

AP US History Summer Reading Assignment

MRS. HOFFMAN - 2015

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 and evidence in the service of creating deeper conceptual understandings of critical developments in US History.

The following summer reading assignment will be your first requirement for APUSH. This assignment is due the **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL** and will be worth 200 points. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED!**

If you have any questions while completing this assignment, please email me at lhoffman@berkscatholic.org. Please note that I do travel a lot during the summer so there may be a delay in my response. I will check email as often as possible; however, at times I will be in remote locations without email access.

The Book:

A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn is an untraditional interpretation of American History. As **controversial** as it is untraditional, Zinn's version of history looks at how social movements and the masses moved history. This approach to history is considered a Marxist critique. Zinn was particularly effective in enlivening the story of history, and creating dramatic responses from his readers. Although some might look at it as biased, all history is biased. The textbooks selected for classrooms have bias, not just because they are vetted by teachers, but by school boards with political motivations, etc. The truth lies between the event and the present. It is up to us to use primary source documents to try and put the puzzle pieces together. We can assemble them in different ways, but there will always be a few pieces missing.

The Assignment:

I hope that all of you will read *A People's History of the United States* with open, but also critical eyes. Look at moments Zinn might be persuading the reader to feel one way, when he pulls at your heartstrings. Also, be sure you entertain the arguments that he includes that aren't in textbooks. Most importantly, look at how he uses evidence and primary sources to prove his ideas.

You will need to keep notes about the book, which will be turned in the first day. Please use this as an opportunity to improve your note taking habits, as this is a skill that will become essential in upper level courses with lots of reading. We all learn in different ways, but for most of us using your hand to write down the material is a great way to help the brain retain what you are learning.

Your Notebook:

- 1/2" 3-ring binders work best
- Use one format throughout (Be sure to indicate chapter and page for direct quotes)
- Do not use complete sentences. Be as brief as possible. Notes are meant to remind you, not retell.
- Record names, events, turning points.
- Try to read an entire paragraph or page before writing information down. When you take notes as you go, often you think everything is important. This will help with reading/writing speed.
- Try color-coding notes. When reviewing notes to study, highlight or underline over your original writing.

Requirements:

- Read *A People's History of the United States*
- Hand in a complete, organized notebook the first day
- **Take a test the first Friday of the school year**, to help assess comprehension and areas of the exam format we will need to help you with this year.
- Participate in discussions on the material the first week of school