

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

“AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives. Using an inquiry framework, students practice reading and analyzing articles, research studies, and foundational, literary, and philosophical texts; listening to and viewing speeches, broadcasts, and personal accounts; and experiencing artistic works and performances. Students learn to synthesize information from multiple sources, develop their own perspectives in research-based written essays, and design and deliver oral and visual presentations, both individually and as part of a team. Ultimately, the course aims to equip students with the power to analyze and evaluate information with accuracy and precision in order to craft and communicate evidence-based arguments.”

## **COURSE FRAMEWORK**

**Q – Question and Explore:** Questioning begins with an initial exploration of complex topics or issues. Perspectives and questions emerge that spark one’s curiosity, leading to an investigation that challenges and expands the boundaries of one’s current knowledge.

**U – Understand and Analyze:** Understanding various perspectives requires contextualizing arguments and evaluating the author’s claims and lines of reasoning.

**E – Evaluate Multiple Perspectives:** Evaluating an issue involves considering and evaluating multiple perspectives both individually and in comparison to one another.

**S – Synthesize Ideas:** Synthesizing others’ ideas with one’s own may lead to new understandings and is the foundation of a well-reasoned argument that conveys one’s perspective.

**T – Team, Transform, and Transmit:** Teaming allows one to combine personal strengths and talents with those of others to reach a common goal. Transformation and growth occur upon thoughtful reflection. Transmitting requires the adaptation of one’s message based on audience and context.

## **COURSE CONTENT**

“Students engage in conversations about complex academic and real-world issues through a variety of lenses, considering multiple points of view. [We will] choose one or more appropriate themes that allow for deep interdisciplinary exploration based on:

- Concepts or issues from AP courses
- Student interests
- Local and/or civic issues
- Academic problems or questions
- Global or international topics”

“Exploring different points of view and making connections across disciplines are fundamental components of the AP Seminar experience. Students consider each topic through a variety of lenses and from multiple perspectives, many of which are divergent or competing. Analyzing topics through multiple lenses aids in interdisciplinary understanding and helps students gain a rich appreciation for the complexity of important issues. [We will] explore [topics] through several of the following lenses:

- |                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| - Cultural and social        | - Economic   |
| - Artistic and philosophical | - Scientific |
| - Political and historical   | - Futuristic |
| - Environmental              | - Ethical    |

## **PEER EDING AND SELF-REFLECTION**

- For all major graded assignments, marked (MGA) students will self-evaluate their work and offer peer assessment, both as an ongoing process of reflection and as a component of the final grade. Using both the official rubrics established by the College Board and informal evaluation tools, students will be asked to self-evaluate their work and write brief reflection papers about strengths and weaknesses of their final product.
- Students will submit their personal reflection on each major assignment before a grade will be reported and recorded by the instructor.

## **AP SEMINAR BOOT CAMP**

- The first two weeks of class will consist of learning the building blocks of the class: assessing student readiness through informal discussion, learning and reviewing ethical research practices, introducing evaluating arguments from multiple perspectives, practicing team small group dynamics, and establishing norms of group behavior and class expectations.
- Specifically, students will:
  - Review MLA format, citation, paraphrasing, and use of direct quotes.
  - Be introduced to Chicago and APA citation
  - Review the College Board AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information and the School District policies on plagiarism and academic ethics.
  - In small group presentations, demonstrate examples of plagiarism and unethical behavior, including falsification, mosaic plagiarism, direct plagiarism, and fabrication of evidence.
  - Engage in a series of in-class brainstorming and discussion sessions centered around current events to discuss and evaluate the Lenses and Perspectives framework for the course.
  - Work in small groups in a series of ice breakers and introductory activities to establish group norms.
  - Establish connections on the methods of classroom communication: the class web site, Slack, Remind, Turnitin, and Google Docs.
  - Student will submit a document attesting to their understanding of late policy, both HHS and College Board policies on Plagiarism, Fabrication, and Falsification, and adherence to class norms and expectations.

## **UNITS OF STUDY**

### **UNIT 1: CONSPIRACY AND THE AMERICAN MIND (9/4-10/15)**

#### **Materials: (Including, but Not Limited to)**

- Alex Jones Rants as an Indie Folk Song (Youtube) Twitter's CEO doesn't get how conspiracy theories work (Vox)
- Flat Earthers vs. Climate Change Skeptics (The Conversation)
- The Internet Fuels Conspiracy Theories (The Conversation)
- Pollsters Made up a Conspiracy Theory (Hit and Run Blog)
- The Roots of Hitler's Hate (National Interest)
- How Trump Spreads Conspiracies and Innuendoes (Washington Post)
- Bad Thinkers (Aeon)
- Excerpt from the book *Suspicious Minds* by Rob Brotherton
- The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories (Current Directions in Psychological Science)
- Conspiracy Theories (Working Paper from Coase-Sandor Institute for Law and Economics)
- Obama Confidant's Spine-Chilling Proposal (Salon)

#### **Enduring Understandings**

**1.3:** The investigative process is aided by the effective organization, management, and selection of sources and information. Using appropriate technologies and tools helps the researcher become more efficient, productive, and credible.

