
Website: [www.mpreese.weebly.com](http://www.mpreese.weebly.com)

**Overall Course Goals:**
1. To empower students to become capable of successfully completing college-level courses that are reading, writing, and critical thinking-intensive.
2. To empower students to earn six college credits in US History (awarded by EPCC - 3 for HIST 1301 and 3 for HIST 1302).
3. To empower students to earn high school credit towards graduation for US History since 1877 (also a year-long course).

**Course Description:** This course is designed to teach students critical thinking, reading, and writing skills that will empower them to be successful in any category of post-secondary (after high school) training that they elect to pursue. Learning how to think like a historian is the platform for accomplishing this objective. Students shall learn the content of US History (as defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for US History) that will enable them to be successful on the State of Texas Exam while learning to think like a historian.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

1) **Analysis-Synthesis-Evaluation Exercises** [appear in the TEAMS Grade Book as “ASEE”]: Assignments in this category shall be completed during class sessions. I will employ three specific activities in conjunction with the Analysis-Synthesis-Evaluation Exercises: 1) the Structured Academic Controversy (SAC), 2) Opening Up the Textbook (OUT), and 3) American History – Historiographical Analysis (AH-HA). There are three separate attachments to this syllabus that describe the means and objectives of each of these activities. The average score earned for the Analysis-Synthesis-Evaluation Exercises category of assignments will weigh as 30% of your nine weeks grade. I shall drop the lowest two scores from this category.

2) **Quizzes** [Appear in the TEAMS Grade book as “Quiz”]: This category of assignment is designed to test students’ knowledge and comprehension level mastery of the textbook material. There shall be a brief quiz at the beginning of nearly every class day. The average score earned for the Daily Quiz category of assignments will weigh as 25% of your nine weeks grade. I shall drop the lowest two scores from this category.

3) **Individual Writing Assignments** [Appear in the TEAMS Grade book as “IWA”]: This category of assignment is designed to expand students’ critical reasoning and writing skills. Students shall complete two Individual Writing Assignments throughout the course of the semester, one during the first nine weeks and the second in the second nine weeks. I shall provide a detailed description of this category of assignments. The average score earned for the Individual Writing Assignment category of assignments will weigh as 10% of your nine weeks grade. While I shall NOT drop the lowest score earned on this category of assignment, students have the option of submitting a third Individual Writing Assignment that may replace the lowest grade earned in this category. I shall provide an extensive description and evaluation rubric for the IWA during the first two weeks of school.
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING cont.

5) Exams [Appear in the TEAMS Grade book as “Exams”] : This category of assignment is designed to evaluate students’ mastery of topics and concepts central to US History at all levels of understanding: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The exams shall be writing intensive. Students shall complete identification questions and an extensive, long-form essay response. The average score earned for the Exam category of assignments will weigh as 35% of your nine weeks grade. While I shall NOT drop the lowest score earned on this category of assignment, students may be given the opportunity of raising their scores on each exam by reworking incomplete or inaccurate responses (at my discretion).

***Note on Exams: In keeping with the goal of learning how to think like a historian, as we transition from Unit 1 to Unit 2 in the fall semester, students shall begin to identify the question they are seeking to answer with their extensive, long-form essay response. See the Think Like a Historian handouts at the end of this document. Students will earn an ASE grade in the formation of their essay question.

REMEDINATION AND TUTORING

I am 100% committed to empowering my students to achieve academic success. To this end, early intervention with students needing additional assistance is essential. If a student’s grade falls below a 75, he or she shall be assigned mandatory tutoring that will take place in my room (C326) on the mornings which that student has my class, from 8:05am to 8:40am and/or (depending on the circumstances) Monday afternoons between 4pm and 5pm (also in my classroom).

CLASS PROCEDURES

Work Standards.

1. All work will be your own (with the obvious exception of group work). If you plagiarized homework you will receive a PLAG “0” and an “U” on the next report card and a referral. Plagiarism includes copying and pasting Internet articles, cutting and pasting pictures without giving a source, copying someone else’s work, thinly veiled paraphrasing without source citing. Any paper I suspect of being plagiarized will be reviewed by at least one other teacher. Once confirmed, you may be given a make up assignment on the potential costs of plagiarism. Second incident and I will request a parent/Teacher/Administrator conference to end the problem. Academic dishonesty on an exam is an automatic 0%.

2. All work will be on time. Late work will be accepted at the cost of 10% per day up to a maximum of 30% off the final score. If you fail to turn in an assignment, you will be assigned to Saturday School, the following weekend.

4. For work done on computers, use Arial, Courier New, or Times Roman New font in a maximum of 12 pitch and a minimum size of 10 pitch.

Attendance. Attendance is critical to success in this class. Excessive absences will greatly reduce your chances of passing. If you miss for any reason more that 10% of the meetings of this class, you will lose credit. This means that after your 5th absence, you will have to appeal for credit. Additional consequences for Unexcused Absences are below. It is your responsibility to correct your record with the Attendance Office. Unexcused Absence: 10 Points off of Class Participation Grade per absence and a U in Conduct on next six weeks report card.

