

What to Expect in AP Classes

AP World History

AP World History compares patterns of changes among major societies from 8000 B.C.E. to the present. By the end of the course, students can discuss world events from a sophisticated perspective, and they can make thematic connections between time periods. Students learn to identify relevant historical evidence, to recognize the limitations of those sources, and to debate their arguments.

Skills taught include how to read a college text, organize and write analytical essays, interpret historical perspectives, analyze and discuss primary sources, and participate in historical debates.

Take AP World if you enjoy:

- Challenging yourself
- Reading and writing
- Learning how to analyze complex topics
- Debating historic events and issues

Prerequisites: This class is open to Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors who have at least a B+ average to date in Social Studies and English. Students also must have the recommendation of the current history teacher.

Summer Reading: *A History of the World in 6 Glasses* by Tom Standage

Homework over school breaks: None

Text:

Ways of the World by Robert W. Strayer

Supplemental readings:

Selected primary documents and news articles.

Workload/Difficulty:

Homework consists of reading in the textbook and taking notes or responding to study questions. As a general rule, a student should expect to spend about 8 - 10 hours per week on homework for this class.

Teacher contact: Susan Roughgarden

sroughgarden@mercyhsb.com

AP English Language

Description:

English III AP is an intellectually challenging course that combines the study of classic and contemporary American literature with multiple nonfiction readings, all of which focus on literary analysis and critical thinking skills. Emphasis is given to expository writing in order to prepare students for the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination. To that end, students analyze and write argumentative, rhetorical analysis, and synthesis essays throughout the year. Attention is also given to expanding vocabulary, improving test taking skills and mastering the rules of standard written English.

Prerequisite:

English II Honors B or English II A, writing sample, recommendation of current English teacher.

Summer Work:

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

Take AP Lang if you:

- like English and want to immerse yourself in the techniques of it
- like to express your creativity and skills through writing
- want to learn the symbolism of iconic literature
- want to develop your writing skills through practice
- want to write at a collegiate level
- took Mrs. Mountain's class. You'll be prepared!
- like books that have a deeper hidden message
- want to improve your writing
- enjoy reading classic literature
- if you are interested in learning about the language
- want to be extra prepared for the SAT
- genuinely enjoy reading and writing
- want to learn how literature and history relate to each other

AP English Literature

Description: AP English IV is designed for seniors who have demonstrated superior ability in English. The course focuses on in-depth discussion and composition related to the survey of major authors and literary movements from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present. Emphasis is given to collateral reading of scholarly literary criticism and preparation for the Advanced Placement Examination in English Literature and Composition. This course is certified by the University of California as an honors course.

Prerequisite:

English III AP B or English III A, writing sample, recommendation of current English teacher.

Summer Work:

[overview](#)

Take AP Lit:

- ...if you like to be challenged but have fun while learning about different types of literature and authors.
- ...if you like reading between the lines.
- ... if you want to see how literature is always personal and constant throughout time.
- ... if you want to learn real world lessons.
- ... if you enjoy unlocking meaning.
- ... if you want expand your mind in gaining exposure to new ideas and philosophies.
- ... if you would like to become a stronger writer.
- ... if you want to learn about life and literature and how the two go hand-in-hand.
- ...if you are passionate about the way the world is perceived through language and willing to put in the time and effort to enjoy it.
- ...if you love reading and finding the deeper meanings in literature.
- ...lit if you want to deepen your connection with the text and language.
- ...if you want to learn how to deep read and thoroughly analyze literature and relate it back to modern life.
- ... if you want to challenge yourself while reading.
- ... if you like criticizing things.
- ...if you want to become a more worldly person.
- ... if you want to challenge your mind with authors that were banned, and outsmart your friends with a prodigious vocabulary.
- ...if you like engaging conversation and critical thinking.
- ... if you're interested in learning.
- ...if you want to know the difference between lightning and lightning bugs.
- ...if you want to be prepared for writing in college.
- ...if you enjoy passionate conversation with your classmates about books you actually like.
- ... if ... You want to take a college level course within a relaxed environment. I am never afraid to raise my hands and ask questions or admit that I am confused.
- ... if you like reading.
- ... if you want to expand your mind in crazy ways English curriculum is not usually taught, and snag a strong 5 on the AP test at the same time.

