETS provides fee waivers (\$35) as a way to lessen the cost if you meet certain financial criteria. The California Department of Education also provides fee waivers (\$48-\$70) if you meet certain financial criteria. When you sign up, remember to let your coordinator know if there are any special circumstances which impair your test taking. Students with certain learning or physical disabilities can have additional time on the exam or special versions of the exam if needed.

April 13th or 20th: Saturday Mock Exam

May 10th, 2024: The AP US History Exam!!!! ☺

Mid May: The completed tests are sent to ETS.

Early June: Approximately 900 high school AP teachers and US History Professors from across the nation and from around the world travel to Tampa Bay, Florida and 2,300 online US History Professors and AP Teachers from across the United States read over 1.6 million Short Answer Question responses, Document Based Question essays and the Long Essays over the course of seven days.

Early July: AP score reports are available online and sent to colleges. Teachers usually get their class score reports one week before students can see their scores. (www.apstudent.collegeboard.org/services)

The SAT and the ACT Exams

Most colleges do not require the SAT or ACT admission tests as of last year, however it can be very beneficial if a student submits high test scores as part of their college applications. The SAT is a major test taken in your junior AND senior years for mainly west coast colleges. The SAT is a test that colleges use to gauge your reasoning and math skills. The ACT is a major test taken in your junior and senior years for mainly

¹ 2023-2024 College Board website for educators.

east coast colleges. The ACT is a test that colleges use to gauge your reasoning skills. Starting in March, 2024 the SAT and the ACT will only be offered in an online format. California public colleges no longer require these exams, but private universities and public universities in other states may require them. Depending on how competitive the acceptance rate is at the universities you are applying to would determine if you should take the SAT or ACT. Since the SAT and ACT are not required for most universities, this could place greater emphasis on your AP passing scores and the California state exams (CAASPP) in the spring.

LAUSD offers the opportunity for all juniors to take the PSAT in the fall. LAUSD also has all juniors take the SAT in the spring semester of your junior year. It is a good idea to take the SAT a third time on your own to try and boost your scores if you are submitting them with your college application. Do not take the ACT Test in April!! THIS could directly conflict with our Saturday mock exam! In addition, do not take the SAT in May. This will overload your schedule! It is very difficult to study for three or more major exams that are back to back to back and do well on all of them (SAT, AP Exams and CAASPP). Also, this year our administration has made the decision that our CAASPP Exams will take place over the two weeks before our AP exams.

SAT Dates: Aug 26, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2, Mar 9, May 4, Jun 1

ACT Dates: Sept 9, Oct 28, Dec 9, Feb 10, April 13, June 8, July 13

AP US History Exam: May 10, 2024

AP English Language Exam: May 14, 2024

Grading the APUSH Exam

ETS scores the multiple choice section by computer, but the essays have to be graded by AP Teachers and Professors either online or in person. The in person grading takes place the first week in June. For decades, the grading took place at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas and from 2006 to 2016 and 2019, it was at Louisville, Kentucky. In 2017 the College Board moved the reading to Tampa Bay, Florida. Alas, it seems Mr. Groven will now never be able to lift his stout and toast President “Teddy” Roosevelt at the Maingor Bar in San Antonio, Texas – where “Teddy” Roosevelt recruited some of the lowest American scum to become America’s greatest heroes – the Rough Riders! Mr. Groven has settled for lifting his stout at the AP Reading in Tampa Bay, Florida where the Rough Riders departed America to become heroes at San Juan Hill in Cuba!

The readers of the essay are either high school AP teachers with a minimum of 3 years teaching AP or college professors with an expertise in American history. Before the readers arrive, exam leaders and table leaders set up rubrics and range finders to assist the readers in evaluating the essays. The goal of the whole process is to give each student a fair assessment of their essays. You will have only one reader for each of your essays, however you are guaranteed that you will have a different reader for each

of your two essays and three Short Answer Responses. To provide a safety net for students, the readers are backread at random for the first three days to check for accuracy. Every four to twelve essays a pre-scored essay is imbedded into the grading for validity checks. In addition, the essay scores are correlated with the multiple choice results. If a student performs well on certain multiple choice questions it seems likely that that student will do well on related essays. Discrepancies in scores are also reexamined.

Starting in 2016 the Short Answer Response was graded in an online format. (Mr. Groven was part of this inaugural process and has graded online three times). In 2020 during the Pandemic the online grading was expanded to all essays. Similar to the readings in Tampa Bay, Florida, exam leaders and “table leaders” set up rubrics and range finders to assist the readers in evaluating the essays. To provide a safety net for students, the online readers are backread at random to check for accuracy for the first three days to check for accuracy and the reader is given instantaneous online feedback. Every four to twelve essays a pre-scored essay is imbedded into the grading for validity checks. In addition, the essay scores are correlated with the multiple choice results. If a student performs well on certain multiple choice questions it seems likely that that student will do well on related essays. Discrepancies in scores are also reexamined.

In addition, the readers have no way of knowing who you are. Each of the three thousand plus readers are given essay responses randomly. You are guaranteed your anonymity. This is a very objective read.

This year will be rigorous and require our dedication to pass the APUSH exam, but I know that we will become the honored few who are able to say we have passed the APUSH exam. In the words of the great UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden, *“There’s no great fun, satisfaction or joy derived from doing something that’s easy.”*

Yours Truly,
Mr. Groven