

# A.P. United States History Syllabus

Mr. Ray  
email: [mray@kenton.k12.ny.us](mailto:mray@kenton.k12.ny.us)

Kenmore East High School

## Course Design:

A.P. U.S. History is a challenging course that is meant to be the equivalent of a freshman college course and can earn students college credit. It is a full-year survey of American history from the age of exploration and discovery to the present. Solid reading and writing skills, along with a willingness to devote considerable time to homework and study, are necessary to succeed. Emphasis is placed on critical and evaluative thinking skills, essay writing, interpretation of original documents, and historiography.

## Course Objectives: Students will:

- master historical knowledge and chronology
- use historical data to support an argument or position
- differentiate between historiographical schools of thought
- effectively use analytical skills of evaluation, cause and effect, compare and contrast
- interpret and apply data for original documents, including cartoons, graphs, letters, etc
- prepare for the Advanced Placement exam

**Comprehensive Final Exam(s):** The A.P U.S. History exam is given in May. The NYS Regents Exam in United States History and Government is given in June.

## Major Projects:

Each student will produce three independent projects during the school year as follows:

- Project #1: Student DBQ
- Project #2: Research Paper [College Style]
- Project #3: Position Paper [Essay Format]

## Anticipated Purchases for Course:

- Three Ring Notebook and Tab Dividers
- 4" x 6" lined notecards for Research projects
- 5" x 8" lined notecards for Seminars and Review
- Looseleaf Paper
- A.P. U.S. Review Book [i.e. Barron's, Princeton Review, Research and Education Associates, ARCO, etc.]

**Course Content:** The core units for this course are as follows:

Unit 1	Discovery, Settlement and Colonial America Chapters 1, 2, 3
Unit 2	Independence Chapters 4, 5
Unit 3	Federalist and Jeffersonian Tradition Chapters 6, 7, 8
Unit 4	Jacksonian Era Chapters 9, 10
Unit 5	The Union in Crisis Chapters 11, 12, 13
Unit 6	Civil War and Reconstruction Chapters 14, 15
Unit 7	American Growth, Big Business, and Politics Chapters 16, 17, 18, 19
Unit 8	1890-1920 Chapters 20, 21, 22, 23
Unit 9	Normalcy, Depression, and New Deal Chapters 24, 25, 26
Unit 10	World War II, Truman, and Eisenhower Chapters 27, 28, 29
Unit 11	The 60s and 70s Chapters 30, 31, 32
Unit 12	Contemporary America Chapters 33, 34

**Notebook Organization:**

The NOTEBOOK represents the effort you are willing to undertake to demonstrate your level of OUTSIDE of CLASS preparation. The notebook will contain at minimum FOUR major sections beyond the organization of handouts as follows:

- **TEXT NOTES [Main Ideas and Terms]**
- **CLASS NOTES**
- **SEMINAR SKILLS**
- **SKILLS**

**Workload:**

The workload in this course is challenging and time consuming at times, but the rewards are worthwhile. Time management is an essential skill for this class and you must take the responsibility for budgeting your time. It is recommended that you try to set aside at least 60 minutes of work time for this course each day. Weekend and holiday times can be used to ‘catch-up.’ It is important not to get discouraged. And it is very important not to get behind in your work.

## **Classroom Activities:**

- **Textbook Quizzes**

The first day of a chapter assignment the text reading is due. A **QUIZ** on the content of the reading will be given to assess how well each student comprehends the reading. Students should take notes on the text reading in preparation for the quiz and class discussion. A section of **TEXT NOTES** should be included in your notebook which outlines major ideas and terms for the reading.

- **Question-Answer Sessions**

Either before or after the text reading quiz, a student initiated question-answer session will be provided in which you can clarify the major ideas and terms which were presented in the text reading.

- **Lecture/Discussion**

To enhance the text reading and provide deeper insight into the chapter assigned, a teacher lecture/discussion will focus on the major themes in the chapter. Students should take notes and provide a section for **CLASS NOTES** in their notebook

- **Skill Lesson**

Skill development is vital to your success in this A.P. course and for college preparation. **SKILL** lessons will focus on an activity that develops your ability to read historical materials and primary sources, organize class materials or notes, write meaningful notes, essays, and research papers; or present ideas/opinions in oral discussion.

- **Seminars**

A seminar will be conducted on a major issue for each unit in the course. The seminar's main focus is to develop a student's critical thinking. Interpretive readings will be assigned for each seminar. Each student will conduct one seminar during the school year. A grade will be given to each student participant and presenter. Students should take notes in preparation for seminar and after seminar for a summary of what was learned. A section for **SEMINAR NOTES** should be provided for in their notebook. Seminar notes will be subject to random review after each seminar!

- **Unit Tests**

Tests will be a combination of multiple choice and DBQ/Free Response essay questions and follow the completion of each unit.

**Attendance:**

Attendance in this class is essential. Much of the material for success is provided through lecture and discussion. Missing class can create problems. Students with many absences rarely do well.

**Make-up/Late Policy:**

All tests, quizzes, and seminars must be made-up the day a student returns from any single-day absence. If an absence exceeds two school days, a mutually agreed upon make-up date will be determined.

Assignments are due in class on the due date. Work turned-in after class will be considered as one day late, up until the next class meeting. For each day late, a penalty of one full letter grade (i.e. 10 percent of the total possible points earned for that assignment) will be assessed. Work turned-in more than five days after the due date will not be accepted.

**Grading:**

Grades will normally be averaged as follows:

Unit Test Average	20%
Quiz Average	20%
Seminars	20%
Homework Average	20%
Notebook	20%

Remember the A.P. grade is a weighted grade for the purposes of final average and class placement.

**GOOD LUCK!**

The four major criteria used in determining your grade in a seminar are as follows:

**The STUDENT . . .**

1. Reading/  
Preparation
  - Arrives prepared with assigned reading and notes on the reading
  - Completes and uses the assigned reading in the seminar discussion
  - Completes and uses notes in seminar discussion
  - Demonstrates knowledge of the main thesis of the authors in the seminar reading
  
2. Speaking/  
Reasoning
  - Demonstrates understanding of the questions raised the seminar
  - Cites evidence to back-up opinions/conclusions expressed in the seminar
  - Makes insightful comments on questions raised in seminar
  - Challenges opinions of others with appropriate backup of evidence
  - Considers many sources beyond his/her own in expressing opinions/conclusions in seminar
  
3. Listening
  - Pays attention to all students who are contributing to seminar
  - Uses other student responses or expands on other student responses
  - Records ideas which are significant from other student responses
  
4. Conduct
  - Respectful to other students and their opinions/conclusions
  - Asks for points of clarification from student, seminar leader, or teacher
  - Avoids speaking too long or repetitiously
  - Uses appropriate language
  - Avoids creating distractions

**Grade scale--> 100 --- 95 --- 90 --- 85 --- 80 --- 75 --- 70 --- 65 --- 50**