

KAP European History
Mr. Connell - September, 2010

I Introduction

KAP European History is a college level course designed to challenge capable high school students who desire to do course work that they would not normally do for another year or two. It is a rigorous course not meant for the fainthearted. Welcome!

You are a select group. Few high school students in all of the United States take four years of history courses. Most students take only two and they are not nearly as challenging as even the introductory courses taught at Laurel. This course will complement your other courses, particularly World History II, and provide you with the background to understand the human condition of the past and the world that we live in today. Success in this course means that you will have success in any college history class that you will ever take.

II Your Commitment

Notice that I have used the words "rigor," and "challenge," among others. This is by choice. This is not a "cake" course that you have chosen to fill your schedule. This is likely to be your most demanding course, not necessarily your most difficult one, but your most demanding one. If you are not prepared to do 5-8 hours of homework per week, change your schedule.

III The Course

We begin this course with a brief look at the European Middle Ages and from there we move to discuss certain, select aspects of European history from about 1350 to the present. The Renaissance, Reformation, French Revolution, and World War I are not new to you. The great joy is that we can explore these topics in greater depth and study other issues for which the sophomore course did not allow enough time. We will finish the French Revolution and Napoleon by Thanksgiving and so spend most of the year on the past two hundred years of European history. My goal is to see that you understand and appreciate the most recent developments in European, and to a lesser extent, world history.

IV Text

We will use the text to provide background information for you for some topics. Textbooks tend to come in two varieties -- bad and worse. The text that we will use by Palmer, Colton and Kramer breaks the mold. It is readable, thoughtful, well organized, and in most respects an interesting narrative. In order to accomplish this, the text is long. In order to keep you honest, there will be frequent quizzes to ensure that you are keeping up with the assignments.

Palmer, Robert, Joel Colton and Lloyd Kramer, *A History of the Modern World*,
(9th edition).

V Collateral readings

In addition to the text you will read several other books to supplement the course. These are listed below:

Alfred Crosby, *The Measure of Reality* (summer reading)

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre (selections)*

Jill Jonnes, *Eiffel's Tower: And the World's Fair Where Buffalo Bill Beguiled Paris, the Artists Quarreled, and Thomas Edison Became a Count*

T. Connell (ed.), *Penguin Custom Editions: The Western World*

VI Assessment

For most of the textbook readings I will give you a 20-point quiz to ensure that you are keeping up with the reading. About every 4 weeks there will be a major test that will include multiple-choice questions and an AP-style essay. On occasion you will also write major essays that are three to five page essays. Also throughout the year you will hone your skills at writing documents-based questions, referred to as DBQs. We will work on these mostly in the second semester. I like these essays because they require you to evaluate documents, and draw conclusions from them. Whether you take the AP test or not, these are valuable learning tools.

VIII Current Events

One mark of an educated citizen is an awareness and understanding of current events. To help you reach this goal each week you read 10 articles from the *International Herald Tribune*. Each Monday you must turn in to me a summary of 10 selected articles that you will read. In the past students have told me that they enjoyed this assignment and said that it was a great way to keep abreast of current international issues. These assignments count 10 points.

IX Spring Seminar Paper

In the spring you will write a major essay on a topic related to post World War II Europe. We will talk more about this assignment later in the year.