

McGill-Toolen Catholic High School-Advanced Placement United States History

I am exceptionally pleased to have your son/daughter enrolled in Advanced Placement United States History here at McGill-Toolen! AP U.S. History is taught as a college-level course and offers a significant opportunity for academic challenge. Early on it is not uncommon for even excellent students to feel a bit overwhelmed or intimidated. With encouragement they will quickly get over that, blossom into better thinkers, and enjoy being treated like responsible young women and men. My primary objective is the ***intellectual growth*** of every student I teach. We work very hard on information processing skills, with an emphasis on improving student ability to **analyze** and **evaluate** the relative significance of historical data, and a corresponding ability to express those ideas through the written word. As a parent, you may wish to take into account that this course may differ from traditional honors courses in the following ways:

- Fifty to sixty percent of the grade may be based on formal essay grades.
- Individual tests may cover a significantly greater body of information than students may be accustomed to.
- Homework consists primarily of reading assignments for which the student is responsible for **mastery** of the factual information.
- There are relatively few graded assignments each quarter increasing the need for adequate preparation for each.
- There are **optional** assignments with most units which allow students to enhance their skills and mastery of the material.
- Our honor pledge, "I have neither given nor received help on this assignment," applies to all assignments not specifically exempted by the instructor. Violations of this pledge will result in administrative action.

Students who successfully complete the course stand an excellent chance of making a passing grade (3 or better) on the Advanced Placement United States History exam in May, thus potentially receiving college credit for the course.

2014 McGill-Toolen AP U.S. History students scoring 3 or better = 95.3%

2014 National AP U.S. History students scoring 3 or better = 52.1%

Class grades will be calculated on a total point system, by simply dividing the points a student has earned by the total points possible. Because there are optional assignments, total points possible may vary for each student.

The course syllabus was given to each student and is posted on the website. You will note students always have an extended assignment sheet clearly indicating when assignments are due. Please feel free to check your student's grade often and email me if you have any questions or concerns.

Please continue to have high expectations for your child while being supportive and understanding of the fact that they are being asked to perform at a higher level than they have been accustomed to in the past. Advanced Placement United States History requires your child to know incredible amounts of specific factual information and prove how our country has changed over time using this information as evidence for their thesis. It is a tough and challenging course requiring students to stay on top of their readings and assignments. Again, please feel free to contact me at any time concerning your child's progress.

Yours in Education,

Abby H. Woodard