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Course Design:
Advanced Placement United States History is a challenging course meant to emulate the rigor of an entry-level college course. An AP Examination is offered in May and provides students with an opportunity to earn college credit. The course is a two-semester survey of American history from the age of exploration to present. Having a strong work ethic coupled with solid reading and writing skills are essential to succeeding. An emphasis in critical thinking and evaluating skills, timed essay writing, and interpretation of primary and secondary documents will be evident throughout the year.

Seminar Format:
This class will function best if it is done in a seminar format. You and I would be best served if we are discussing the history vs. me repeating what you have read in your textbook. We need to explore the subject together; therefore, I am planning on you having your reading done for each day. The classroom discussions will revolve around the unit objectives and primary sources that we interpret/discuss each day. The important thing is to make connections that go beyond chronological associations; the themes of the course will help you make the necessary links that allow you to deepen your understanding of US history. Moreover, when we can discuss what has happened as well as what is happening in US history we further our ownership of the society we live in. Engage yourselves daily.

Supplemental Reading:
Students will be given outside readings each week that will correlate with the topic being studied. These will be essays from various historians that will help stimulate discussions in class.

Writing in AP US History:
There will be a considerable amount of time devoted to learning how to write essays that critically analyze various historical questions.

Assessments: Your assessments will consist of the following: formative reading quizzes, summative objective tests, short-answer questions, document-based questions, long essay questions, and a variety of assessments intended to evaluate your development as an “apprentice historian”.

Support, Modify, or Refute: Students will be given a prompt, statement, or an historian’s position and will write a coherent, persuasive essay that will assess either chronological reasoning or crafting historical arguments. [Writing Assessments]

The Beginning and The End: Students will craft an argument that delineates the rationale for selecting a specific time period as a beginning or end for an event/phenomenon/idea/concept, etc. in American history.

You Be the Judge: [Attribution to, Thomas F. Sleete-reprinted with his permission] Students analyze disparate primary source documents on the same topic. Students then compare and contrast the viewpoints expressed in the documents, and-supported by the evidence presented, and in the context of the historical period-determine which authors made the better case.

In-Class Debate: Students will utilize a variety of historical evidence (primary sources) and historical interpretations (secondary sources) to analyze, contextualize, and better understand the processes needed to evaluate an historical topic. Students will be asked to write a reflection on the merits of the conclusions they reached as a result of the debate.

The Theory Qualifier: Students will be given opposing secondary sources. They will analyze the validity of each argument by exploring the evidence the historian utilizes as well as the credibility of the claims presented to determine which source better accounts for the causation of an event/phenomenon/idea, etc.

Six Degrees of Separation: Attribution to, John Struck and Thomas F. Sleete-reprinted with his permission] Students will be provided with two events spanning decades, but related by their theme. They will select six events in chronological order that link the first even in the series with the last. Students will write the name of each selected event, and use their research and knowledge of the time period to create an argument to support the events selected. Students must emphasize both cause and effect and/or demonstrate continuity or change over time in their linking. There will be at least one Six Degrees assignment per unit. Some events can and will include environmental impact data. This assignment provides students with the opportunity to observe continuity and change over time.

Role Play: Students will take the position of historical figures to garner support of their positions based on the research and selection of primary sources that will require
students to use historical evidence appropriately. Students must stay within the context of the time period and are not allowed to introduce ‘presentism’ into their positions. Students will be required to use a variety of sources including; speeches, charts, maps, quantitative data, images, and works of art germane to the time period.

- **Portfolio:** Students will engage in two longitudinal studies (African-Americans and Women) to further infuse the relevancy of social history in the classroom. They will trace the progress, change, or developments across time and space and at various points in the curriculum will respond in writing to stimuli to assess change over time of these groups.

### Summer Assignments

1. Read Sam Wineburg article: “Why historical thinking is not about history”
2. Read Chapter 1 and the beginning of Chapter 2 through the top of page 52.
   - a. Complete vocabulary assignment from Chapter 1.
3. Follow this link: [http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/zinncol1.html](http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/zinncol1.html) and read chapter one of Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*. Then read the handout of chapter one of Larry Schweikart and Michael Allen’s *A Patriot’s History of the United States*.
   - a. Create a Venn diagram, chart or other graphic organizer comparing and contrasting the details of Columbus based upon these two assigned readings. **You should shoot for 10 facts in each section.** Be prepared to discuss this.
4. Read the Charles Mann article “1491”. Be prepared to discuss this in class.

**1st Week Expectations:** We will have a quiz based largely on assignment number one on the first day back, August 17th. We will have some discussion on summer assignments, a Six Degrees of Separation assignment and a You Be the Judge assignment. By the middle of the next week, we will have a test on Unit 1. I have attached Key Concepts for Unit 1.