Communications. Two-way communication is essential. Please, ask questions before, during and after class. I am available during my conference periods to help you. I can be reached either by telephone/sms text (929-4042) or E-mail (mpreese@episd.org).
Fall 2012

Dual Credit US History

Think Like a Historian – Introductory Handouts

Pages 1-3 of this section introduce the fundamental steps of doing history: 1) determining what is a worthwhile and answerable question on which to seek an answer; 2) identifying and locating the appropriate evidence to form an answer to the question being asked; and 3) interpretation of the evidence – analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating your findings to formulate an answer to the original question.

Page 4 of this section is a graphic organizer of the process.

Pages 5-9 of this section explain the categories of inquiry that define the spectrum of questions that can be asked about the past.
Questions

History is a study of the past, it is not the past itself. Thinking of worthwhile questions to ask in the studying the past is a fundamental concern of historians.

1. History *begins* with questions – something we want to know, something we are curious about.

2. Questions about the past generally fall into one of the five historical categories of inquiry.

3. Some questions are better than others. The most interesting and meaningful questions recognize that the human experience in the past was as complex as the present.

   Historical events unfolded as different people, groups, and institutions with different experiences, needs, ideas, and degrees of power interacted with one another.
Evidence

We need information to answer historical questions. This information, the historical evidence, comes from secondary sources (such as books, documentaries, textbooks, etc.) and primary sources (such as letters, newspapers, speeches, diaries, treaties, photographs, oral interviews, etc.). Historical Evidence contains facts about the past. Facts, in themselves, are not history.

1. Facts are the building blocks and supporting evidence we need in order to answer the really important and meaningful historical questions.

2. Not all historical sources are equal. It is necessary to consider ways in which a number of factors may affect the validity of each source. These factors include: the creator of the source, the creator’s perspective and knowledge about the events, the purpose for which the source was created, and the intended audience for the source.

3. Multiple sources are needed for legitimate analysis.

4. Sources must illuminate both the historical context and the topic being studied.
Interpretation

The final and essential step in doing history is interpretation. Historical interpretation answers a historical question using the reasonably available historical record (primary and secondary sources).

1. All secondary sources are examples of historical interpretation.

2. While what happened in the past cannot change, history does change (This is Historiography – the study of how historical understanding changes over time). New questions, new sources, and new understandings of familiar sources lead to new interpretations.

3. All historical interpretations are not equal. Some interpretations are better than others. Some are wrong. Some are misleading.

4. The quality of one’s historical interpretation depends on the questions one asks, the breadth and depth of the sources one uses, and the sophistication of one’s analysis of the sources in support of the answer to the historical question.
Cause and Effect

What were the *causes* of past events?

• Who or what made change happen?
• Who supported change? Why?
• Who did not support change? Why?

What were the *effects* of past events?

• Which effects were intended?
• Which effects were accidental?
• How did events affect people’s lives, community, and world?
Change and Continuity

Historical chronology is different from the chronology of the physical sciences. The physical sciences have chronologies that are cyclical and repeatable. Historical chronology is neither cyclical nor repeatable. Historical chronology is focused on change over time. Historical chronology marks the passage of time and the passage of people and events of that time.

What has changed?

• Who has benefited from this change? Why?
• Who has not benefited from this change? Why?

What has remained the same?

• Who has benefited from the status quo? Why?
• Who has not benefited from the status quo? Why?
Turning Points

Some change is so dramatic that historians refer to these points of new departure as historical turning points. A turning point signifies a profound change in one or more of the major arenas of human experience (political, social, economic or cultural/intellectual).

Turning points are characterized by change of such magnitude that the course of individual experiences and societal development begins to follow a new trajectory, shaped by a new set of possibilities and constraints.

The first Turning Point that this course shall illuminate is the Columbian Exchange.

How did Past decisions or actions affect future choices?

• How did decisions or actions narrow or eliminate choices for people?
• How did decisions or actions significantly transform people’s lives?
Through Their Eyes

This category of historical inquiry seeks to understand past events through the perspective of the participants. People living through the historical events under study did not know how the event would resolve! This is similar to how one experiences watching a movie for the first time, in contrast to how one experiences watching a movie over and over again. The ending is a surprise when you do not know what is going to happen!

The common people and leaders who lived through the US Civil War did NOT know the North was going to win. We must seek to understand the people who lived through past events by seeing these events through their eyes.

How did people in the past view their world?

• How did their worldview affect their choices and actions?
• What values, skills, and forms of knowledge did people need to succeed at the time being studied?
Using the Past

Drawing lessons from the past can be a powerful way to make sense of the present and to inform decisions about the future. In order to use the past responsibly we must identify aspects of the past that are relevant to the question being studied.

Some historical similarities are comparable. Others are not. For example, comparing the divorce rates in the US in 1890 and 1990 to draw conclusions about changes in family stability is not an appropriate use of the past. The major causes of family instability in 1890 were death and desertion, not divorce.

How does the past help us make sense of the present?

• How is the past similar to the present?
• How is the past different from the present?
• What can we learn from the past?
Fall 2012

Dual Credit US History

ASE Exercises – Introductory Handouts

The following three pages outline the three types of Analysis-Synthesis-Evaluation exercises that we shall engage in during the course of this academic year.