AP Physics C Mechanics

What to Expect if You Take AP Physics C Mechanics

Course Description:

This course will explore the concepts of kinematics, Newton's laws of motion, work, energy and power, systems of particles and linear momentum, circular motion and rotation, oscillations, and gravitation. Students will learn to apply differential and integral calculus in order to solve problems associated with these concepts. These calculus concepts will be taught as part of the course for the students who have not yet taken calculus. Students will build understanding and critical thinking skills through inquiry-based, laboratory investigations that explore these physics concepts.

Prerequisite:

Students must have an A- average in Honors Math and current science course and the recommendation of current science and math teachers.

Summer work:

None

Workload/Difficulty:

Homework consists of about one hour of problems and free response questions per class, about one set of lab questions / write up per week, and studying for daily 5-minute quizzes. Tests will be given every unit. Calculators are allowed on exams. Some formulas need to be memorized.

Take AP Physics if you enjoy

- Hands-on explorations and lab work.
- Proving ideas mathematically, graphically, and verbally.
- Creatively solving problems.
- Designing physical structures to test your ideas.
- Collaborating in lab groups.
- Managing your time and staying organized.
- Taking a challenging but rewarding class.
- Wondering about why nature does what she does!

AP Environmental Science

What to Expect if You Take AP Environmental Science

Course Description:

The goal of the AP Environmental Science course is to provide students with the scientific principles, concepts, and methodologies required to understand the inter-relationships of the natural world, to identify and analyze environmental problems both natural and human-made, to evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and to examine alternative solutions for resolving or preventing them. Environmental science is interdisciplinary. It embraces a wide variety of topics from different areas of study. The course includes a field study component.

Prerequisite:

Students must have a B average in previous honors level science and English classes and recommendation of science teachers. Sophomores must be concurrently enrolled in Honors Chemistry.

Summer work:

Students will read Chapter 1 of the text and complete study questions for the chapter.

Workload/Difficulty:

Homework consists of about one hour of reading and study questions per class, about one set of lab questions / write up per week, and studying for daily 5-minute quizzes. Tests will be given every two chapters

You should be able to express yourself clearly in writing and do basic math calculations without a calculator. (Calculators aren't allowed on the exam!)

Take AP Environmental Science if you enjoy

- Debating various sides of an issue.
- Hands-on explorations and lab work.
- Digging in the garden.
- Exploring the wildlife on campus.
- Sharing current issues and related video clips that you discover.
- Learning new vocabulary
- Expressing your ideas in writing.
- Designing "green" houses and communities.
- Observing the world around you as a citizen scientist.
- Understanding the science behind environmental issues that will affect your life.
- Managing your time and staying organized.
- Taking a challenging but rewarding class.
- Learning important life skills.

AP Biology

Why Take AP Biology?

Course Description:

AP Biology is an introductory college-level biology course. Students cultivate their understanding of biology through inquiry-based investigations as they explore the following topics: evolution, cellular processes — energy and communication, genetics, information transfer, ecology, and interactions.

LABORATORY REQUIREMENT

This course requires that 25 percent of the instructional time will be spent in hands-on laboratory work, with an emphasis on inquiry based investigations that provide students with opportunities to apply the science practices.

The course is based on four Big Ideas, which encompass core scientific principles, theories, and processes that cut across traditional boundaries and provide a broad way of thinking about living organisms and biological systems. The following are Big Ideas:

The process of evolution explains the diversity and unity of life.

Biological systems utilize free energy and molecular building blocks to grow, to reproduce, and to maintain dynamic homeostasis.

Living systems store, retrieve, transmit, and respond to information essential to life processes

Biological systems interact, and these systems and their interactions possess complex properties.

Summer work:

From the assigned text book:

- 1 chapter reviewing the themes of biology
- 1 unit (4 chapters) on the Mechanisms of Evolution
- Learn a list of scientific prefixes, roots and suffixes

Workload/Difficulty:

Students will be expected to do readings from the text and complete active reading guides paced at 1-2 chapters per week. There will be several guided inquiry labs or lab activities per unit to be documented in a laboratory notebook. Unit exams will cover 2-4 chapters with a frequency on average of every two weeks. There are (individual and group) projects assigned to review additional topics not covered in the lecture part of the class.

