

# Putnam County High School Advanced Placement Program



Dear AP Students,

Welcome to the Advanced Placement program at Putnam County High School. The AP program offers a unique opportunity for motivated students to engage in college-level coursework while still in high school. Whether you are a returning AP student or new to the program we are thrilled to have you join us for what promises to be an exciting and rewarding experience.

As you explore the pages of this handbook, you will find essential information about the AP courses offered at our school, including course descriptions, expectations, and guidelines for success. Additionally, the handbook serves as a comprehensive resource to help you navigate the intricacies of the AP program, from registration and exam preparation to college credit opportunities and beyond.

We firmly believe that participation in AP courses not only challenges students academically but also fosters critical thinking, problem solving skills, and a deeper understanding of subject matter. Through rigorous coursework and dedicated support from our experienced faculty, you will be equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary to excel in your chosen AP subjects and beyond.

Furthermore, the AP program provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate your academic prowess to college admissions officers. Successfully completing AP courses and earning high scores on AP exams can enhance your college applications, potentially leading to advanced placement credit or exemption from introductory college courses.

We encourage you to approach the AP program with enthusiasm, determination, and a willingness to embrace challenges. Remember that you are not alone on this journey; our faculty and staff are here to support and guide you every step of the way.

On behalf of the entire PCHS community, I extend my best wishes for a successful and fulfilling May your dedication and hard work pave the way for a bright future filled with endless possibilities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Andrew Cooper

Principal

Advanced Placement Coordinator

## **WHAT IS ADVANCED PLACEMENT?**

Advanced Placement (AP) offers college-level courses to high school students, providing an opportunity to earn college credit, stand out in the college admissions process, and develop essential skills for success in higher education. AP courses are taught by experienced educators who follow a rigorous curriculum aligned with college standards. Putnam County High School currently offers 12 AP courses.

## **WHY ENROLL IN AP COURSES?**

Many colleges and universities offer credit or advanced placement for high AP exam scores, allowing students to save time and money on their college education. College admissions officers recognize the rigor of AP courses and value students who challenge themselves academically. AP courses foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and time management skills essential for college success. With a variety of AP courses available, students can explore their interests and potential college majors. AP courses are introductory college courses, making them more demanding and requiring more time and work than regular high school courses. AP courses provide students with greater depth and understanding of content standards. *A student should realize that taking an AP class is a serious commitment and give careful thought to which and how many AP courses to take in one year.*

The purpose of this handbook is to help students and parents clearly understand course requirements and expectations. The challenge of AP courses helps to focus students' interests as they begin to plan for their future. AP courses, modeled on rigorous, evidence-based standards, give students the preparation they need to be successful in college.

With 12 courses to choose from, AP offers something for everyone with a strong curiosity about the subject you plan to study and the willingness to work hard. Here are just a few reasons to sign up:

- Broaden Your Intellectual Horizon:
  - Explore the world from a variety of perspectives, most importantly your own.
  - Study subjects in greater depth and detail.
  - Assume the responsibility of reasoning, analyzing, and understanding for yourself.
  
- Gain the Edge in College Preparation:
  - Get a head start on college-level work.
  - Improve your writing skills and sharpen your problem-solving techniques.

- Develop the study habits necessary for tackling rigorous course work.
- Stand Out in the College Admissions Process:
  - Demonstrate your maturity and readiness for college.
  - Show your willingness to push yourself to the limit.
  - Emphasize your commitment to academic excellence.

As students plan their schedules, they should also consider time commitments required in extracurricular and outside activities. Carefully review the course descriptions and expectations before you make your decisions.

### Eligibility Requirements

1. Prerequisite Courses: Students must complete required prerequisites with a grade of B or higher.
2. Teacher Recommendations: A recommendation from a subject-area teacher may be required.
3. Academic Standing: Students should maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 or meet school-specific criteria.

### Expectations for AP Students

1. Classroom Commitment:
  - a. Attend classes regularly and arrive on time.
  - b. Participate actively in discussions and activities.
  - c. Complete all assignments by the due date.
2. Independent Study:
  - a. Dedicate time outside class to studying and reviewing course material.
  - b. Utilize additional resources like textbooks, online tools, and tutoring if necessary.
3. Respectful Conduct:
  - a. Follow all school rules and maintain a respectful demeanor toward teachers and peers.
  - b. Uphold academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism and cheating.

