

PVHS Social Studies Department

2008-09 Course Descriptions

Advanced Philosophy & Religion	The course provides a conceptual understanding of philosophy and its essential relationship to the major thought systems of the modern world. It surveys and compares core intellectual and religious traditions in both western and eastern civilizations. The curriculum requires critical reading, essay writing, and directed research into advanced levels of philosophical thought. Oral communication skills are emphasized in learning the reasoning process as well as promoting clarity of thought and expression.
American Government	The required semester course in American government is designed to give students a critical perspective on politics and government in the United States. The course compares systems of government in the world today and analyzes the life and changing interpretations of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the current state of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. The course promotes familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that make up the American and comparative political system.
American Government AP	Designed to survey the United States national political system; the purpose of this course is to examine and analyze the basic governmental institutions and their functions. This course is intended for the highly-motivated student who wishes to earn college credit in government. It is heavily content oriented and aims to promote skill development through a rigorous course of study. Primary focus will be placed on the national level, with a brief examination of the states and how they function within the federal system as well as how their governments differ from the national government.
Comparative Government AP	AP Comparative Government is a one-semester introductory comparative course. Five countries form the core of this class: France, Great Britain, China, the former Soviet Union and one of the following: India, Mexico, and Nigeria (teacher's discretion). This course in Comparative Government and Politics will provide students with the conceptual tools necessary to develop an understanding of some of the world's most diverse political structures. The course will encompass the study of specific countries and their governments and general concepts used to interpret the political relationships and institutions found in virtually all societies.
Comparative Religion	This course introduces the students to the major religions of the world. These belief systems are approached from the cultural perspective of each faith. Major religious tests, doctrines, rituals, customs, and artistic expressions are presented in order to increase a wide range of understanding and respect.
Economics	Economics involves the study of microeconomics and macroeconomics to help students become responsible citizens and effective decision makers. The class provides an understanding of basic economic principles, including the law of supply and demand, scarcity, the role of the market place, competition, and consumer choice. In addition, the course deals with macroeconomic topics of inflation and unemployment, measures of national wealth, the economic role of the government, and international trade and finance. The course also includes personal economic decision-making: investments, budget process, job choice, and consumer information.
Economics AP	AP Economics involves the study of microeconomics and macroeconomics. The microeconomics portion of the class provides an understanding of the principles of economics that apply to the functions of individual decision-makers, both consumers and producers, within the larger economic system. It places primary emphasis on the nature and functions of product markets, and includes the study of factor markets and

	<p>the role of government in promoting greater efficiency and equity in the economy. This portion of the class will include: supply and demand models, consumer choice, production and costs, market structures, concepts of supply and demand to markets for factors such as labor. The macroeconomics portion of the class develops an understanding of the principles of economics that applies to an economic system as a whole. It places an emphasis on the study of national income and price determination, and develops familiarity with economic performance measures, economic growth, and international economics. This portion of the class will include: concepts of scarcity and opportunity, trends in gross national product, gross domestic product, inflation and unemployment, analysis of the determination of national income and the aggregate price level, and international finance, exchange rates, and balance of payments.</p>
European History AP	<p>This course deals with varied political, intellectual, and socio-economic themes and familiarizes students with the interrelationships of these themes through several chronological periods. Emphasis is placed on European History from the High Renaissance through current times. Medieval times are reviewed in terms of its influence on the Renaissance.</p>
European History AP/Eng 2 Honors	<p>This course deals with varied political, intellectual, and socio-economic themes and familiarizes students with the interrelationships of these themes through several chronological periods. Emphasis is placed on European History from the High Renaissance through current times. Medieval times are reviewed in terms of its influence on the Renaissance.</p>
Global Cultures	<p>Global Cultures is designed to provide an in-depth examination of the interchanges among members of cultures throughout the world and to teach requisite research and writing skills. Students develop an understanding of current world issues and relate them to their historical, geographic, political, economic, and cultural contexts. Students consider multiple accounts of events in order to understand international relations from a variety of perspectives.</p>
Human Geography AP	<p>Geography is concentrated on the question "where". Human geography, however, focuses on answering the "why" of "where". The purpose of the AP course in Human Geography is to introduce students to the systematic study of patterns and processes that have shaped human understanding, use, and alteration of the Earth's surface. Students employ spatial concepts and landscape analysis to examine human social organization and its environmental consequences. They also learn about the methods and tools geographers use in their science and practice.</p>
Mock Trial	<p>This course is offered during the first quarter for credit only. Students will learn about the American legal system and the Constitution by preparing and role playing in fictional criminal cases. The criminal case reenactments are tried before a real court of law, supervised by local judges and attorneys who donate their time and expertise. Students will have a real "hands-on" experience assuming fictional roles as attorneys, witnesses, prosecutors, defendants, and bailiffs (Mock Trial). Evening and weekend practices as well as participation in Saturday competitions are required. This experience will allow students to gain a working knowledge of public speaking, the rule of law, mediation, negotiation, the United States Constitutional Law, research, and teamwork. This program will provide fundamental building blocks for students considering a career in law.</p>
Model United Nations	<p>An interdisciplinary study during which students' research topics presently being debated in the United Nations in order to participate in Model United Nations simulations. Students assume the roles of Member States of the UN, tackling a wide range of international issues. Through practice and attendance at Model United</p>