Take AP Bio if you...

- LOVE biology and the sciences.
- have good time management and organizational skills.
- are an independent learner that can work well in group situations.
- are curious about the how and whys of biology.
- want to improve your research and writing skills.
- are looking to challenge yourself in the area of science.

AP Computer Science:

What to Expect if You Take AP CSA

Course Description:

Advanced Placement Computer Science (also called **AP Comp Sci**, **APCS-A**) is an Advanced Placement course and examination offered by the College Board to high school students as an opportunity to earn college credit for a college-level computer science course. **AP Computer Science A** is meant to be the equivalent of a first-semester course in computer science. The course introduces students to computer science with fundamental topics that include problem solving, design strategies and methodologies, organization of data (data structures), approaches to processing data (algorithms), analysis of potential solutions, and the ethical and social implications of computing. The course emphasizes both object-oriented and imperative problem solving and design using Java language. These techniques represent proven approaches for developing solutions that can scale up from small, simple problems to large, complex problems. The AP Computer Science A course curriculum is compatible with many CS1 courses in colleges and universities.

Prerequisite:

A average in Algebra II/Trig or B average in Honors Algebra II/Trig or A average in Honors Geometry AND current math and/or science teacher approval. Students should be comfortable with functions and the concepts found in the uses of function notation, such as $f(x) = x + 2$ and $f(x) = g(h(x))$. It is important that students understand that any significant computer science course builds upon a foundation of mathematical reasoning that should be acquired before attempting such a course.

Summer work: There will be a summer assignment that is an online introduction to coding with JAVA. It will involve coding with Karel...the robot dog (yes, kind of fun).

What is class like? You will learn by doing, writing computer codes every day using a specific subset of Java. You will complete skill-based exercises by writing small programs and gradually develop the skill to write larger and more sophisticated programs. It is truly a critical thinking required class.

Workload/Difficulty: Homework consists of about 30 minutes to one hour of coding per class. We will be doing as much as possible in class, but there will be work outside of class, including a great deal of problem solving.

Take AP Computer Science because:

- Computing is part of everything we do, part of every industry and career
- Computing develops your problem-solving skills
- Computing offers many types of lucrative careers
- Jobs requiring Computing skills and experience are among the fastest growing in the global economy
- Expertise in Computing helps you even if your primary career choice is something else
- Computing is an essential part of well-rounded academic preparation
- **There is a huge need for more females in the ever growing field**
- We live in Silicon Valley area

Which students do well in AP Computer Science? Students who:

- Exhibit a genuine interest in math, problem-solving, and learning how to write software
- Are committed to earning college credit/placement by passing the AP Exam

What is the AP Exam? The exam is given in May and consists of the following sections:

- Section I: multiple-choice, 40 questions, 90 minutes
- Section II: free-response, 4 questions, 90 minutes
- The test is completed with paper and pencil, no computer required

AP Chemistry

Course Description:

The AP Chemistry course is designed to be the equivalent of the general chemistry course usually taken during the first college year (two semesters). This course is taken with the idea in mind that students will take the AP Exam to receive college credit or placement at the student's college of choice. For some students, this course enables them to undertake, in their first year, second-year work in the chemistry sequence at their institution or to register in courses in other fields where general chemistry is a prerequisite. For other students, the AP Chemistry course fulfills the laboratory science requirement and frees time for other courses. Such credit and placement tied to the AP Chemistry exam could lead to students' readiness for and engagement in the study of advanced topics in subsequent college courses and eventually the achievement of a STEM degree and successful career.

The course centers around six big ideas and seven science practices:

Big Ideas	Science Practices
1. Structure of Matter	1. Drawing, explaining, and interpreting representations
2. Bonding and Intermolecular Forces	2. Using mathematics and logical routines appropriately
3. Chemical Reactions	3. Asking and refining scientific questions
4. Kinetics	4. Designing and implementing data collection strategies
5. Thermodynamics	5. Analyzing and evaluating data
6. Chemical Equilibrium	6. Making predictions and justifying claims with evidence
	7. Connecting chemistry concepts across the big ideas.

