

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to Advanced Placement European History. If this is your first experience with the Advanced Placement program there are some important differences between a pre-AP and an AP course that you should understand. AP courses are designed and updated annually to reflect what is being taught in college courses. A large part of the curriculum and the pace of the class are set by the requirements of the *Collegeboard*. Students receive an external evaluation, the AP exam, which is scored by both college and high school faculty who verify that the student has mastered college-level studies. Due to the advanced level of the course some of the material we will use will be at the college level, this includes the textbook and supplemental readings. Because of the rigor of AP courses students who earn a “C” or higher will receive a one point bump in their GPA at the end of the year.

One area of focus for the course will be preparing each student for the Advanced Placement European History exam, which will be given during the second week in May. The college-board has a web site ([apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com)) which answers many questions dealing with the benefits of an AP class as well as the challenges. This may be a helpful site to visit before school begins in the fall. **Students who have not experienced an accelerated course before may not be aware of the volume of work, time constraints, and performance level required for above average grades in an advanced placement class.** Students must expect anywhere from 45-90 minutes of homework per class. Parents/Guardians and students should understand the commitment level involved in taking an AP course. Please use this opportunity to take a look at the sample homework assignment that was made available to students.

If you feel that your student is up for the challenge, please sign this letter (*on reverse side*) and return it to me before the end of the year exams. If you have questions feel free to call me at the school’s number (703)365-6500 or contact me by email at [wattese@pwcs.edu](mailto:wattese@pwcs.edu).

Thank you,

Mrs. Watters  
Room 2083

Parents and students: your signatures are an understanding and an acceptance of your responsibility for AP European History and your commitment to a successful year in AP History. Your signatures are also permission to view and read outside sources above and beyond the textbook with the understanding that due to the advanced level of the class some topics may include material appropriate for college (freshman) level. No AP credit will be given until the successful (grade C or above) completion of the course and the completion of the May AP European Exam. (\*High achieving AP European History students who earn a 90% or higher on the AP European midterm may also consider taking the AP World exam in addition to the AP European exam during the May testing period.)

Student name: **(Printed)** \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Experience a college-level test**

“The intensity of college exams catches far too many freshmen by surprise. Students who have prepared for and taken the AP exams adapt more easily to taking college essay exams, and are especially skilled in including a thesis and a well-developed argument. They are also less intimidated by sophisticated, college-level multiple-choice questions that seek to test understanding over memorization.” Robert Blackey, Professor of History CSU, San Bernardino

### **Prepare Now to Succeed in College**

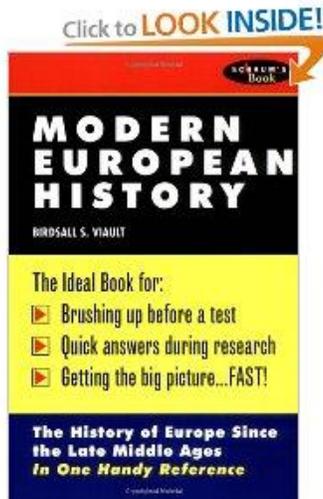
“A 1999 U.S. Department of Education study found that the strongest predictor of college graduation is something students do before they ever go to college: Participate in rigorous, college-level courses in high school-and AP courses in particular.” Clifford Adelman, *Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor’s Degree Attainment* (1999), U.S. Department of Education.

*This page is for you to keep over the summer! Detach when you turn in permission form.*  
**Advanced Placement European History**

**Course Summary:**

This course presents a study of European History from c. 1450 to the present. In addition to learning a basic narrative of events and movements, students will develop (a) an understanding of some of the principal themes in modern European history, (b) an ability to analyze historical evidence, and (c) an ability to analyze and express historical understanding in writing. Students will take a national comprehensive examination at the end of the year. All sections of the examination reflect college programs in terms of subject matter and approach. The class will be structured to meet these demands so students should be prepared to work on the university (freshman) level.

**Book Purchase:** Former students **STRONGLY** recommend that each student purchase Modern European History by Birdsall S. Viault. (ISBN # 0-07-0674531) to accompany the county issued textbook. The cost of the review book is approx. \$17.00 in book stores but can be bought from amazon.com for around \$12.00 or used for under \$3.00. Classroom copies for checkout will also be available.



**Summer Assignment:** There is **no** required summer assignment for AP European History, however each quarter I offer extra credit reading assignments. The first marking period's extra credit assignment choices are Galileo's Daughter by Dava Sobel or The Prince by Machiavelli. If you are in the biotech program I strongly recommend choosing Galileo's Daughter as you can earn biotech hours along with the extra credit for my class. If either of these books interest you and you would like a head start during the summer you may pick up the assignments from me before the end of the school year **The Prince is due before the Renaissance test (approx. 2 weeks after school starts).** Galileo's Daughter is **due before end of the quarter (9 weeks into school year).** One goal of this assignment is to initiate a discussion of the use of outside sources beyond the textbook and the reliability of those sources in terms of historical content, bias, and point of view. This will be an ongoing topic of discussion throughout the year as students are taught to analyze and use historical documents in preparation for the Document Based Question given on the AP exam. Furthermore, the extra credit assignment gives students an indication of the level of vocabulary and reading comprehension that will be necessary for a successful year in AP European History.