Students who choose to enroll in AP courses must commit to completing all requirements of the course. **Students who determine an AP course is not a good fit for them before the end of the first 4 weeks of the semester will be allowed to withdraw and enroll in a lower-level course in**

the same subject. *Students who do not withdraw prior to this hard deadline will remain in the course for the remainder of the semester.*

### **WHY TAKE AN AP EXAM?**

Satisfactory grades on AP examinations offer many benefits which may enhance your applications for college admissions, placement, and scholarships. You may also receive college credit based on your AP scores. AP exams are administered each year in May. An exam contains both multiple-choice and free-response questions that require essay writing, problem solving, and other skills. Every examination receives an overall grade on a five-point scale.

Scale:

- 5- Extremely Well Qualified
- 4- Well Qualified
- 3- Qualified
- 2-possibly qualified
- 1-no recommendation

AP Grade Reports are sent in July to each student's home address, high school, and if the student has requested it, to the designated colleges. Each college decides how much credit to award for AP scores. You can find this information for the college(s) you are interested in by using the AP Credit Policy search at [www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy](http://www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy).

\*See College Board website for additional details as well as the updated AP Exam schedule for the May exams.

### **AP BIOLOGY**

Course Description: Advanced Placement Biology is designed to be the equivalent of an introductory college biology course. This course aids in the development of the processes of scientific inquiry and thinking. It provides students with a conceptual foundation in the major biological themes: science as a process, evolution, energy transfer, continuity, and change. The relationship between science, technology and society is also explored. This, coupled with in-depth lectures and extensive laboratory investigations, provides students with access to exciting, hands-on experiences. AP Biology will also help students develop a conceptual framework for modern biology and gain an appreciation of science as a process.

### Specific skills for success:

- Self- motivation and organization needed to complete tasks
- Commitment to completing homework
- Ability to read, understand, and apply concepts to novel scientific situations
- A desire to learn more about biological topics
- Strong math and analytical skills for data collection and analysis
- Strong writing skills

### Out of Class Commitments:

- Students are expected to spend roughly 1 hour a night completing homework, labs and unit reviews.

## **AP COMPUTER SCIENCE A**

Course Description: This course emphasizes object oriented programming, problem solving and algorithm development. The course is taught using the programming language Java. The purpose of AP Computer Science is to lay the foundation for object-oriented programming. The course aims at teaching the students computer science concepts. Java is used as the vehicle to teach them. The focus is more on the concepts and abstract ideas rather than on the syntax. The course is the equivalent of a first semester college-level Computer Science course. The prerequisite is Beginning Programming or recommendation of the teacher.

### Specific Skills for Success:

- Interests in programming/ software development
- Good mathematical skills
- Logic Development
- Ability to think creatively
- Attention to details and precision
- Ready to accept challenging tasks

### Out of Class Commitments:

- There will be homework every week. Students will have lots of lab time. But if they do not finish it within the provided time, they are responsible for finishing it after school or at home.

## **AP COMPUTER SCIENCE PRINCIPLES**

Course Description: The focus of this course will fall into these computational thinking practices: connecting computing, developing computational artifacts, abstracting, analyzing problems and artifacts, communicating, and collaborating. Various forms of technologies will be used to

expose students to resources and the application of computer science. Professional communication skills and practices, problem-solving, ethical and legal issues, and the impact of effective presentation skills are enhanced in this course to prepare students to be college and career ready.

Specific Skills for Success:

- Interests in programming/ software development
- Good mathematical skills
- Logic Development
- Ability to think creatively
- Attention to details and precision
- Ready to accept challenging tasks

Out of Class Commitments:

- Homework is assigned based on the completion of classwork. Students will have lots of lab time, but if they do not finish it within the provided time, they are responsible for finishing it after school or at home.

**AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**

Course Description: AP English Language and Composition is a college level course for high school students interested in improving themselves as critical readers, thinkers, and writers. Our emphasis is two-fold: reading strategies for the “expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communication” and writing from argumentative and analytical platforms. The course is designed for those who love reading, writing, and discussion.

Specific Skills for Success:

- Students need a strong work ethic coupled with analytical, writing and critical thinking skills.

Out of Class Commitments:

- You will read weekly and write essays every few weeks.
- There will be additional reading and writing assignments during class.

**AP ENGLISH LITERATURE**

Course Description: This course is devoted to reading, analyzing, deconstructing, and questioning texts at a high level. Skills are mostly assessed with in-class and out of class essays, but multiple-choice assessments are also included. The course pushes students to think

differently about written works by considering theoretical perspectives and author's purpose. Class discussions include psychological, historical, political, social and gender issues in relation to text.

