

Dual Credit US History

Parent Newsletter # 1 August 2009

Welcome

Welcome to Dual Credit US History. This will be an exciting & demanding year for your student. Students enrolled in dual credit classes are concurrently enrolled in high school US History and as a student at St Philips College. Unlike Advance Placement or International Baccalaureate classes that are high school classes taught at the college academic level, this class is college. I am an adjunct professor of US History at St Philips, so I will be the only instructor for this class. Each semester is the equivalent of one three-hour class at St Philips, so my students will earn 6 semester hours of college credit upon successful completion of the course. As a parent, this is a great opportunity, since St Philips waives all fees and tuition. If you haven't had the college experience yet, this would amount to about \$1800 in tuition, fees, and books at UTSA, or \$5500 at The University of the Incarnate Word. Go out and treat yourself to a nice dinner!

Stay in Touch

There are several ways that you can keep track of what we are doing in class.

1. **Parent Newsletter:** If you want a quick overview, I will upload a Parent Newsletter to my website at the start of each month. The newsletter will have important events such as test dates, project assignments & due dates, and other major activities.
2. **Student Calendar:** Each month I will upload a student calendar to my website that lists what we will be doing on each day of the month.
3. **Email Me:** Feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns. Email is the best and usually prevents a couple of days of "phone tag".
4. **Gradespeed:** This is the District's online grade book system. Once parents & students register & set up a password, a student's grades & attendance can be checked at any time. Please refer to this website often.

What It's All About

Dual Credit US History is a great opportunity. Students in dual credit gain college credit while completing required high school courses. Unlike Advance Placement courses, dual credit does not require an additional national test to complete in order to possibly gain college credit. Just like other college courses, students earn college credit upon successful completion of the course. Dual credit does require a higher level of commitment on the part of the student in terms of study time, effort, and class participation.

Top 10 Things to Know

1. This is college. It's good news & bad news. Whatever the student does academically, either good or bad, will go on their college transcript. College courses are often reading & writing intensive. This course is no different.

2. Access to a computer and the Internet are required for this course. If these are not available at home, students should plan to use computers on their own time in our library, our computer labs, or at the public library.
3. Aside from the normal paper & writing utensils required for this class, students will also need a supply of 2" x 2" sticky notes. Any color is fine.
4. There are two grades in this class, one for high school and one for college. Although similar, they are not always the same. When students are in class, they are in a St Philips class, not a Clemens class. The reasons for the differences between the grades lie in the difference between high school and college rules and the college calendar.
5. The college semester ends about a month before the high school semester ends. When the college grade ends each semester, there are still grades that go into the grade book that will apply to the high school grade only. This leads to differences in the two grades.
6. When I teach this class, I am employed by St Philips College. This means that my college rules differ from high school rules. For instance, I do not allow retakes of failed tests for the college grade, but I do allow retakes for failed tests for the high school grade.
7. Carroll Benham is the only counselor who can deal with dual credit issues. Students must see her to take any action in relation to this class. **This is very important.** For instance, if a student drops this class by going to any other counselor, they will still be enrolled at St Philips. After the "drop date" for this class, students will receive an "F" on their college transcript. At that point, there is nothing that we can do to fix the problem.
8. I rarely have students fail this course. Students who have trouble do so because they either don't pay attention in class or they don't do the reading.
9. College hours earned in dual credit are accepted at any public university in Texas (UTSA, Texas State, and so on). They may, or may not, be accepted at private universities (Baylor, Texas Lutheran, and so on), out-of-state universities (Harvard, MIT, etc), or for some specialized programs (honors programs, engineering, and so on). In all cases, it is best to contact the prospective university to be sure.
10. My first Masters Degree was in Political Science, but I am working on a 2nd Masters Degree in US History. I like teaching this subject. My goal is to cover a great deal of history in an interesting & challenging manner, while also teaching skills that will prepare students for their full-time college experience.

Events in August

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| 24 Aug | -1 st Day of Class. Assign Parent letter. |
| 28 Aug | -Parent Letter Due
-Assign individual semester project (due in December)
-Assign 1 st group project (Due 4 Sept) |
| 31 Aug | -Assign 1 st online quiz (due 4 Sept) |

Supply List

In addition to the normal supplies needed in class, students will also need a supply of 2" x 2" Post-It Notes for notetaking. If students do not wish to save computer projects on the school I-Drive, they will need a flashdrive for this purpose.

See You Next Month!

Starting next month, each monthly newsletter will be located in the "Classroom News" Section of my school website.