	Nations Conferences, the students will acquire a working knowledge of diplomatic communication, rules of procedure, debate, negotiation, and resolution writing. The class is open to all students with a desire to learn about the workings of the United Nations and international diplomacy. Membership in the MUN Club is not a requirement.
Psychology	This is a one-semester course, which introduces students to the subject of psychology. The course includes an overview of major psychological approaches, theories, and concepts and is designed to help students gain a better understanding of themselves and of other people. It also offers practical applications for students to help them live more satisfying and productive lives.
Psychology AP	Advanced Placement (AP) Psychology is designed to provide students with a college level of introductory psychology.
Sociology	This is a semester course providing an introduction to the major perspective, principles, concepts, and methods of sociology. Reference is made to varied world cultures with concentration upon social conditions and institutions within American society. Topics include culture, groups, social interaction, socialization, deviance, social stratification, social institutions, and social change.
US History	In this required eleventh grade course, students analyze and evaluate American political, social, and economic behavior during major periods in the nation's experience. Multiple factors that effect continuity and change in historical settings are studied, in addition to the outstanding contributions of individual Americans. The course traces the change in ethnic composition of American society, the movement toward equal rights for racial minorities and women, and the expanding role of the Federal government in addressing critical issues.
US History AP	This college-level course is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in American History. Students learn to assess historical materials -- their relevance to a given interpretative problem, their reliability, and their importance -- and to weigh the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship. In addition, the course develops student skills necessary to arrive at conclusions on the basis of an informed judgment and to present reasons and evidence clearly and persuasively in essay format. This survey of American History provides extensive chronological coverage and readings on a broad variety of topics that include economic, cultural, intellectual, and social history, in addition to political, constitutional, and diplomatic history.
US History AP/English 3AP Language	This college-level course is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in American History. Students learn to assess historical materials -- their relevance to a given interpretative problem, their reliability, and their importance -- and to weigh the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship. In addition, the course develops student skills necessary to arrive at conclusions on the basis of an informed judgment and to present reasons and evidence clearly and persuasively in essay format. This survey of American History provides extensive chronological coverage and readings on a broad variety of topics that include economic, cultural, intellectual, and social history, in addition to political, constitutional, and diplomatic history.
Women's Studies	Based on the California Framework for History Social Science (Women in Our History), and the California English Language Arts Standards, this two-semester course examines the history of American women, the effects of historical events on

contemporary women as reflected in literature. The course will also examine women as characters and authors, with a particular emphasis on narrative, voice, and the choices available to these women.

**World History** In this year-long course, students demonstrate a basic understanding of World History, Geography, and Culture. Content will cover the foundation of political thought in the development of law, religion, philosophy, and culture, and the influence of ancient civilization on modern western society. Students' identify, analyze, and interpret significant historical information.

**World History Honors** In this honors level course, students work toward developing an advanced understanding of World History, Geography, and Culture. Emphasis is placed on acquiring and exhibiting specific critical reading and writing proficiencies that enable them to succeed in subsequent social science advanced placement courses. As part of the course, students are also able to identify, analyze, interpret, and communicate significant historical information.

**World History Honors/English 1 Honors** In this honors level course, students work toward developing an advanced understanding of World History, Geography, and Culture. Emphasis is placed on acquiring and exhibiting specific critical reading and writing proficiencies that enable them to succeed in subsequent social science advanced placement courses. As part of the course, students are also able to identify, analyze, interpret, and communicate significant historical information.