# AP European History

## Course Introduction and Prerequisites

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*2026-2027 School Year*

## *THE PROGRAM*

AP European History, sponsored by the College Board, offers ambitious and capable high school students the opportunity to take college level courses for credit prior to entering an undergraduate program at the university level.

The Program is designed to help you develop the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems of and materials related to European history from approximately 1450 AD to the present. Students will learn to assess historical materials--their relevance to a given issue, their reliability, and their importance--in order to weigh the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship.

Compared to your regular high school coursework, AP European history will be more demanding. The course moves rapidly and covers a lot of ground. You will be asked to read and write more, to analyze historical material, and to both synthesize and evaluate ideas. These skills, necessary in most history classes, will be exercised at a much higher level of complexity in your AP class.

The primary objective of the course is to prepare you for the AP examinations that take place in May of each school year. To be successful, you must be both *willing* and able. "*Willing*" means motivated to study and learn at the college level. If you are committed to participating actively in the classroom and can keep up with (or better yet stay ahead of) reading and writing assignments, you have met a major prerequisite for success.

## *READING LIST*

**Mandatory Texts:**

- A History of Western Society (14th ed), by John McKay et al (**school supplied textbook**)

- A History of The Modern World (12th ed) by R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton (**school supplied textbook**)

**Optional Study Guide:**

- AP Achiever European History **3rd edition**, by Chris Freiler. McGraw-Hill © 2021 (**available online**) (**ISBN-13: 978-1948641401**) note: 1st and 2nd editions are outdated and do not correspond to the new test format). This is a highly recommended resource that provides important summaries of course content as well as effective test preparation strategies

## *SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS*

1. Read **Chapter 1: The Later Middle Ages** (pp.2-37) from A History of Western Society (14th ed) and answer the study questions included in this handout listed below). **This assignment is due on Tuesday August 18th.**
   **AS WITH ALL AP EURO READING ASSIGNMENTS, DO YOUR OWN WORK—THIS IS *NOT* A GROUP OR AI ASSIGNMENT!**

2. Become familiar with the current political and geographic map of Europe (2026). Be able to identify the nations of Europe (not capitals) as well as geographic features such as major rivers, mountains, and bodies of water. **A quiz on this information will be given during the second week of school.**

## *STUDY TIPS*

As you have probably already realized, the course will require a substantial amount of study time, and it is important to use this time effectively. Don't put off readings until the last moment, for the information presented is complex and requires time to synthesize and understand. Also, class discussions and lectures are often times based upon these readings, and the failure to develop a familiarity with discussion topics ahead of time will prevent you from making meaningful contributions in class. Find a quiet, well lit place to read. Begin by previewing introductions, headings and summaries. Taking reading notes should help you organize, understand, and memorize the material. **If you don't understand words, look them up**! Finally, **use your STUDY GUIDE regularly**. It offers a broad overview of topics that the texts develop in much more detail, and is invaluable in helping you to see the "big picture".

## STUDY QUESTIONS:

***A History of Western Society (14th ed):*** **Chapter I: The Later Middle Ages 1300-1450** (pages 2-37)

**Develop a summary paragraph for each of the following bullet points**
**(use Google Docs from your BHUSD account to record your answers)**

1. How did climate change shape the late Middle Ages?
   - Climate change and Famine
   - Social Consequences

2. How did the plague affect European Society?
   - Pathology
   - Spread of the Disease
   - Care of the Sick
   - Economic, Religious, and Cultural Effects

3. What were the causes, course, and consequences of the Hundred Years' War?
   - Causes
   - English Successes
   - Joan of Arc and France's Victory
   - Aftermath

4. Why did the Church come under increasing criticism?
   - The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism
   - Critiques, Divisions, and Councils
   - Lay Piety and Mysticism

5. What explains the social unrest of the late Middle Ages?
   - Peasant Revolts
   - Urban Conflicts

- Sex in the City
- Fur Collar Crime
- Ethnic Tensions and Restrictions
- Literacy and Vernacular Literature