



## ADVANCED PLACEMENT EUROPEAN HISTORY

### Studying and Review Best Practices

#### Overview

In order to maximize your efficiency in this course, you need to remember a few things:

1. This course is written at the college sophomore level and designed for high school seniors; you are sophomores, so this will challenge you. That's a good thing; it's how you grow.
2. You will have to work and work consistently. This course has too much information for you to cram at the last minute and still do well. Cramming is ineffective because you don't actually learn anything, most of the knowledge you acquire is not converted to short-term or long-term memory from working memory because you brushed over it once and won't cover it again. Thus, it is worthless to you and you will have to put in even more effort to re-learn the same things for the final and/or unit exams.
3. The reading is absolutely required. The content goes too far in-depth on a number of different topics for you to get all of it in class, that's why there is also reading assigned.
4. If you are covering the content for the first time that's called "learning" not "reviewing." Don't think you can pass off trying to do all of the reading at once right before as "studying" for a quiz or test; it will generally reflect on your grade.

#### Studying Tips

To get the most out of your studying, you'll want to do the following things each time you study:

1. **Do the assigned reading when it is assigned, not all at once.** The more times with sustained periods in-between that your brain processes the information, the better it is converted into long-term memory and becomes part of your knowledge base. This means you *actually* learn.
2. **Turn off your electronic devices.** We're used to having multiple levels of information bombarding us everywhere. In order to meaningfully study however, you will need to use your brain power not to process several things at once, but all of it on processing the information you are learning. This requires discipline, but is worth developing. Turn off and put away your cell phone. Turn off the television. Close your laptop.
3. **Do NOT listen to music with lyrics.** Really. Just don't. It's very simple cognitive science. When you read, you use the language-processing parts of your brain to fire messages between neurons and make connections to content that your brain is filing away so it can pull it up again later (learning). Listening to music with lyrics requires your brain to also use the language-processing functions it has to hear the music, *even if you aren't paying attention to it*. We process external stimuli all the time sub-consciously, that's part of how our brain works and has an evolutionary function (safety and survival). When you listen to music with lyrics, you absolutely prevent your brain from processing the information you are studying fully.
4. **Be careful about what other types of music you listen to.** Recent research indicates that not only do lyrics distract from the reading you do while studying (Nass, Stanford University), but that loud, fast music also distracts from your ability to study. (Schellenberg, University of Toronto) Music affects mood and takes cognitive power. You not only don't need it to study, it is actually usually harmful. If you must listen to music, choose even paced, classical music.
5. **Write notes on paper once then copy them again later.** Even if you like to take notes on a laptop, you need to close possible distractions (the internet, other programs, etc.) and take your notes on paper. Then, it's even more helpful if you copy them again or type them later so you re-process the information.