

# A.P. World History: Modern

Family Letter



**Ms. Avar** email: tavar@slusd.us **Room:** 201 **Voicemail**: (510) 618-4600, xt. 2201

## I encourage you follow along and access online resources at www.slhs.net:

- Aeries Portal: Review student attendance, grades, makeup work, timed writing & exam dates for all classes.
- Teacher Pages: View coursework and important class resources. Mine is under "Teacher Pages" / Avar, Traci

Dear Parents and Significant Adults,

My name is Traci Avar and I warmly welcome your scholar into our <u>COLLEGE-LEVEL</u> course, AP World History: Modern. A little about me: I have been an educator my entire adult life and a classroom teacher at SLHS since 2008. I have traveled to numerous countries across 6 continents and have lived in 9 cities, 2 states, 1 district and 2 countries (Mesa & Tucson, Arizona; Mammoth Lakes, San Diego, San Mateo, Oakland, and currently San Francisco, California; Washington, DC; and Barcelona, Spain). I have a deep passion for travel and new experiences. It allows me to better understand and appreciate different world cultures through exploring global history, geography, language, art, religions and especially through meeting new people. I am excited to take our class on a similar academic journey in AP World History this year as we explore hundreds of years of world civilization together and develop global scholars!

#### \*\*\* SAVE THE DATES \*\*\*

- Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>: Back-To-School Night at San Leandro High School Let's meet!
  - O AP World History is the first History class San Leandro students have taken since 8<sup>th</sup> grade <u>middle school</u>. Now they are enrolled in a rigorous <u>college-level</u> AP course where they are <u>expected to learn most of the content facts on their own</u>. That is a big & overwhelming jump! Further, college and education has evolved since the good ol' days of a professor sitting and lecturing all the time. These first weeks of class will naturally feel <u>very</u> challenging. I like to meet with families to clarify many of the research-based educational practices I use to support students which include strategies that may still be very new to you.
- Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 8am: College Board AP World History Exam at San Leandro High School
  - On this date, your scholar is **EXPECTED** to take College Board's AP World History exam. <u>Please do not make any significant family plans, commitments or appointments in the week leading up to that date so that there will be plenty of time to focus, rest, study, collaborate and prepare for this college test (and pass class!)</u>

You will best support your scholars for success by ensuring they are provided **time** and a **quiet, academically supportive** space - free from distractions - for homework. This course requires hours of interactively reading college-level text while taking focused notes and outlining chapters week (<u>1-hour per day average</u>). When reading and taking AP exams and writing essays in class, and the national AP exam in May, students will not be able to listen to music, be on a digital device, text, talk to friends/family, or watch tv. Therefore, <u>scholars need to become comfortable (and well practiced)</u> with reading in a quiet and focused setting for extended time. If this cannot be made available at home, please support them doing this using our excellent school facilities, including the student library and Barbara Lee Center with many extended hours available, and/or at the San Leandro Public Library or other quiet and safe space.

Please <u>carefully</u> review and discuss with your student the course Syllabus and AP World History Contract handed out in class (a copy can also be found on our course website), which outline what this class is about, materials to purchase, expectations and policies, what students need to do in the event of an absence, and gives guidelines for scholars to be successful in this class. After collaborative family review, please sign and return the AP World History Contract to me.

If you have any questions or concerns about your scholar or the course, I would love to collaborate with you. My email and phone number are at the top of this page. I look forward to sharing a successful year ahead! ©

Warm Regards, Ms. Traci Jacobsen Avar ("Ms. Avar")

#### **COLLEGE ADMISSIONS CONSIDERATIONS for AP COURSES**

College admissions at many prestigious and competitive colleges, including some private schools and all UCs (University of California), will conduct a careful, holistic review of student transcripts and <u>favor a rigorous schedule which shows college readiness and experience</u>. While a competitive GPA and college entrance exam scores are still significant criteria for admissions at these institutions, a student who takes an AP class (college-level rigor) and earns a C is usually more desirable than a student enrolled in an Honors/CP/high school class earning an easier A in the same subject.

On the other hand...

• Many colleges – including the entire **CSU** (California State University) system of colleges - do <u>not</u> review levels of courses at all, and admit students solely on numbers (GPA and college-entrance exam scores). For those institutions, having a <u>higher GPA</u> is <u>more important</u> than being in the most rigorous classes offered, even AP.

The above can be confusing and sophomore year is too soon to finalize an exact college path. Focus on this:

- Student GPAs can be increased because of AP course designation (ex. earning a C in AP World History is the same as earning a B in an Honors or CP World History class because AP is a <u>weighted</u> grade). **However**, earning lower than a C in any class at any level (including AP) is always detrimental for admission to ANY school.
- Students who succeed in AP courses in high school <u>are more prepared for college-level rigor and success AT ANY UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE</u>, and, <u>may earn college credit at a very inexpensive cost compared to college tuition rates by earning a 4 or 5 (or usually also a 3) on the AP Exam.</u>

Sophomore year is a crucial time: Students' grades—and the classes they take—are significant because college admissions personnel will review classes and GPA from this year and junior year as the two most significant of high school. Therefore, it is imperative that students take academics very seriously and enroll in the most rigorous courses appropriate for them. As a dedicated teacher, I commit to teaching your scholars the skills necessary to be successful in AP World History, but it is up to students' individual determination (vs. parent/teacher/peers) to apply those skills and be motivated enough to do the required work. Because students can't transfer out of an AP course after the first progress reporting period, I would fail to do my job if I didn't emphasize the level of rigor and high expectations set for success in AP World History. Students in AP classes rarely succeed if they don't want to be in AP, and only enrolled due to parent/peer/outside pressure. It is important for your family to have an authentic conversation about this to determine if AP/college-level rigor is appropriate this year. I'm eager to support you on the journey and appreciate your ambition!

### **VIDEO DISCLAIMER**

In order to make history more exciting and "come alive" from the past, exposing your child more personally to meaningful events, places and influential people, we will sometimes view documentaries, movies and video clips throughout the duration of this class to supplement the textbook and coursework. Each video is valuable for history, is aligned with California and/or College Board standards and curriculum, and most are intended for a general audience. On rare occasions, however, some clips may contain some language, violence and/or adult concepts that are of a PG-13 or R rated nature (ex. "Schindler's List" about the Holocaust). As an adult who values professionalism, I view all videos in advance, and skip over/fast forward through video content that is not of academic value (ie. anything sexually explicit or shocking just for the sake of entertainment). I only show the academic and appropriate content of each video. Unless you specifically state otherwise on the comments portion/back of the AP World History Policy & Contract form you will be signing this week, I will assume your child has permission to view all class videos and partake in all class activities (otherwise s/he will be placed in another classroom with an alternative assignment).