



2024-2025 AP SEMINAR COURSE SYLLABUS

A.P. Seminar

(5 credits/semester, 10 total) EZS 500

GENERAL INFORMATION

Term and Year: Fall 2024 and Spring 2025

Name of Instructor: Brett Williams

Room Number: C-304

Telephone Number: (916) 395-5090 Ext.506304

E-mail Address: brett-williams@scusd.edu

Class Website: <https://sites.google.com/scusd.edu/apseminar>



Scan to access website.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives. Using an inquiry framework, students practice reading and analyzing articles, research studies, and foundational, literary, and philosophical texts; listening to and viewing speeches, broadcasts, and personal accounts; and experiencing artistic works and performances. Students learn to synthesize information from multiple sources, develop their own perspectives in written essays, and design and deliver oral and visual presentations, both individually and as part of a team. Ultimately, the course aims to equip students with the power to analyze and evaluate information with accuracy and precision in order to craft and communicate evidence-based arguments.

COURSE OUTLINE

Content Area	Dates
1. Power and Participation (Mock PT 1)	8/19-9/13
2. Poverty (Mock PT2)	9/16-10/18
4. Performance Task 1	10/21-1/17
5. Performance Task 2	1/20-4/11
6. End of Course Exam Prep	4/21-5/9
7. Success	5/9-6/13

*The AP Seminar College Board Exam is on Wednesday, May 7th.

GRADING Infinite Campus

Ongoing Self Assessments	A log where students keep track of their progress on all class assignments preparing them for the Summative Assessments and reflecting on their performance and understanding of both formative and summative assessments.	15%
Thematic and Mock Performance Tasks	Students will engage in inquiry, presentations, and written reports and arguments all in preparation for their CB Assessments of PT1 and PT2.	50% 1st Semester/ 15% 2nd Semester
End of Course Exam	This task consists of two parts. The first part is a short answer argument analysis piece. The second part requires students to write a written argument using the provided sources from the College Board. These 2 parts of the exam will be done digitally on Monday, May 12th.	35%

GRADING SCALE

A=89.5%+ B=79.5%+ C=69.5%+ D=59.5%+ F=59.4% or below



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Curricular Requirements

1. Students explore complexities of one or more themes by making connections within, between, and/or among multiple cross-curricular areas and by exploring multiple perspectives and lenses (e.g., cultural and social, artistic and philosophical, political and historical, environmental, economic, scientific, futuristic, ethical) related to those themes.
2. Students develop and apply discrete skills identified in the learning objectives of the enduring understandings within the following 5 big ideas: Question and Explore; Understand and Analyze; Evaluate Multiple Perspectives; Synthesize Ideas; and Team, Transform, and Transmit (see below).
3. Students gain a rich appreciation and understanding of the issues through the following activities: reading articles and research studies; reading foundational, literary, and philosophical texts; viewing and listening to speeches, broadcasts, and/or personal accounts; and experiencing artistic works and performances.
4. Students develop an understanding of ethical research practices and the AP Capstone™ Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information.
 - a. Students develop an understanding of ethical research practices.
 - b. Students develop an understanding of the AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information.
5. Students work collaboratively with a team to identify, investigate, analyze, and evaluate a real-world or academic problem or issue; consider and evaluate alternatives or options; propose one or more solutions or resolutions; and present and defend the argument for their solutions through a multimedia presentation.
6. Students work independently to identify a research question based on provided stimulus material; research the issue; analyze, evaluate, and select evidence to develop an argument; present and defend a conclusion; and produce a multimedia presentation to be delivered to their peers.

STANDARDS-BASED GRADING

Here are a few articles to learn about Standards Based Grading

- <https://kappanonline.org/standards-based-grading-equity-reform-feldman/>
- <http://my.aasa.org/AASA/Resources/SAMag/2019/May19/Feldman.aspx>
- **Grading for Equity** by Joe Feldman (2019: Corwin, Thousand Oaks, CA)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & RIGOR:

Formative Assessments: Mastery of content in this class requires participation in group and class discussions and activities, as well as individual study and preparation. Students will be required to complete an **Ongoing Self Assessment on Formative Assessments by Standard** to help prepare them for summative assessments. **Formative assessments will be reviewed for accuracy (in class), but not graded.**

Summative Assessments: After being introduced to a particular topic, students will be expected to prepare for in-class content application (Presentations, Writing Assignments, Portfolios, Quizzes/Tests, and Socratic Seminars).

