Welcome to APUSH, a class that you will no doubt find to be both challenging and rewarding. The course covers America's “Pre-Columbian” roots all the way through to the 21st century. We will learn about cultural and social changes, wars and conflicts, politics and the law. As befitting an AP class, we will delve deeply into these issues, not just to prepare for the AP Exam, but also to prepare you to be an adult American.

This AP course will also require a higher level of maturity and discipline. There is an extraordinary amount of work required for this course. You will need to consistently read and take notes on the textbook, read and analyze sources, and participate in class discussions. This means that you will be called upon to do a great deal of work outside of the classroom. Since this is such an expansive course, you will need to, in some instances, teach yourself the material. We do not have time in class to go over every piece of information- it would be impossible.

As a result, you are being given this summer assignment. The assignment consists of two parts. They are described below:

**Part 1- Early Colonial Reading**

You will be required to read and take notes on the first two chapters in our textbook. These two chapters cover the following: Native American societies, the “Discovery of America” by European explorers, the causes and results of Spanish colonization, and finally, early British colonization.

You will, in effect, be learning this content on your own. This will allow us to get a jump start on the material in class. To ensure that you have read, taken notes, and studied these two chapters, you will be given a unit test on those two chapters. This test will be given to you the day after we return to school (we return on September 4; therefore, the test will be given on September 5). There are NO EXCEPTIONS.
**Part 2- Outside History Reading**

Textbooks like ours, however, are not actually the primary works of historians. Rather, historians focus on particular topics, individuals, time periods, wars, etc. They research their chosen field with incredible attention to details, and they look at their topic from every direction, attempting to create a comprehensive view of that moment in history. The product of this work is called a monograph; a book about a single event or theme in history. In order to prepare for AP United States history, you are to read ONE (1) such history monograph of your choice.

There are a few guidelines to follow when selecting your book:

1- It **cannot** be an autobiography or fiction
2- It must have been written by a “current” historian (1980 or later)
3- It must be focused on American history
4- It cannot be a “young reader’s” book- it should be at a college/adult reading level

*For example, while the *Diary of Anne Frank* is an incredible source, it does not conform to rules 1-3 of the above, and hence cannot be used.

You may choose to read about ANY American history topic you like, as long as it matches the 4 rules above. Below I have listed some possible topics you might find interesting:

The Colonial Era    The American Revolution    The Founding Fathers
Slavery            Sectionalism and Civil War    Age of Industrialization
Progressive Era    Women’s Rights Movements    The World Wars
Civil Rights Movement    The Cold War            Vietnam
1960s “Counterculture”    1980s Conservatism    The War on Terror

*This list is NOT all inclusive- there are many, many topics to choose from.

I have also listed below some potential authors to look into. These are some of the most active historians and authors crafting American history today:

Doris Kearns Goodwin    H. W. Brands    Joseph J. Ellis
Jill Lepore            Jon Meacham      David McCullough
Eric Foner             Stephen Ambrose    John Lewis Gaddis
Victor Davis Hanson    Henry Louis Gates Jr.    Ira Berlin

*Again, this list is NOT all inclusive. There are many historians to choose from.
When reading this book, you should be considering the following:

The Historian’s Thesis- what is the MAIN point the author is trying to make?
Evidence- what events, laws, people, etc. does the author use to prove his/her point?
Style- how would you classify the author’s writing techniques?
Context- How does this topic fit into American history as a whole, according to the author?

You will be required to type a book report on the book you have chosen. This book report should address the four areas described above. It is to be a page to a page and a half. It is to be size 12 font, Times New Roman, and double spaced. Any book report not conforming to the above parameters will not be accepted. This will be due on the first day of school, September 4. Again, there are NO EXCEPTIONS.

Last Thoughts:
This is the level of work required in an Advanced Placement history course. This summer assignment, and the course itself, are reflective of a 1st year college level course. If you have any questions regarding this assignment, please email me at dpontillo@obenschools.org. See you next year!

Sincerely,

David Pontillo