Summer work:

There is a weekly assignment due throughout the summer (approximately 20 problems each week) of strictly review from the previous chemistry year. There is flexibility of due dates due to vacation times, etc.

Workload/Difficulty:

There will be an assignment every class that will be approximately 30-90 minutes in length. AP Chemistry will challenge you to the limits of your academic ability.

Prerequisites: Honors Chemistry: B+ or better and recommendation of science teacher. Chemistry: A and recommendation of science teacher (students from regular chemistry will be required to do additional work over the summer). It is preferable for students to take in consecutive years.

Why Take AP Chemistry???

1. AP Chemistry will teach you to think at higher levels. This is excellent preparation for the higher levels of thinking required in college.

2. When you take and pass the national AP Chemistry Exam given in May, you could receive college credit for the course when you enroll at many colleges and universities in the United States. This will save you both time and money.
3. AP Chemistry looks great on your transcript or on a letter of recommendation. One of the first things admissions officers ask counselors about a potential candidate for their university is 'did this student take the most challenging courses available?' Taking AP Chemistry is a way of distinguishing yourself in high school.
4. AP Chemistry is an intense course of study where students and the teacher really get to know each other. It is to the student's advantage for the teacher to know them well when they need a letter of recommendation.
5. If you are planning to go into a science/engineering or health related field (nursing, premed, physical therapy, etc.), this is an excellent class to take.

TOP 10 Reasons to take AP Chemistry:

- 10) It looks **great** on your college applications.
- 9) Your parents won't be able to hassle you about not working hard enough.
- 8) That certain someone you don't want to date will actually believe you when you say, "I'm sorry, I can't—I've got AP Chem homework to do..."
- 7) No one will ever claim you're not smart enough to hold a political office.
- 6) It will make that first chemistry class you took seem really easy.
- 5) It only hurts for a little while.
- 4) Builds Character (and lasting friendships).
- 3) The solutions you use in lab come in pretty colors.
- 2) It will excite your electrons.

And the number one reason to take AP Chemistry is:

- 1) Carefully controlled explosions are a real blast!!



Passing this exam can allow many students to either skip a first and second semester college chemistry or just move ahead. Taking the course shows colleges a very high level of interest in challenging yourself....which is very attractive to college admissions personnel.

AP Studio Art : 2D and Drawing

Course Overview

The AP Studio Art course enables students to develop mastery in concept, composition and execution of 2D Design and Drawing portfolios. They are required to investigate all aspects of their portfolio: Breadth, Concentration and Quality. In May, they will submit their works both digitally and submit 5 physical works. Over the course of the year, students will develop a body of work investigating a strong underlying visual idea that grows out of a coherent plan of action; 24 or more works of art. Students learn a variety of concepts and approaches in 2D Design and Drawing so that the student is able to demonstrate a range of abilities and versatility with technique, problem-solving and ideation. The course emphasizes making art as an ongoing process that involves the students in informed and critical decision making.

AP Studio Art 3D

Course Overview

The object of this course is to explore the different aspects of 3D sculpture and to teach the students how to express themselves in their own personal style with different media. The individual sections of each portfolio- Quality, Concentration, and Breadth- are discussed in detail. The students are expected to develop mastery in concept, composition, and execution of ideas. Critiques from the teacher and peers are expected and are an ongoing process throughout the year and form part of the assessment grade for the course.

Expectations

The following are key guidelines of the course:

- In addition to work completed in class, **much artwork will have to be done at home** – this will help accomplish 1 finished piece of work approximately every 1 ½ weeks throughout the year.
- A **sketchbook/journal is to be kept** throughout the course. This will include photos, notes, sketches, clippings, and any other variety of ideas/techniques produced/practiced on a daily basis.
- **Deadlines must be met.** Procrastination is not accepted in this course, or the portfolio requirements will never be able to be completed in the time period allotted.
- Students must be **active participants** in class. Discussions and critiques are key learning processes in this course and students must contribute their ideas and thoughts at all times.
- Students must **be prepared** for class. Students must arrive to class on time with their materials, and use the class time to its fullest extent.
- **Respect** is expected at all times. This includes respect for personal artwork, respect for other people's artwork, respect for the classroom and materials, and most of all respect for people's ideas, opinions, and feelings voiced in discussion.
- Students must also study classic and contemporary artists and trends during the duration of the course. Students are expected to **visit galleries and local art museums** on their own 2-3 times during the year.