Specific Skills for Success:

- Willingness to read and to analyze amazing works of literature
- Desire to improve writing skills for college.

Out of Class Commitments:

- The majority of the homework is reading; therefore, students must be willing to read novels outside of class.

**AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY**

Course Description: AP Human Geography is a college level course that travels well beyond the simple memorization of geographic facts and figures. It teaches you why and how things happen in and around the world, and how they are connected. To put it simply, Human Geography deals with the why of where. We deal with demographics, migration, linguistics, religion, political geography, urbanization, and industrialization. It's the perfect course for students interested in what's happening in the world now!

Specific Skills for Success:

- The requirements to succeed are desire and determination. If the student is willing to work hard and never give up, we would recommend them to take AP Human Geography.
- Other skills that are important to have would be above average reading abilities and above average writing skills.

Out of Class Commitments:

- Students are required to read most nights in a textbook and take reading notes.
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**AP WORLD HISTORY**

Course Description: The Advanced Placement World History course is the equivalent of a two semester college-level course in Global Civilization/History. The course covers a little over ten thousand years of human history beginning with the development of agriculture and permanent settlement and ending with the present times. The course is also relatively all-encompassing, primarily covering Europe, Asia, the Americas, and Africa with some necessary emphasis on Oceania. The course features a mostly thematic approach that seeks to trace global developments within world cultures as well as to make connections between these



cultures based on the same themes. This is a course that also has a heavy emphasis on teaching critical thinking, historical document analysis, and writing skills.

Specific Skills for Success:

- To be able to critically analyze major historical trends and documents within and between time periods and cultures.
- To have mature study and work habits of nightly study and reading to insure full understanding of the materials.
- To be willing to master three different types of essays: The Comparative, Change-and Continuity-over-Time, and Document Based Question Essays.

Out of Class Commitments:

- Roughly (15-20) pages of reading a night.
- Preparation for daily reading quizzes.
- Weekly essay writing assignments.
- Analysis of primary source documents.

**AP US HISTORY**

Course Description: In AP U.S. History, students investigate significant events, individuals, developments, and processes from approximately 1491 to the present. Students develop and use the same skills and methods employed by historians: analyzing primary and secondary sources; developing historical arguments; making historical connections; and utilizing reasoning about comparison, causation, and continuity and change. The course also provides eight themes that students explore throughout the course in order to make connections among historical developments in different times and places: American and national identity; work, exchange, and technology; geography and the environment; migration and settlement; politics and power; America in the world; American and regional culture; and social structures.

The course content is organized into commonly taught units of study that provide a suggested sequence for the course. These units comprise the content and conceptual understandings that colleges and universities typically expect students to master to qualify for college credit and/or placement. This content is grounded in themes, which are cross-cutting concepts that build conceptual understanding and spiral throughout the course.

The AP U.S. History Exam assesses student understanding of the historical thinking skills and learning objectives outlined in the course framework. The exam is 3 hours and 15 minutes long and students are required to answer multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, 1 document-based question, and 1 long essay question. We will practice these forms of assessments throughout the course in order to prepare students for the exam in May.

Specific Skills for Success:

- Critical thinking, analysis, reading comprehension skills, writing skills, map skills, thematic categorization, interpretation of primary sources, and historiography.

Out of Class Commitments:

- Reading of textbook and supplemental readings, studying notes and completing critical essays (approximately 5 hours per week).

**AP MACROECONOMICS**

Course Description: The purpose of an Advance Placement course in Macroeconomics is to give students a thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to an economic system as a whole. Such a course places particular emphasis on the study of national income and price-level determination, and also develops students' familiarity with economic performance measures, the financial sector, stabilization policies, economic growth, and international economics.

Specific Skills for Success:

- Ability to interpret graphs and charts
- Ability to evaluate issues
- Good analytical skills
- Good basic math skills (Students who performed well in Algebra I and Geometry usually find the conceptual nature of the course easy to grasp.)

Out of Class Commitments:

- Approximately one hour for every hour in class

**AP PRECALCULUS**

Course Description: AP Precalculus prepares students for other college-level mathematics and science courses. Through regular practice, students build deep mastery of modeling and functions, and they examine scenarios through multiple representations. The course framework delineates content and skills common to college precalculus courses that are foundational for careers in mathematics, physics, biology, health science, social science, and data science.