Retakes: Standards-Based Grading is about developing a growth mindset. So retakes are a large part of the course. Students will have an opportunity to retake a given assessment on the target standards they are seeking to reach proficiency or above. Retakes will be offered once a week on Wednesdays at lunch or before school at 7:30 a.m. In order to do a retake, the OSA for that content must be complete. If another time is needed we can discuss options.



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Makeups: Students who miss class, will need to make up any Summative Assessments they are missing ASAP. Students can do that on the same day and time retakes are offered. Students who are far behind should reach out through Remind, or email so we can coordinate a plan together to get caught up. Don't let yourself fall behind; advocate for yourself.

GRADING SCALE

Grade	Score Point	Criteria
A	4 (89.5-100%)	SUPERB - Exceeded the standard
B	3 (79.5-89.4%)	PROFICIENT - Met the standard
C	2 (69.5-79.4%)	DEVELOPING - Student has key gaps in their understanding of the standard
D	1 (59.5-69.4%)	NOVICE - Student is unable to demonstrate Proficient or Superb levels without assistance
Incomplete	Incomplete	No evidence

Rubrics will be used for assignments ranging from presentations to papers. The 1-4 scale demonstrates their proficiency in those areas. The percentages used for summative assessments in IC should be viewed relative to this scale as well.

- **1- Novice** Learner knows part of the standard, but may still have learning to accomplish, misconceptions to clear up and practice is needed. They are beginning to understand the standard.
- **2- Developing:** Learner knows part of the standard, but still makes mistakes because confidence in their knowledge is developing. More practice is needed to improve their confidence.
- **3- Proficient:** Learner knows the standard, but might make a few small mistakes because they are human. They are confident in their learning.
- **4- Superb:** Learner knows the standard and can make connections to how this standard relates to other standards. They make little to no mistakes and can justify their thoughts with background knowledge. They can transfer their knowledge to similar, yet different scenarios.

GRADING & INFINITE CAMPUS

Instead of assignment headings like Ch.1 Quiz, you will see something like this 1. Id. Claim, 2. Weighing Evidence. This is intended to demonstrate to students and parents alike exactly where a student is on given standard. Students can then pinpoint their challenge areas, and retake the portion of the assessment that only targets that specific area. This option is available on nearly every quiz. In this respect this grading system should help make grades more transparent and students more empowered.

Extra Credit: You have enough work to do in the class without extra credit. Focus on developing proficiency on the required standards instead of taking advantage of retakes, and prepping extensively for the projects.

Late/Incomplete Work: You may turn in 3 assignments late per semester, but each will require a Late Form fully completed and attached to your assignment. You can find the Late Forms in Google Classroom.. Late Forms will



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primarily be used on project stages. **I do not accept late work for your Ongoing Self Assessments (OSAs).** My reason is that the whole purpose of the OSA is to prepare you for the quizzes. Turning in OSAs after your quizzes then makes no sense. If you're absent for a quiz, just turn in your OSA for that week after your makeup quiz.

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Ongoing Self-Assessment (10% of semester grade each semester)

- This will be a document you will receive in class at the start of each unit, almost always Monday, and it will be submitted with your assignments from that week's unit, stapled to the back. View it as a portfolio of your work, and a chance to reflect on where you are succeeding, and where you need to better focus your efforts. The reflections here should help considerably both with retakes and progressing through the semester.

AP SEMINAR COLLEGE BOARD ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Mock and Theme Based Assessments: 20% of Semester Grade (1st Sem.)

Students will engage in a theme based unit on Power and Participation, followed by a full mock up of their Performance Task 1 where they will engage in inquiry, writing a report, and engaging in a team based presentation. Their 1st semester final will be their Team Based Presentation.

After the AP Seminar exam on May 7th students will engage in a final thematic unit on Success. They will implement the tools they learned throughout the year here in defining success on their own terms.