- **All artwork must be original!** No published work can be used as a basis for personal artwork unless significant alteration to the image is completed. All imagery must be developed according to personal voice and any duplication of imagery from any source is not accepted.

Prerequisite Assignment

Students entering AP 3D Studio Art are given assignments to complete over the summer. This work would be used towards Section III of the 3D Portfolio and are submitted the first week of class.

Summer Assignment

- (Required) Museum/Gallery/Studio visit.
- Transform an Old Purse into a Symbolic Monument.
- Wooden Architectural Sculpture.
- Create a three dimensional sculpture from found objects.
- Using items from your everyday life
- Use Sculpey Your Choice. Anything you want.

Oh and two more things.... 1- You will be given detailed instruction on every project requested, and 2- trash picking.... Collect a sizable boxful (or more) of interesting objects and junk. Broken objects, machine parts, natural objects, household items- anything that interests you in terms of shape, volume, texture, color, meaning, or social significance. Objects that are modular or occur in multiples can be especially useful. Bring back to school the first week.

Why Take AP Studio Art 3D

Obvious Reasons

- The course is aligned with both the National Art Standards and State Standards
- It challenges highly motivated high school students to perform at the college level
- Students may receive placement and/or credit in college
- The student creates a sophisticated body of work (portfolio) which helps students stand out in the college admission process by demonstrating:
 - commitment to academic excellence
 - study habits necessary for rigorous course work
 - advanced creative problem solving skills

Not So Obvious Reasons

- Students may use the portfolio to apply for scholarships
- Enriches their secondary and postsecondary school experiences
- Allows for exploration of the visual world in a broader context
- Enables students to explore a variety of perspectives of the world, and most importantly, their own vision and creative journey
- Develops self-confidence through personal creative growth
- The student becomes a member of a rich and supportive artist community that may last a lifetime

Expectations for AP Spanish Language and Culture Course

You want to take the AP Spanish Language and Culture Course because

- you want to define your future in TWO languages
- you want to stand out with Global 21st Century skills in any profession
- you want to reach 350 million more people -whose mother tongue is SPANISH
- you want to make a difference in any career.
- you want to stand out ABOVE other candidates because of the EXTRA language
- you want to develop strong communicative abilities in TWO languages
- you want to become more knowledgeable about world issues in TWO languages
- you want to communicate successfully in a pluralistic world
- you want to enter college with FIVE (5) or SIX (6) semester college credits
- you want to enter college needing only 2 courses from a MINOR
- you want to go for the GOLD; perhaps earn a minor painlessly
- you want to have earned 5 to 6 college semester units as an entering freshman
- you enjoy learning a language
- you have curiosity, creativity and commitment
- you want to be more competitive with a Second Language edge
- you love researching other cultures and presenting what you learned
- you enjoy a more intimate classroom structure and instruction
- you are up to a challenge that will reap future rewards
- you want to cash in\$\$ - so be noticed TWICE
- you want to become a BI-LINGUAL American

Academic prerequisites for the AP Spanish Language and Culture course:

Student has at least a B in Spanish 3 Honors and a B in English or sufficient dedication to make it happen!

This implies that :

Student is willing to learn new strategies for improving her writing skills and reading comprehension

Student is willing to risk figuring out meaning from context

Student s willing to learn strategies to improve listening skills

Student has the discipline to work diligently, acquire a broad vocabulary gained through group and individual learning.

Student has curiosity and desire to delve further into a subject.

Student will continue to explore Spanish and Hispanic cultures in the broad global themes of:

Science and Technology

Contemporary Life

Beauty and Aesthetics

Family and Community

Personal and Public Identities

Global Challenges

In order to pass the AP exam students will:

- make inferences from what is read or heard, draw conclusions, from evidence given.
- formulate an opinion after having read and listened to various information on a given topic.