The vast majority of these exercises shall be completed in small groups. However, I shall modify them slightly to allow for individual completion in the event of an excused absence.
ASEE (Analysis-Synthesis-Evaluation Exercise) Type I:
The Structured Academic Controversy (or SAC)

The Structured Academic Controversy protocol was developed by Roger T. Johnson and David W. Johnson, co-directors of the University of Minnesota’s Cooperative Learning Center (http://www.co-operation.org/). Successful participation in a SAC helps students move beyond either/or debates to craft a more nuanced synthesis of responses to important questions relevant to the study of US History.

Classroom Procedures

Step 1 Preparation

a. Partners prepare evidence to support their position.

Step 2 Presentation and Listening

a. Pair A presents their position using supporting evidence.
b. Pair B restates to Pair A’s satisfaction.
c. Pair B presents their position using supporting evidence.
d. Pair A restates to Pair B’s satisfaction.

Step 3 Consensus Building

a. Abandon roles.
b. Using supporting evidence, build consensus regarding the question—or at least identify where your differences lie.
c. Consider the question: How should we judge people from the past?

Graded Assignment

Students shall work in their assigned small groups to write a one page explanation of their findings. This must include a summary of the nature of the academic controversy, and an explanation of the key differences between the major positions that define the controversy. Students will argue whether or not differences in positions in this controversy stem from differences in values, assumptions, and/or perspectives. Finally, students shall identify the common values and concerns of each side of the debate that may function as a starting point for reaching a meaningful consensus.
ASEE (Analysis-Synthesis-Evaluation Exercise) Type II: Opening Up the Textbook (or OUT)

Rationale and Purpose
Any survey history textbook (a history textbook that covers vast numbers of years and topics) must be concise and abridged. While the textbook we are using is one of the best US History survey textbooks on the market, it is inevitable at times that complex topics, events, and people are covered in a less-than-comprehensive fashion. The objective of an OUT ASEE is to provide the students with supplemental primary source documents (documents that were produced in the time being studied) central to the topic, event, or person being considered and to write a more comprehensive description and interpretation of that topic, event, or person. In other words, students will write an extension of the textbook’s account that could be inserted into the textbook and result in a more nuanced understanding of that topic, event, or person.

Classroom Procedures

Step 1 Preparation
Students work in their assigned small groups to critically read the provided handouts that contain supplemental primary source document accounts of the topic, event, or person being studied.

Step 2 Discussion and Writing
Students work in their assigned small groups to identify key items that are revealed by the primary source documents that are omitted from the textbook account. Students then re-write the textbook account with this new learning in mind.

Step 3 Presentations
Each small group will briefly summarize the improvements they made to the textbook account, with emphasis on how their revised version of events brings a deeper understanding of the topic, event, or person.

Graded Assignment
I shall grade the written product of each small group for its coherence, level of analysis, organization, and overall thesis (argument).
ASEE (Analysis-Synthesis-Evaluation Exercise) Type III: American History – Historiographical Analysis (or AH-HA)

Rationale and Purpose
Historiography is a spring board to achieving analysis, synthesis, and evaluation-level understanding in topics central to the study of history. Simply put, if history is what historians say happened, historiography is the evolution of what historians say happened. The historiography of the Reconstruction era (period immediately following the US Civil War when the South was rejoined to the US) is a prime example of this concept. Historians writing in the early twentieth century (1900s) understood the failure of Reconstruction as a product of the inferiority of freed and former slaves in the South. The consensus position of historians in this period is that Reconstruction failed because blacks were inferior to whites and that they were not ready or capable for self-government. Needless to say, historians in the 21st century understand the failure of Reconstruction in a completely different way. Today, historians blame Reconstruction’s failures on a combination of Southern resistance to Reconstruction policies, ineptitude and corruption among Federal officials, and a lack of social, economic, and political support for former enslaved persons.

The purpose of the AH-HA exercise is to ask the following: Does the manner in which past historians understood a topic, event, or person reveal more about the actual topic, event, or person being studied or more about the period of time in which those historians lived and worked? In the case of my example, the answer is surely the latter! Historians in the early twentieth century lived and worked during the nadir of race relations in the US; historians today live and work in the post-Civil Rights era United States, so surely our understanding of Reconstruction will have evolved to acknowledge this broader societal shift in values and beliefs.

Classroom Procedures
Step 1 Preparation
Students work in their assigned small groups to critically read the provided handouts that contain various explanations of historical topics, events, or people written by past historians.

Step 2 Discussion and Writing
Students will work in their assigned small groups to identify key elements that reveal how a historical topic is understood has evolved over time. Students will collaborate in their assigned small groups to write a one-page summary of their findings. The summary must have a strong overall thesis (argument).

Step 3 Presentations
Each small group will briefly summarize their findings for the class.

Graded Assignment
I shall grade the written product of each small group for its coherence, level of analysis, organization, and overall thesis (argument). It is essential that each AH-HA written exercise have a clear, unifying argument (thesis).