AP UNITED STATES HISTORY

Summer Project 2026-2027

Welcome to Advanced Placement United States History (APUSH). This college level advanced placement course will be both challenging and rewarding. This course is designed to encourage students to become apprentice historians who are able to use historical facts, evidence, and research to create deeper conceptual understandings of critical developments in U.S. History. The following summer assignment will be your first requirement for APUSH. This assignment is due the **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.** Please reach out to me over the summer with any questions at jford@berkscatholic.org.

PART A: READ AND OUTLINE

Purchase *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn. This book is an interpretation of American History that analyzes how social movements and individuals of vastly varying experiences shaped the American narrative. It is up to us to use primary sources as pieces to put the puzzle together. We can assemble them in different ways, but there will always be a few pieces missing.

Read *A People's History of the United States* with open, but also critical eyes. Search for moments where Zinn might be persuading the reader to *feel* one way or another, while keeping in mind that the information presented is factual. Be sure to entertain the arguments he includes that aren't in traditional textbooks. Most importantly, look at how he uses primary sources as evidence to prove his perspective.

Take notes as you read using the Cornell Note Taking Method. Notes must be handwritten on looseleaf and kept in a binder; ½" 3 ring binders are the best option. For the chapters, identify the main ideas/key terms (major historical developments such as the Columbian Exchange) and provide definitions/explanations for each (supporting details). Using this process will ensure you include all of the necessary information without including too many unimportant details.

Use this as an opportunity to improve your note taking technique, which is an essential skill you will need to interpret large amounts of academic information. Do not use complete sentences and/or rewrite the book! Notes are meant to remind, not retell. Read an entire paragraph before writing down any information – when you read, everything seems important, but you don't need to remember it all! You will use these notes as a study guide throughout this course.

PART B: ESSAY

Read Chapter 23: The Coming Revolt of the Guards. Write a **5 paragraph** essay that is handwritten on looseleaf, kept in your binder, and is **4 pages** in length (2 handwritten pages front and back).

Include an introduction that identifies Zinn's thesis (main argument of the chapter) about U.S. history and the way in which history has traditionally been written. Choose the best 3 pieces of evidence Zinn presents in the chapter to support his claims. For each body paragraph, explain each piece of evidence. Cite one direct quote from the text (include the chapter and page number) in your essay to support your argument. For your conclusion, identify an alternate or opposing argument that Zinn would disagree with and explain

that different point of view. Conclude with an explanation of whether or not Zinn proved his thesis based on what you've read.

SUMMER ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

- Submit Summer Assignment in a Binder
- PART A: Notes
- PART B: Essay
- NO LATE OR TYPED ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED!
- Submit as a bound, hard copy.
- For the essay, use third person, formal writing, and proofread before submitting.
- Failure to meet the required page length will result in a point deduction from your final grade.
- Plagiarism, cheating, copying, and/or AI usage will result in a zero for the assignment.
- Use third person and formal writing for PART B.
- Include a Cover Page for the entire summer assignment, including:
    - Your Name
    - Subject: AP United States History
    - Year: 2026-2027

Please note that any student who turns in a LATE OR INCOMPLETE summer project will be automatically dropped from the course.