“What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.” - Howard Zinn

Dear Prospective Advanced Placement United States History Student or Gonzo Historian,

Welcome to Advanced Placement United States History and congratulations on your decision to take on arguably the most challenging yet rewarding course at Elizabethtown Area High School!

You are about to embark on a fantastic journey which will hopefully culminate in your achievement of a “5” on the AP Exam early next May. Before we begin our journey, however, you will need to know a few things....

As we live in the incredibly fast paced 21st century, we will need to communicate with great speed and facility. To facilitate this process, I have created a Google classroom account by which I communicate most information to the group. All students MUST sign up for APUSH Google classroom. The class code is vgwxed I also ask all students to sign up for my Remind account. I will pass information along to you on signing up for this account via Google classroom. This is a one-way text information service through which I can get important information to you even more quickly when needed.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I have established a school wires account that you can access by going to the Elizabethtown Area School District website and locating the “Schools” tab. After choosing “Elizabethtown Area High School,” look for the “Teacher Websites’ tab. Look for and click “Safford, James.” On the left hand side of your screen you will find a button titled, “Advanced Placement US History.” Here, you will find most items that you will need for the course, including the course syllabus, curriculum, assignments, essential links, reading schedules and other useful information. Take some time to explore.

Due to the breadth and width of our curriculum, we will need to do some reading before we begin classes in the Fall semester. Please make sure that before you leave for the summer that you stop by my room to pick up a copy of the 16th edition of The American Pageant, our main text for the course. I expect that you will have read chapters 1-4 and corresponding term sheets or guided reading questions before returning for the Fall semester. You will find the term sheets and guided reading questions on my Google Classroom site. The intent of the term sheet is NOT to simply DEFINE the term, but rather to comment on the term’s SIGNIFICANCE. If you simply write down who a person is or what took place during a certain event, I will most likely ask you, “Why should I care? What does the definition or description say about us as a people?” Be prepared to discuss the significance of ALL terms or questions.
In addition to your textbook, you will need to purchase a book that we will use extensively as a supplement to the course, *A People’s History of the United States: 1492-Present* by Howard Zinn. You can purchase the book on Amazon.com for less than thirteen dollars each, but you may find better deals elsewhere. You may want to check with former APUSH students to borrow or buy a used copy. I expect that you will have read chapter 1 and 2 in both books before our first class together. You will find guided reading questions, prompts, or reflection pieces for the chapters on Google classroom.

Please see my Google classroom site for a more detailed description of the course and curriculum. If you have any questions concerning the course or the summer assignments, do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at the following:

Cell: 717.304.1089 (text preferred)  
Email: james_safford@etownschools.org

Have a relaxing and safe summer! I will see you when we get back.

As ever,

Mr. Safford