- respond, react in phone conversation simulations
- speak for two minutes on a subject, expressing her opinion which is substantiated by references as well as personal experiences.
- write a lengthy essay on one of the theme's topic, expressing opinion, citing sources and life experiences in order to defend, substantiate her opinion.
- become more aware of the world around her so as to be able to make reference to situations that affect the world she lives in.

Students will have summer work in which to explore a variety of on-line sites to become familiar with Spanish and Hispanic news sources, and to “practice” strategies which will be refined during class work.

Students must be willing to spend quality (not quantity) time practicing the skills in listening and speaking to nail the exam –

Students must meet to schedule for extra practice in acquiring successful strategies for passing the AP exam during mutually agree collaboration times, some after school meetings.

Students must be willing to work in pairs and small groups to support the learning and preparation of content and skills

Expectations for AP French Language and Culture Course

You want to take the AP French Language and Culture Course because

- you enjoy learning a language
- you are curious about other cultures
- you have opinions and speak up when asked for yours
- you love researching other cultures and presenting what you learned
- you enjoy a more intimate classroom structure and instruction
- you are up to a challenge that will reap future rewards
- you enjoy using your imagination and creativity in role playing

Academic prerequisites for the AP French Language and Culture course:

Student has at least a B in French 3 Honors and a B in English

This implies that :

Student has good writing skills and reading comprehension, and can especially figure out meaning from context.

Student has good listening skills.

Student has the discipline to work diligently, acquire a long list of vocabulary, review regularly, and contribute regularly to class discussion with new vocabulary and more elevated structures learned. Requires lots of independent review.

Student has curiosity and desire to delve further into a subject.

Student will continue to explore francophone cultures in the broad themes of:

- Science and Technology**
- Contemporary Life**
- Beauty and Aesthetics**
- Family and Community**
- Personal and Public Identities**
- Global Challenges**

In order to pass the AP exam students will:

- make inferences from what is read or heard, draw conclusions, from evidence given.
- formulate an opinion after having read and listened to various information on a given topic.
- respond, react in phone conversation simulations
- speak for two minutes on a subject, expressing her opinion which is substantiated by references as well as personal experiences.
- write a lengthy essay on one of the theme's topic, expressing opinion, citing sources and life experiences in order to defend, substantiate her opinion.

- become more aware of the world around her so as to be able to make reference to situations that affect the world she lives in.

Students will have summer work in which to explore assigned a francophone culture and report back with a comparative reflection of the culture and how it is different or similar to their own.

Time spent studying for this AP course can vary, but one hour per class session is expected.

Students to meet one hour a week after school to practice format of the AP exam

Passing the exam, depending on the score can give the student up to six semesters of college credit. Student will have the possibility to continue French at the 200 level in college and complete a minor in French within two years.

AP US History

Prerequisites: An A- or better in World History, B or better in Honors World History.

Summer work: Read 5 chapters complete study guide write a DBQ, 1 Long Essay, complete online multiple choice questions, and watch online videos
Typical work load 1-2 hours a night (read half a chapter a night, work on study guide, read primary sources, and write responses)

Students will be expected to attend weekly review sessions in 2nd semester and take practice tests offered before the exam

10 Reasons to take APUSH

1. You love History
2. You love to write
3. You love to read
4. You love to analyze documents
5. You want a college class experience
6. You want to be challenged intellectually
7. You care more about learning than the letter grade
8. You like to participate in class discussions
9. You hope to become a future historian
10. You believe that you can succeed.

Last Year 95% of the students who took my class passed the AP Exam.

The key to success is simple: Work Hard, Work Smart, and Seek Help.

AP American Government and Politics:

Prerequisites: Students must have a first semester grade of A- in U.S. History or a B in AP U.S. History

Course Description:

AP United States Government & Politics is a one-semester survey course that provides an analysis of the organization and influence of our government and political system at the national, state and local levels. The course begins with an exploration of political philosophy and power before moving through the civil rights movement, to current issues in American government. We will debate and discuss questions like, Where did the Founding Fathers get their ideas? Does the system of checks and balances really work? Where does our government get its legitimacy? Why is the voting age 18, but the drinking age 21? Why do we pay taxes? Where does the money go? How are the Supreme Court Justices chosen? How come the terms for US Senators is six years, but only 2 years for members of the House of Representatives? Does the United States have an upper and lower house?

