



Santa Rosa City Schools Course Proposal: AP Seminar

Proposal Submitted By: Scott Wallach and Jerry Deakins

Needs Statement: Discuss how this course fits into your Site and/or the District's goals. Attach minutes of meetings where this course was approved at site or district leadership meetings.

This course fits into both site and district goals.

At MCHS, [the graduate profile](#) includes the categories of Powerful Producer, Universal Citizen, Masterful Communicator, and Active Learner. Powerful Producer: AP Seminar requires students to work collaboratively in teams throughout the year. Students are expected to work well individually and together on long term projects that must meet specific checkpoints. Lastly, students must create high quality writing and presentations in order to pass the class and the AP Test.

Universal Citizen: In AP Seminar, students can choose to research topics that deal with social justice issues, local community issues, and issues facing the entire world. Students must also examine perspectives that are not their own.

Masterful Communicator: In order to be successful in this class students must be able to express themselves verbally and in written form at a high level. They must be able to build and then support their arguments using high level research.

Active Learner: AP Seminar requires students to make cross-curricular connections. Students must be adaptable to multiple major assessment types. One of the most important qualities of the course is critical thinking and reasoning.

AP Seminar also meets many of the goals set in the [SRCS Strategic Priorities](#).

Embrace: AP Seminar will allow students to achieve a higher level of academic achievement than was previously possible. This applies both to the skills they will learn as well as the diploma distinction after completing the AP Capstone program. AP Seminar is also an excellent course for a first time AP student. This course allows students the flexibility to take an AP course that is not in a specific content area.

Engage: One of the biggest values of this course is that it pushes students to do high level work in a group/team setting. Students will need to build relationships with each other and the teacher.

Empower: AP Seminar allows the teacher to steer the curriculum used to learn the necessary skills in whatever direction most interests the students. This empowers them to be excited about the content they learn and take ownership of the material.

[Social Science Department Minutes](#)

[Advisory Council Meeting Minutes \(Site Level\)](#)

Overview: 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. AP Seminar is the first of two required courses of the AP Capstone program. AP Capstone is a diploma program from College Board that is built on AP Seminar and AP Research. Students who complete both courses and pass four other AP tests can obtain the AP Capstone distinction for their diploma.

Graduation Requirements: Specify which requirement is met.(High School only)

Elective Course

UC a-g Requirements: Specify which requirement is met. (High School only)

B-English

Explain the rationale for course addition or modification. How does this fit in with district/site goals? Is this course replacing a current course, which course is it replacing and why? Will this course require new sections? Be explicit.

This course would be a brand new course to the district and our site. It would not replace any other courses and would serve as an elective. This would be the first of two courses in the AP Capstone program. This course would require a new section.

This course is being proposed in an effort to better serve our student population. Only two other schools in Sonoma County offer the AP Capstone program (AP Seminar and AP Research). MCHS would be the third. In 2024, 436 MCHS students took at least one AP test. This accounts for roughly 25% of our entire student population. In total 996 AP tests were taken. In 2024, 84 graduating MCHS students (26%) had passed five or more AP exams. Past data fits with this trend. College Board considers MCHS a “Gold” school. The only element that MCHS does not meet to achieve the highest rank (Platinum) is in the area of the percentage of students who take at least one AP course. Currently MCHS is at 73% and needs to be at 80%. Adding AP Seminar (and AP Research) would give an additional option for students. Adding this course (and the AP Research course the following year) would allow our many students who take multiple AP classes to qualify for the AP Capstone distinction on their diploma. Only about 20,000 students nationwide achieve this honor each year. This course (and AP Research) will help keep enrollment up at MCHS as it is a desirable distinction to earn.

Additionally, this course will enable the students who take it to have a higher level understanding of research methods, critical thinking and reasoning, argumentation, and collaboration. College Board reports that completing the AP Capstone program (which AP Seminar is the first stage of), “is a powerful indicator of college readiness on a student’s transcript and helps students stand out

to colleges in the application process”. College Board also reports that, “Research has found that students who take AP Capstone courses are more likely to persist in college and earn higher first-year college GPAs”.

Explain the measurable learning outcomes

Students will...

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- develop an understanding of ethical research practices.
- 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.
- 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.

Course Description (To be used in the course catalog)

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.

<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap-seminar-course-and-exam-description.pdf>

Detailed Course Design

(Course design should include the objectives, activities, assessments, and standards to be addressed in this course.)