Course Content: The course framework is organized into four commonly taught units of study. The units of study are Polynomial and Rational Functions, Exponential and Logarithmic

Functions, Trigonometric and Polar Functions and Functions Involving Parameters, Vectors and Matrices. The first three units are assessed on the AP Exam in May.

Specific Skills for Success:

- Commitment to complete assignments
- Ability to work independently
- Intrinsic motivation to work hard and seek help when needed
- Problem-solving skills

Out of Class Commitments:

- Complete daily assignments
- Take time to review content and to prepare for assessments

**AP STATISTICS**

Course Description: This course is a unique math course in that it does not fall into a sequence with other courses. It can be taken as an elective while taking another math course or it can be taken as a final math course for high school students.

Specific Skills for Success:

- Mathematical skills are not nearly as important for success as personal disciplinary skills.
- Students must be motivated to do their work in a timely manner, ask questions when struggling, and take ownership in their mastery of the concepts.
- Written and verbal communication skills are important as we address more than just the numbers.

Out of Class Commitments:

- Several projects will be assigned throughout the semester. Many of those are group projects, but there are also individual projects. These are excellent learning opportunities that can be lots of fun. Of course, there is homework on a regular basis that is completed prior to the unit test.

**AP CALCULUS** (*Beginning 2025-2026 school year*)

Course Description: The AP Calculus AB course is designed to prepare students to be mathematically proficient at the college calculus level. Students are expected to take and be successful on the AP Calculus AB exam, thereby earning college credit for differential calculus (approximately 3 credit hours). The class focuses on the study of differential calculus with

limited exposure to the early concepts of integral calculus. The concepts are presented and tested in the analytic (symbolic), graphical and tabular frameworks.

Specific Skills for Success:

- Strong background in Precalculus
- Commitment to do homework
- Ability to work independently
- Intrinsic motivation to work hard and seek help when needed
- Problem-solving skills

Out of Class Commitments:

- 0-45 minutes for homework daily
- 1 hour preparation for quizzes
- 2 hours preparation for tests
- 4-6 hours preparation for final exams
- 12-18 hours outside of class preparing for AP Exam

**AP DRAWING, 3D DESIGN, 2D ART & DESIGN**

Course Description: The AP Art and Design program consists of three different courses and AP Portfolio Exams—AP 2-D Art and Design, AP 3-D Art and Design, and AP Drawing—corresponding to college and university foundations courses. Students create a portfolio of work to demonstrate inquiry through art and design and development of materials, processes, and ideas over the course of a year. Portfolios include works of art and design, process documentation, and written information about the work presented. Students submit portfolios for evaluation based on specific criteria, which include skillful synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas and sustained investigation through practice, experimentation, and revision, guided by questions. Portfolios are submitted at the end of the second semester at a date selected by teacher with regard to the date set by College Board. Students can choose to focus their AP portfolios in the following disciplines: photography, graphic design, digital art, drawing, painting, pottery and sculpture. The AP Art and Design course framework presents an inquiry-based approach to learning about and making art and design. The teacher will guide students in conducting an in-depth, sustained investigation of materials, processes, and ideas. The framework is composed of course skills, big ideas, essential questions and enduring understandings, learning objectives, and essential knowledge statements. Projects are assessed with the AP College Board rubric guidelines and critiques are required and held for feedback in regard to improvement. All three AP Art and Design Portfolio Exams contain two sections. The Selected Works (5 works showing a variety of techniques, styles, mediums, and subjects) section requires students to demonstrate skillful synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas. The Sustained Investigation section (up to 15 works associated with a central subject and/or theme) requires students to conduct a sustained investigation based on questions, through practice,

experimentation, and revision. Both sections of the portfolios require students to articulate information about their work.

Specific Skills for Success:

- Students should have high marks in previous art classes and have shown the ability to work independently, specifically in generating ideas with little or no teacher direction.
- Students must be self-motivated with a strong desire to create and grow as an artist.
- Students must be open to criticism for the sake of improvement and learning.
- Students must be committed to learning and coming to class prepared with materials and completed assignments.
- Students should be open to and feel comfortable critiquing their art and the art of others in a group setting.
- Students should have a place outside of school that is conducive to creating art.

Out of Class Commitments:

- Research and development of ideas are expected beyond the classroom walls. These courses require work outside of the school day.
- Students can expect to produce and finish a work of art every 1 to 2 weeks on top of required brainstorming, researching, and sketching.
- Students should expect to fulfill the majority of the written portfolio components at home.