This class involves significant reading, writing, weekly current event presentations and an additional workload and extended content for the accelerated student.

For the school year 2016-2017 this course will be taught in the second semester. In the first semester the students will study Economics as a non-AP course that follows the California State Social Studies Framework.

Course Goals: Students will:

- understand important facts, concepts and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics.
- understand the typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their results.
- be able to analyze and interpret basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics.
- evaluate primary sources and editorial writing for bias.

Course Readings

Required Text: O'Connor and Sabato, American Government: Roots and Reform, 10th Edition, 2009, Pearson.

Additional readings:

Lanahan Readings in American Politics
Additional Excerpts from Political Theory texts, News Articles, etc.
Current articles from newspapers and news magazines

Summer reading:

Texts:

Nickel and Dimed: Barbara Ehrenreich
The Annotated United States Constitution

Documentary: "Inequality for All"

Research and writing:

There will be two research essays during the AP Government semester:

- A position paper analyzing which candidate is most qualified to be president
- A paper analyzing one major, current, policy area evaluating how the government system helps to shape the policy

Prerequisite:

Students must have a first semester grade of A- in U.S. History or a B- in AP U.S. History

Workload/Difficulty:

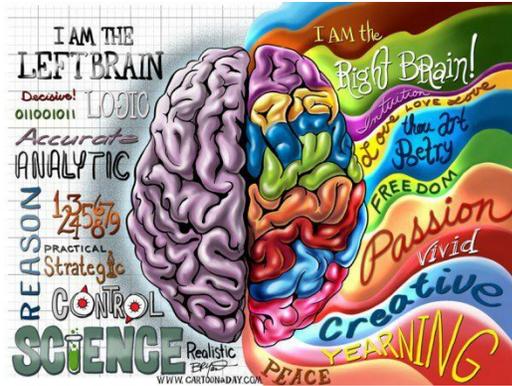
Homework consists of reading in the college-level textbook and taking notes. As a general rule, a student should expect to spend *at least* an hour each night.

Take AP Government if you enjoy:

- Challenging yourself at a higher level
- Learning how the U.S. government system works (and sometimes doesn't!)
- Learning and sharing about current political events and issues
- Debating current political events and issues
- Becoming actively involved in politics
- Developing more informed opinions on political events and issues
- Preparing for college by practicing a variety of different research and writing formats

AP Psychology

So You Are Thinking of Taking AP Psychology, Huh?!?



What to Expect if You Take AP Psychology

Course Description:

AP Psychology is an elective course designed to introduce students to the study of human behavior and mental processes at a college level rigor and pace. Students are exposed to the history and subfields of psychology, the brain's structures and functions, altered states of consciousness, psychological testing, and psychological disorders. Students analyze the biopsychosocial approach to psychology in all human interactions and decisions. Emphasis will be placed on the ethics and statistical methods psychologists use in their science and practice as well as on famous psychological experiments that shaped the field of psychology. *This class involves an additional workload and extended content for the accelerated student.*

In other words.... AP Psychology is a course for those students who are looking to challenge themselves and who are interested in learning about human behavior from a scientific perspective. (Don't let that word science scare you- you will need to understand the brain and the nervous and endocrine systems, but this is not as scientific as a biology or anatomy class). AP Psychology covers a HUGE range of topics so there is something for everyone and the stuff you don't like you will be over within a couple weeks!

Like all AP classes this is an academically rigorous course and it will be taught as a college- level class. You will need to be responsible for your learning and work!

Prerequisite:

- Students must have at least an overall 3.0 GPA

Summer work:

Summer packet that requires students to read Units One and Two of the textbook. Students will need to complete analytical questions on the first two units. Don't let it scare you! If you do it in full you come in with an A! If you don't do it, you are dropped from the class.

Students should also expect winter and Easter break work. (Not nearly as much as the summer work!)