Course Overview:

This course is organized around five “Big Ideas”

Big Idea #1: Question and Explore

Inquiry and investigation begin when students encounter information about ideas, complex issues and problems that stimulates their intellectual curiosity. They then continue the research process by developing a critical question about one or more of those complex issues or ideas. Seeking answers to such questions requires exploration of numerous, often competing perspectives; the context surrounding those perspectives; and the reliability and credibility of the perspectives. Through this exploration, students begin to develop their own perspectives, rather than simply accept those of others. They consider the purpose of their research — what is supposed to be achieved and why. Ideally, they also develop additional questions that lead to further inquiry. The intrinsic value of asking and answering questions cannot be overstated. Giving students the opportunity to dig deeper and feed their curiosity makes for meaningful discoveries and discussions.

Essential Questions:

- How does the context of a problem or issue affect how it is interpreted or presented?
- How might others see the problem or issue differently?
- What questions have yet to be asked?
- What voices or perspectives are missing from my research?
- What do I want to know, learn, or understand?
- How does my research question shape how I go about trying to answer it?
- What information do I need to answer my question?
- What keywords should I use to search for information about this topic?

Big Idea #2: Understand and Analyze

Developing understanding starts with comprehension of the concepts and perspectives under examination. Being able to summarize by identifying and explaining the salient ideas in a text is foundational. When students summarize and explain an author’s perspective to others, they are building understanding. Students must comprehend a perspective or argument in order to be able to analyze it. That analysis — including consideration of the author’s point of view and purpose, the reasoning and details the author selects, develops, and conveys, and the way the author chooses to situate those details — in turn leads to greater understanding of the topic or concept being explored. Students evaluate the validity of an argument by examining the strength of the line of reasoning and the quality of the evidence the author uses. This level of understanding allows students to recognize the implications and predict the consequences of an argument.

Essential Questions:

- What strategies will help me comprehend a text?
- What is the argument’s main idea and what reasoning does the author use to develop it?
- Why might the author view the issue this way?
- What biases may the author have that influence his or her perspective?
- Does this argument acknowledge other perspectives?
- How do I know if a source is trustworthy?
- What are the implications of these arguments?
- How does this conclusion impact me and my community? Or my research?

Big Idea #3: Evaluate Multiple Perspectives

Understanding the complexity of an issue, idea, or problem requires students to compare and contrast different perspectives. These multiple perspectives, which may support, oppose, compete with, or otherwise vary from one another, come together to create the conversation on the issue. Students must consider the biases and assumptions behind those perspectives in order to evaluate their relevance and importance in the conversation. Evaluating multiple perspectives and arguments allows students to better understand the complexities of an issue or topic.

Essential Questions:

- What patterns or trends can be identified among the arguments about this issue?
- What are the implications and/or consequences of accepting or rejecting a particular argument?
- How can I connect the multiple perspectives? What other issues, questions, or topics do they relate to?
- How can I explain contradictions within or between arguments?
- From whose perspective is this information being presented, and how does that affect my evaluation?

Big Idea #4: Synthesize Ideas

Once enough information is gathered and evaluated, students synthesize their accumulated knowledge, emerging ideas, and perspectives to form conclusions of their own. In order to situate their perspectives within the larger conversation, students must consider other perspectives and points of view. Strong arguments have a clear purpose and are grounded in a logical line of reasoning supported by carefully chosen and relevant evidence. Effective arguments analyze the material and develop a perspective on it. Information from other sources should not stand in for students' own thinking. The goal is for students to think critically about the information and then add to, not simply repeat, the ideas of others. Building arguments on the ideas of others recognizes and acknowledges their perspectives while also establishing one's unique voice in the conversation.

Essential Questions

- How do I connect and analyze the evidence in order to develop an argument and support a conclusion?
- What line of reasoning and evidence would best support my argument? Is my reasoning logical?
- Are there other conclusions I should consider?
- What am I taking for granted? How do I acknowledge and account for my own biases and assumptions?
- What is the best way to acknowledge and attribute the work of others that was used to support my argument?
- How can I avoid committing plagiarism?