**2.1:** Authors express their perspectives and arguments through their works. The first step in evaluating an author's perspective or argument is to comprehend it. Such comprehension requires reading and thinking critically.

**2.2:** Authors choose evidence to shape and support their arguments. Readers evaluate the line of reasoning and evidence to determine to what extent they believe or accept an argument.

**2.3:** Arguments have implications.

**3.1:** Different perspectives often lead to competing and alternate arguments. The complexity of an issue emerges when people bring these differing, multiple perspectives to the conversation about it.

**3.2:** Not all arguments are equal; some arguments are more credible/valid than others. Through evaluating others' arguments, personal arguments can be situated within a larger conversation.

**4.1:** People express their ideas, points of view, perspectives, and conclusions through arguments. Crafting an argument requires a clear line of reasoning, considering audience, purpose, and context.

**4.2:** Evidence is strategically selected to support a line of reasoning that appeals to or influences others.

**5.1:** How an argument is presented affects how people interpret or react to it.

#### **Assessments and Projects**

- Perspectives Practice: using a series of 4-5 current events over the first two weeks of the class, students will learn to address, assess, and evaluate lenses and perspectives used to consider argument
- Annotated Bibliography of Provided Sources (MGA)
- Individual Research Report on impact of Conspiracy Theories on Democracy. (MGA)
  - This assignment requires students to:
  - include three perspectives on the chosen topic
  - evaluate those perspectives and, drawing on all three, suggest a potential solution or additional research necessary to answer the question.
- Class Debate about Sunstein Proposal to Curtail Conspiracy Theories (MGA)
- Class Presentation on Cognitive Biases (3-5 minute speech) (MGA)

## **UNIT 2: RACE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN THOUGHT (10/18=12/1)**

### **Materials (Including, but Not Limited to)**

- Excerpts from *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates (**Foundational, literary, or philosophical texts**)
- The Case for Reparations (The Atlantic)
- I Am Not Your Negro (film) (**speeches, broadcast, or personal account**)
- Imaginary Lines, Real Consequences: The Effect of the Militarization of the United States-Mexico Border on Indigenous Peoples (American Indian Law Journal) (**article or research studies**)
- The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro by Frederick Douglass (**Foundational, literary, or philosophical texts**)
- Excerpts from *Shame of the Nation* (**article or research studies**)
- The Problem We All Live With Parts 1 and 2 (This American Life) (**speeches, broadcast, or personal account**)
- Different Script, Same Caste in the Use of Passive and Active Racism: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of the (Ab)use of "House Rules" in Race-Related Education Cases (Washington and Lee Journal of Civil Rights and Social Justice) (**article or research studies**)
- Excerpts from *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (**article or research studies**)
- Excerpts from *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (**article or research studies**)
- Color Blind or Color Brave (Ted Talk) (**speeches, broadcast, or personal account**)
- Mathematics by Mos Def (**artistic works or performances**)

### **Enduring Understandings:**

**1.1:** Personal interest and intellectual curiosity lead to investigation of topics or issues that may or may not be clearly defined. A good question explores the complexity of an issue or topic. Further inquiry can lead to an interesting conclusion, resolution, or solution. Sometimes this inquiry leads to research and unexpected paths.

- 1.2:** New knowledge builds on prior knowledge. Strengthening understanding of a concept or issue requires questioning existing knowledge, using what is known to discover what is not known, and connecting new knowledge to prior knowledge.
- 1.3:** The investigative process is aided by the effective organization, management, and selection of sources and information. Using appropriate technologies and tools helps the researcher become more efficient, productive, and credible.
- 1.4:** There are multiple ways to investigate problems and issues. The question asked determines the kind of inquiry.
- 4.2:** Evidence is strategically selected to support a line of reasoning that appeals to or influences others.
- 4.3:** Achievement of new understandings involves the careful consideration of existing knowledge, imagination, innovation, and risk taking and incorporates personally generated evidence.
- 4.4:** Innovative solutions and arguments identify and challenge assumptions, acknowledge the importance of content, imagine and explore alternatives, and engage in reflective skepticism.
- 5.1:** How an argument is presented affects how people interpret or react to it.
- 5.2:** Teams are most effective when they draw on the diverse perspectives, skills, and backgrounds of team members to address complex, open-ended problems.
- 5.3:** Reflection increases learning, self-awareness, and personal growth through the slowing down of thinking processes to identify and evaluate personal conclusions and their implications.