Workload/Difficulty:

This class moves at a fast pace- we cover a unit within 2-3 weeks so expect a test in that time frame. There are quizzes which you are more than prepared for- they are not designed to trick you or be hard- they are designed to help reinforce what you learned in the previous class. Homework consists of various assignments from

reading, writing, watching videos, etc. The time spent on homework each night can range from 30 minutes to an hour and a half.

In February we begin an intensive review for the AP Exam. I expect a minimum of 1.5 hours of studying at least 5 days a week for the two months before the AP Psychology test.

Take AP Psychology if you

- Constantly are wondering why the heck people do the things they do
- Enjoy learning new vocabulary and applying it to real world scenarios
- Find psychological disorders to be fascinating
- Enjoy reading!!!
- Like to ask a lot of questions
- Want to be part of a collaborative classroom
- Like to work with others
- Are good with managing your time and staying organized.
- Aren't afraid to study
- Enjoy figuring out why your friends and family think and act the way they do!
- Enjoy learning random stuff!
- Want to attend optional morning and weekend reviews that will help you better understand the material and prepare for exams
- Are interested in majoring in Psychology
- Want to learn
- Are curious about the brain
- Simply want to challenge yourself in a way you never have

Passing the exam, depending on the score, can allow the student to jump into a higher level psychology course.

AP Statistics – What to Expect

What is statistics?

Statistics is the “science” of data. It helps us answer questions such as:

“How many under-inflated footballs would it take to convince you that cheating was taking place by a football team?”

“To test the safety of a new medication, how many test subjects would be needed for the study to be valid?”

It involves:

- Collecting Data – How much data needs to be collected to make your results have significance? Is the data that was collected valid?
- Analyzing Data – What is the center of the data? How spread out is the data? What is the shape of the data?
- Probability – Is the data “real” or is it due to chance?
- Inference – What conclusion can you make based on the data and your analysis?

Is it difficult?

The “math” part of statistics uses mostly concepts from Algebra I. The new and challenging aspects of statistics are involved in reading detailed problems, reading graphs and tables, and making valid conclusions based on your analysis of the data. You **do not need to be a math expert** to do well in statistics.

What is the workload?

The outside of class work includes reading, homework problems, and learning how to use various technology (e.g. TI-84 calculator). Homework will take 1 to 2 hours to complete.

When is the A Statistics Exam?

The exam is in May and includes multiple choice and free response questions.

What are the prerequisites?

A minimum of a B- in Algebra II Honors or precalculus honors, or a minimum of an A- in Algebra II or precalculus and approval by the math department.

Questions?

Mr. Kish

kkish@mercyhsb.com

AP Calculus AB

Introduction:

AP Calculus AB consists of a full high school year of college-level mathematics. It is expected that students who take this course will seek college credit, college placement, or both from institutions of higher learning.

Prerequisite:

Students taking AP Calculus AB should have demonstrated mastery of material from courses that are the equivalent of four full years of high school mathematics before attempting calculus. These courses should include the study of algebra, geometry, coordinate geometry, and trigonometry, with the fourth year of study including advanced topics in algebra, trigonometry, analytic geometry, and elementary functions. To demonstrate this mastery in order to take this course, students will have to pass an entrance exam.

Summer work:

Work in AP Calculus AB starts the summer before with an introduction to limits. Students are expected to spend about an hour per day for 2-3 weeks for this introduction.

Workload/Difficulty:

While the homework every night should only take about 1-2 hours to complete, the material is covered at a fast pace. The concepts covered are complex and challenging. Expect to spend extra time reviewing the material. Unit tests are given about every three weeks and count for 60% of the 1st semester grade and 80% of the 2nd semester grade.

The curriculum is finished in March, when intense review for the AP exam begins. Students are expected to study at least 2 hours per day for 5 days a week in the weeks leading up to the exam. Optional review sessions will be scheduled occasionally after school and on weekends during this time.

Take AP Calculus AB if you

- Have a genuine interest in mathematics
- Enjoy being challenged mathematically
- Would like to earn college credit/placement
- Plan to concentrate college studies in areas which require calculus (examples include engineering, mathematics, chemistry, physics, biological sciences)

Please contact Mr. Kish at kkish@mercyhsb.com with any questions.