Performance Task 1 (PT1) Team Project and Presentation: 20% of AP Seminar Score

Students collaborate as a team to identify an academic or real-world problem, question, or issue and conduct initial research. They then identify approaches and perspectives, and divide responsibilities among group members for individual research. Individually, students investigate an approach or perspective on the issue, question, or topic. Each student presents his or her findings and analysis to the group in an individual report.

Then, working collaboratively, the team considers all research and analyses from individual team members for the purpose of proposing one or more solutions or resolutions. Together, the team develops a multimedia presentation that presents a convincing argument for the proposed solutions. Each team member then responds to a question posed by the teacher about their work as a group.

Component	Scoring Method	Weight
Individual research report (1,200 words)	College Board scored (individual score)	50% of 20% College Board Score
Team multimedia presentation and defense (8-10 minutes, + defense questions)	Teacher scored (group score)	50% of 20% College Board Score



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Performance Task 2 (PT2) Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation: 35% of AP Seminar Score

On or around Jan. 2 of each year, the College Board will release academic, cross-curricular source material (texts) focused on a theme or topic representing a range of perspectives from each of the following domains: Natural Sciences, Technology, Mathematics, Environment, Social Sciences, Politics, Economics, Psychology, Arts (Visual Arts, Music, Dance, Theater), Culture, Languages, Linguistics, History, Literature, Philosophy, Critical Theory/Criticism, Quantitative data, visual text, or multimedia will be represented in the texts.

Students read and analyze the provided stimulus materials to identify thematic connections among the sources and possible areas for inquiry. They compose a research question prompted by their analysis of the stimulus material. They then gather additional information through research; analyze, evaluate, and select evidence; and develop a logical, well-reasoned argument of 2,000 words. The final paper must refer to and incorporate at least one of the sources provided.

Students then deliver a 6–8 minute presentation of their findings. Finally, students defend their research process, use of evidence, and conclusion through oral responses to two questions asked by the teacher.

Component	Scoring Method	Weight
Individual written argument (2,000 words)	College Board scored	70% of 35% College Board Score
Individual multimedia presentation (6–8 minutes)	Teacher scored	20% of 35% College Board Score
Oral defense (two questions from the teacher)	Teacher scored	10% of 35% College Board Score

End-of-Course Exam (EOC, 2 Hours)

Component	Scoring Method	Weight
Understanding and analyzing an argument (3 short-answer questions); suggested time: 30 minutes	College Board scored	30% of 45% College Bd. Score
Evidence-based argument essay (1 long essay); suggested time: 90 minutes	College Board scored	70% of 45% College Bd. Score

*Find out more about each of these tasks on the course website [here](#).

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Computer - bring to class every day
- A binder with binder section dividers for this class (Class Assignments, Handouts, Warmups, Your Choice)
- Lined binder paper



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- Pencils and pens (black or blue only please)

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

The following are a few of the more notable expectations students will follow:

1. Be on time physically and mentally.
2. Treat others with respect at all times, especially when confronting ideas different than your own.
3. Be on task, and offer help to others if you finish early.
4. Keep your electronic devices hidden and silent unless the instructor approves use.
5. Adhere to the JFK expectations of academic integrity.*

AP CAPSTONE™ POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND FALSIFICATION OR FABRICATION OF INFORMATION

Participating teachers shall inform students of the consequences of plagiarism and instruct students to ethically use and acknowledge the ideas and work of others throughout their course work. The student's individual voice should be clearly evident, and the ideas of others must be acknowledged, attributed, and/or cited.

A student who fails to acknowledge the source or author of any and all information or evidence taken from the work of someone else through citation, attribution, or reference in the body of the work, or through a bibliographic entry, will receive a score of 0 on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Task. In AP Seminar, a team of students that fails to properly acknowledge sources or authors on the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that component of the Team Project and Presentation.

A student who incorporates falsified or fabricated information (e.g. evidence, data, sources, and/or authors) will receive a score of 0 on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Task. In AP Seminar, a team of students that incorporates falsified or fabricated information in the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that component of the Team Project and Presentation.