### **Assessments and Projects**

- Annotated Bibliography of Provided Sources (MGA)
- Individual Research Report on Race in America (1/2 provided sources, 1/2 student) (MGA)
- Team Multimedia Presentation on Race in America 1/2 provided sources, 1/2 student) (MGA)
- Precis writing Assignment (MGA)
- Written and oral presentation on Line of Reasoning for 2 pieces (MGA)
- Class debate on the legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education* (MGA)

### **UNIT 3: STUDENT-RESEARCHED AND CHOSEN THEMATIC UNIT (12/2-1/24)**

Subject to instructor approval, students will select a thematic unit similar to the first two in breadth and access to research materials. They will collaboratively put together a sequence of readings, audio/visual content, and images that come from a range of academic sources. Students will select materials using the RAVEN method to evaluate quality sources and be evaluated on their use of these sources.

### **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS**

- 1.2:** New knowledge builds on prior knowledge. Strengthening understanding of a concept or issue requires questioning existing knowledge, using what is known to discover what is not known, and connecting new knowledge to prior knowledge.

**1.3:** The investigation process is aided by the effective organization, management, and selection of sources and information. Using appropriate technologies and tools helps the researcher become more efficient, productive, and credible.

**2.2:** Authors choose evidence to shape and support their arguments. Readers evaluate the line of reasoning and evidence to determine to what extent they believe or accept an argument.

**3.1:** Different perspectives often lead to competing and alternate arguments. The complexity of an issue emerges when people bring these differing multiple perspectives to the conversation about it.

**3.2:** Not all arguments are equal; some arguments are more credible/valid than others. Through evaluating others' arguments, personal arguments can be situated within a larger conversation.

**4.2 :** Evidence is strategically selected to support a line of reasoning that appeals to or influences others.

**5.1:** How an argument is presented affects how people interpret or react to it.

**5.2:** Teams are most effective when they draw on the diverse perspectives, skills, and backgrounds of team members to address complex, open-ended problems.

**5.3:** Reflection increases learning, self-awareness, and personal growth through the slowing down of thinking processes to identify and evaluate personal conclusions and their implications on and revising their own writing, thinking, and/or processes.

### **Assessments and Projects**

- Unit Research and Construction (MGA)
- Annotated Bibliography of Provided Sources
- Individual Research Paper #3 (MGA)
- Team Multimedia Presentation (MGA)
- Written presentation on Line of Reasoning for 1 piece
- Individual Written Argument (MGA)
- Individual Multimedia Presentation (MGA)

### **UNIT 4: PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TASK 1 (JAN 20-FEB 15)**

*Peer review, class discussion throughout*

Students will:

- Complete individual research papers
- Conduct peer and team reviews
- Practice End of Course A and B exam questions
- Submit the IRR to the College Board
- Present and submit their Team Multimedia Report

### **Unit 5: PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TASK 2 (FEB 15-APRIL 21)**

*Peer review, class discussion throughout*

Students will:

- Discuss, annotate, and evaluate the material from the released stimulus packet.
- Develop a research question and complete individual research

- Complete their individual written argument
- Complete Individual Multimedia presentation
- Submit all work to the College Board



## **UNIT 5: END OF YEAR EXAM REVIEW (APRIL 30-MAY 8)**

Review of course skills Practice exams

## **UNIT 6: AP RESEARCH REVIEW AND PREPARATION**

Students will:

- Learn about the requirements of the AP Research course
- Began to develop research questions and topics for next year
- Conduct an initial literature review.

## **PLAGIARISM AND FALSIFICATION OR FABRICATION OF INFORMATION POLICY**

(From AP Capstone Policies Document,

<https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/takingtheexam/exam-policies/ap-capstone-policies>)

The AP score for work submitted as part of the Team Project & Presentation and the Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation will also be subject to the following AP Capstone Plagiarism Policy, as outlined by the College Board:

A student who fails to acknowledge the source or author of any and all information or evidence taken from the work of someone else through citation, attribution, or reference in the body of the work, or through a bibliographic entry, will receive a score of 0 on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Task. In AP Seminar, a team of students that fails to properly acknowledge sources or authors on the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that component of the Team Project and Presentation.

A student who incorporates falsified or fabricated information (e.g. evidence, data, sources, and/or authors) will receive a score of 0 on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Task. In AP Seminar, a team of students that incorporates falsified or fabricated information in the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that component of the Team Project and Presentation.