

FAQ
(Frequently Asked Questions)
AP Human Geography
Roosevelt High School
2008-2009 Sophomore Social Studies Course

1. What exactly is the AP Human Geography course?

The AP Human Geography course offers a curriculum that is accessible to a diverse student population, like ours at Roosevelt. The course is concerned with human society and its consequences, providing students with a global perspective on change – how and why it occurs - and how to view places and patterns - not in isolation, but in terms of their relationship with other places. In the course students use maps and data to describe and analyze changing interconnections among places. Students further learn how to pose and solve problems by thinking critically about these issues. We have spoken directly with some of the top schools in the country who offer this class and they report it as being a very engaging and relevant class. For more detailed information on the course visit the College Board website at: http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/teachers_corner/8154.html

2. How did Roosevelt High School first come up with the idea of including this course in the curriculum? What was the decision making process that occurred to implement this curriculum change?

The proposal to make this change was generated from within the Roosevelt Social Studies department and is supported by the majority of department. Feedback was received from parents, students and teachers during this process and the final proposal was brought through the building instructional council and signed off on by district leadership.

3. How were families and students informed of this new curriculum and what the choices were in selecting the class for their sophomore year?

There was information given to students during the course registration process that included details of the course and the choices that students had in selecting how to take the class. Additional information was provided at a PTSA meeting and most recently a letter was sent home to 9th grade parents providing them with much of the same information included in this FAQ.

4. What are the three options available for students to choose from?

We are offering the course in three different formats to provide students with flexibility in their schedules so that they can continue to develop a four-year plan that allows them to reach the goals they have set for high school

- **Full-Year Course-Stand Alone Class:** *This is a full-year, stand alone class taught by the same teacher. This course will provide opportunities for projects, field trips, research and presentations that will allow students to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts being studied.*
- **Full-Year Course- Blocked with LA10:** *This is a full-year class, taught in much the same way as the stand alone course, which will be blocked with an LA10 class. The SS and the LA class will be scheduled back to back and the same students will be together for both of those periods. This allows for literature to be incorporated into the course which supports the geographic concepts being studied.*
- **Semester Course:** *This is a half-year course that will cover the same core content as the year long classes, but in one semester and with fewer enrichment opportunities. This option is available for students whose 4-year plans require taking only a semester of Social Studies in grade 10. Students will need to get a signature from their SS teacher and counselor. This step is just to make sure that students are aware of how this course will be different from the year long classes and to align this choice with their 4-year plan.*

5. Why is the class mandatory for all sophomores?

One of the goals for the change is to provide more students with the skills and confidence in engaging with challenging material so that more students will choose to take advanced classes in both the 11th and 12th grades. By having all 10th graders take the course, we will be able to work collaboratively in developing a strong curriculum built on the collective expertise within our social studies department.

6. Does this mean the AP European History will no longer be available as a choice for Roosevelt students?

The AP European History class will be offered to students as an 11th or 12th grade social studies elective.

7. Will there be text books available for all students to take home?

Yes. We have ordered enough copies for all students to have a copy.

8. What resources will be available for students who may need help keeping up with the course load?

In order to support all students in taking this challenging course we are incorporating a series of strategies. These include differentiated instruction, working directly with the teacher before and after school, access to a social

studies teacher during the afterschool homework center, training and curriculum alignment in both our bilingual and special education departments. In addition, we are in the process of securing additional funding to support a reading and writing tutor who would be available for students needing additional and specific assistance.

9. Do teachers know how to differentiate the curriculum to serve the variety of students likely to be in any given class?

Yes. In addition, teachers will go through continued professional development on differentiation and they will work together as a team in developing the curriculum and the differentiated lessons, activities and assessments.

10. How will students that want more rigor be challenged?

This is an Advanced Placement class with concepts and standards set at college level. Work in this class will have a heavy emphasis on reading, writing and critical thinking skills. Students will need to be able to understand multiple perspectives and bring those together into analysis of contemporary and historical problems. All of the staff teaching the class have volunteered and are excited about teaching the class. They have already started working together to develop the course and will continue with additional trainings this summer.

11. How will Roosevelt incorporate the origins of western civilization into the student's social studies course without World History III or AP Euro as an option?

Western Civilization will continue to be incorporated into all levels of Social Studies classes. For instance ninth grade classes will include European Imperialism and the spread of European religion and culture. Tenth grade classes will include European migration (urban/rural) and immigration (regional/national). Eleventh grade classes will include the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and the World Wars. As we create the tenth grade curriculum and refine the other classes we will continue to look for more opportunities to directly include components of Western Civ.

12. Can students make changes to their enrollment form after they have submitted it?

We provided all current 9th grade families with more information earlier in April and provided another window to make some changes. If you still need to make a change to your course selection based on this additional information, please contact your counselor.

13. What methods will be used to evaluate the AP Human Geography class from year to year and will parent/student feedback be solicited?

The metrics used to evaluate AP Human Geography include:

- **Student grades**
- **Number of students taking the AP exam**
- **Number of students scoring a 3 or better on the AP exam**
- **Number of students enrolling in advanced level courses in 11th and 12th grade.**
- **Grade data from students in advanced social studies classes in grades 11 and 12.**
- **Course evaluations**

14. Will students be required to take the AP exam?

No. Students will be encouraged but not required to take the exam.

15. The fee to take an AP exam is \$80. The College Board offers a fee reduction for low-income students of \$22. Does Washington State offer any additional fee reduction?

Washington State does not offer any additional fee reductions. However, we are identifying other local sources of funding to help. We do not want anyone not taking the exam because of financial reasons and we will work to make sure that we can support all of our students.

16. College Board recommends setting up AP Vertical Teams, “to increase student achievement through discussion of the standards and how different teachers interpret and teach the standards at each grade level. Educators are able to discuss what the students have done in their classes and ways to utilize those projects, activities, and events into the curriculum as they move to the next grade level.” It seems that this is suggested for middle through high school teachers in order to prepare students for AP courses. Are there discussions occurring with the middle schools where we get most of our students from (Hamilton and Eckstein) to create AP Vertical Teams to start to align Social Studies curriculum so students come to Roosevelt better prepared to take AP courses?

This level of collaboration with the middle schools has not happened yet. However, we will be working within our social studies department to make sure our sequence is aligned and supports high achievement of both content and skills.

17. Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

There are several people who may be of assistance if you need more information. If you have questions regarding the decision making process, please contact Mr. Vance (brvance@seattleschools.org). Questions regarding

**the course and/or the social studies sequence, please contact Ms. Grace
(kagrace@seattleschools.org) or Ms. Mackoff
(chmackoff@seattleschools.org).**