AP CAPSTONE POLICY ON USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Generative AI tools must be used ethically, responsibly, and intentionally to support student learning, not to bypass it. Accordingly, all performance tasks submitted in AP Seminar and AP Research must be the student's own work. While students are permitted to use generative AI tools consistent with this policy, their use is optional and not mandatory.

Students can use generative AI tools as optional aids for exploration of potential topics of inquiry, initial searches for sources of information, confirming their understanding of a complex text, or checking their writing for grammar and tone. However, students must read primary and secondary sources directly, perform their own analysis and synthesis of evidence, and make their own choices on how to communicate effectively both in their writing and presentations. It remains the student's responsibility to engage deeply with credible, valid sources and integrate diverse perspectives when working on the performance tasks. Students must complete interim "checkpoints" with their teacher to demonstrate genuine engagement with the tasks.

FINAL NOTE

Please note that after teaching 20 years I have learned that every group of students is different. With that in mind, I reserve the right to change policies indicated above at any time during the semester. Before these changes occur though I will be sure to communicate those changes with the students in advance, and announce those changes using Google Classroom and where possible, on my website.

I want to end saying what an honor it is teaching you this year. Please consider me your advocate here at Kennedy High School. You have a support system here at Kennedy as well as at home. Remember that and it will be a good year



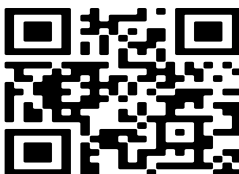
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AP Seminar Executive Summary

This executive summary of the Syllabus is meant for your binder. The full syllabus can be accessed on my website [here](#) under General Resources.. Please access and read closely. Once you and your parent have done so, please complete the Syllabus Verification form on Google Classroom where the full Syllabus can also be found.

- Keep this page in your binder and have it with you throughout the year.
- Be ready to take risks. We're all going to be wrong at some point this semester, and likely at multiple points. Let's grow from that.
- Your grade will be based on the standards related to this course alone. Formative assessments, which are practice-based, will not be graded.
- The Mock Performance Task Units represent 50% of your overall grade 1st semester, and 35% 2nd semester.
- Performance Task 1 (PT1) consists of an individual report (IRR), a team multimedia presentation (TMP) based on your collective inquiry. Semester 1 will end with that presentation.
- PT1 represents 20% of your College Board AP Seminar score, but your reflections and your OSAs are what will serve as your most essential pieces for your grades in the class.
- PT 2 consists of an individual written argument (IWA) using sources provided by the College Board along with an individual presentation (IMP) and oral defense (OD) based on your own inquiry.
- PT 2 represents 35% of your College Board AP Seminar score, but your reflections and your OSAs are what will serve as your most essential pieces for your grades in the class.
- Your Mock End of Course exams will represent 35% of your final grade both semesters.
- The EOC is made up of 2 parts; the first is an argument analysis piece, and the second is a written argument of your own using some of the stimulus sources provided to you from a set of 4 documents.
- It constitutes 45% of your College Board AP Seminar score. It also represents the last 2 of the 6 assessments that cover your composite AP Seminar score.
- Retakes (on summative assessments) are an integral part of the class. Take advantage of them and build your proficiency in all the required standards. Retakes will be offered on Wednesdays during A Lunch or before school at 7:30.
- The work will largely consist of preparing for the performance tasks. Some of that will need to be done outside of class, but I will provide extensive time in class as well to prepare.
- Some projects are group projects, so please be ready to work as part of a diverse team.
- Class assignments and some course material will be posted on Google Classroom, but many more resources beyond these to help better prepare you will be on the class website found [here](#).
- Late work will not be accepted without a completed Late/Incomplete form. You can find the Late Forms in Google Classroom. You get 3 per semester.
- **I do not accept Late Work for OSAs.** OSAs represent 15% of your grade 1st and 2nd semester.
- Please check your student email, and Google Classroom each evening. I also send messages through Remind frequently.
- Remember above all, that I am your advocate here, but in order to fight for you, I need you to be open with me about how I can best do that. We're part of a team.

Again, please fill out the Syllabus Verification Form on Google Classroom to ask any questions or express any concerns about the course. You can also email me anytime at brett-williams@scusd.edu or call me at 916-395-5090 Ext. 506304.



Scan the QR code to access the full class syllabus.