



Dear Parent(s):

The purpose of this letter is to share key information and establish a foundation to move forward regarding Advanced Placement United States History. It is likely that APUSH is your child's first-ever AP class; more are probably planned before graduation from high school. Apart from course-related content (American history), students will be introduced to study skills which no doubt will come in handy in future AP classes.

The standards are exceedingly high . . . no excuses or shortcuts are appropriate. APUSH is essentially a college-level course and is therefore conducted in that spirit. Reading assignments are extensive. Tests consist of multiple-choice questions and various types of essay-response items in accordance with the College Board National Examination format. Our journey through United States history starts with peopling of the Americas and stretches into the current millennium.

Study is very comprehensive. We go beyond mere fact recall (otherwise known as memorization) to the higher levels of knowledge (synthesis, analysis, and evaluation). This is accomplished by creating a solid reservoir of data, and then linking one historical moment to another, and to another, and to yet another. Our ultimate goal is to make sense of history by recognizing the interlocking mechanisms and often obscure ingredients which link the vast array of dates and events and people to create a giant chronological mural.

Although no outright prerequisites exist for this course, simple logic dictates that students should be ***academically accomplished*** (relatively high GPA) and possess some degree of ***interest in American history***. Further, the APUSH student should be adept at ***self-directed study***, embrace sense of ***personal accountability***, make ***attendance a high priority***, and be willing to ***create and manage appropriate amount of time*** needed for suitable consumption and processing of knowledge. Major shortcomings in any of these dimensions, as well as an overzealous extra-curricular agenda and/or employment schedule, might be potentially problematic. APUSH is very taxing of both time and effort—there are no viable shortcuts.

Students enrolled in APUSH are eligible to take the National Exam in early May. Based on the test score, factored with the university selected to attend upon graduation from high school, students ***may*** earn college credit. The cost of the National Exam is less than \$100.

Over the 25-plus years this course has been offered at Stevens High School, the majority of APUSHers have performed well on the National Exam. Roughly 90 percent of students who successfully addressed all components of APUSH have passed the test with scores equivalent to grades of A or B in a college-level course. This does not happen by simply enrolling in APUSH. It comes through constant and consistent effort, starting with day one (summer preparatory work, actually). Above all, parents and students should recognize that APUSH is a ***no-nonsense course*** with the expectation that students conduct themselves academically and socially at levels which might very well be advanced and unfamiliar to them.

Starting early in the second semester, we hold plenty of after-hours review sessions (mornings, lunchtime, evenings, and weekends) in preparation for the National Exam. Attendance at these meetings is optional, though highly recommended. It has been my experience that students who perform well on the National Exam take advantage of every opportunity offered, including these extra study sessions.

I know what it takes to prepare students for the National Exam, and it is my professional responsibility to proceed accordingly—high expectations exist for instruction, as well! Attention to my overall strategy puts students in optimum position to score well. However, *the ultimate responsibility for success or failure on the National Exam rests with each individual student*, of course.

Besides the National Exam, the other huge culminating event in APUSH is our excursion to the Little Bighorn Battlefield in southeastern Montana, some historical sites in and near Sheridan, Wyoming, and Devils Tower National Monument. It is a wonderful three-day affair and usually occurs during late April in conjunction with the APUSH evening colloquium which features lecture vignettes by guest experts in history (college professors, authors, site curators, and so forth), as well as brief presentations of student excellence.

I invite you to visit the course Website (best viewed using Internet Explorer) in order to become acquainted with all that APUSH entails. It is full of helpful material and crucial information, although it naturally needs to be updated for the upcoming year—appearance at the start of summer compared to the following fall will differ in spots. *Extensive use of the Website throughout the year is an absolute*. Therefore, students are encouraged to create shortcuts on all home computers and personal devices which will be frequently used to access the Website.

www.APUSH-XL.com

Perhaps needless to mention, the 2020-21 school year will encounter unprecedented and unpredictable classroom challenges due to the ongoing COVID-19 intrusion. This reality underscores the necessity of scholastic commitment on the part of students who are truly invested in maximizing the APUSH opportunity. Be assured that APUSH contingency plans (beyond whatever measures RCAS may levy as the school year approaches and transpires) are *already in place to deal with any conceivable COVID-19 speed bumps*.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me (scott.tubbs@k12.sd.us). However, keep in mind that e-mail is not checked with any semblance of regularity during the summer months, so patience is appreciated. Unless the matter is absolutely critical, I do not welcome telephone interruptions of my personal life at home. *All summer preparatory work is due the day of the school-wide open house* held during the week immediately prior to the first day of classes for the new school year. I look forward to meeting parents next fall under some degree of normalcy. In the meantime, have a healthy and happy summer!

Sincerely,



Scott Tubbs
APUSH Instructor



P.S. Students who bring this letter—with parent/guardian signature in the blank area here—to class the first day of school will receive either a new Corvette or 10 bonus points (instructor choice) to start the year!

Remember these five essentials about your child's commitment to APUSH for next school year:

- ❶ This is a **college-level** course.
- ❷ The work load is **enormous**.
- ❸ High levels of academic and social behavior are **expected**.
- ❹ Students must assume major **responsibility** for self.
- ❺ Irregular attendance is often inherently **detrimental**.

These standards are not softened due to any circumstances forced by the COVID-19 presence!