Big Idea #5: Team, Transform, and Transmit

Collaboration, communication, and reflection are skills that provide opportunities for students to develop their learning. When collaborating, students draw upon their own strengths and the strengths of teammates to achieve a common goal. An argument is effectively communicated when its purpose is clear, it is tailored to a specific audience and context, and it is conveyed through a medium appropriate and appealing to the intended audience. Adhering to standard language conventions and engaging delivery techniques establishes a writer's or speaker's credibility with his or her audience. Whether working alone or in a group, students reflect on their work and learning processes, which can lead to personal growth as well as even more effective inquiry, learning, and collaboration.

Essential Questions

- How can I best appeal to and engage my audience?
- What is the best medium or genre through which to engage my audience?
- What common misconceptions might my audience have?
- How might I adapt my argument for different audiences and situations?
- How might my communication choices affect my credibility with my audience?
- What contributions can I offer to a team?
- What is the benefit of revision?
- How can I benefit from reflecting on my own work?

AP Seminar Assessment Overview

- **Performance Task #1-Team Project and Presentation:** Students work in teams of three to five to identify, investigate, and analyze an academic or real-world problem or issue. Each team designs and/or considers options and evaluates alternatives; develops a multimedia presentation to present the argument for their proposed solution or resolution; and provides an oral defense to questions posed by the teacher.
 - Individual Research Report (1,200 words): Individually, students investigate their assigned approach, perspectives, or lens on the issue or topic of the team research question. Each student presents his or her findings and analysis to the group in a well-written individual report that:
 - identifies the area of investigation and its relationship to the overall problem or issue;
 - summarizes, explains, analyzes, and evaluates the main ideas and reasoning in the chosen sources;
 - identifies, compares, and interprets a range of perspectives about the problem or issue; and
 - cites all sources used and includes a list of works cited or bibliography.
 - Team Multimedia Presentation: The team develops an 8–10 minute presentation that presents a convincing argument for their proposed solutions or resolutions. The team should ensure the claims made are supported by evidence which should be attributed or cited (orally or visually). They should ensure they have considered different perspectives and the limitations and implications of their proposed solutions or resolutions. The presentation and the media used to enhance the presentation should consider audience, context, and purpose.
- **Performance Task #2-Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation:** College Board's AP Program will annually release cross-curricular stimulus material (texts) representing a range of perspectives focused on a single theme. Students read and analyze these stimulus materials to identify thematic connections among them and possible areas for inquiry. Their inquiry must be based on a thematic connection between at least two of the stimulus materials. Students then compose a research question of their own; conduct research; analyze, evaluate, and select evidence to develop an argument; and present and defend their conclusions. The final paper must integrate at least one of the provided stimulus materials as part of the response.
 - Individual Written Argument: Students read and analyze the provided stimulus materials to identify thematic connections among them and possible areas for inquiry. Their inquiry must be based on a thematic connection between at least two of the stimulus materials. Students then compose a research question prompted by their analysis of the stimulus materials; 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 integrate at least one of the stimulus materials as part of the response.

- Individual Multimedia Presentation: Each student develops a 6- to 8-minute presentation to convey their perspective and present their conclusions from their individual written argument. Students should use and attribute, either orally or visually, evidence to support their claims and situate their perspective in a larger context, rather than merely summarizing their research. The presentation and the media used to enhance the presentation should consider audience, context, and purpose.
- **Performance Task #3-End of Course Exam**
 - During the AP Exam administration window, students will take the AP Seminar End-of-Course Exam. The exam consists of four items (three short-answer and one essay question). The three short-answer questions assess analysis of an argument in a single source or document. The essay question assesses students' skills in synthesizing and creating an evidence-based argument.

Budget- budget figures must be included even if they are an estimate.

Projected Costs	Start-up	Ongoing
Personnel (Not to include classroom instructor unless a new section is needed)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Instructional Material Supplies per student (textbooks, software, etc.)	40 copies of <i>The Bedford Researcher</i> . \$57.88 per copy, \$2315.20	\$0.00
Services (training, equipment maintenance, contracts, etc.)	\$0.00 AP Seminar training can be funded through each specific site council.	\$0.00
Capital Outlay (remodeling, technology, etc.)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Projected Costs	\$2315.20	\$0.00

Instructional Materials- must include an estimate for new materials even if none have been selected. Place in the chart above.

Type	Publisher	Title	ISBN	Author	Copyright	# Have/Need
Textbook	Bedford/St. Martin's	<i>The Bedford Researcher (8th Edition)</i>	978-1319 414030	Mike Palmquist	2023	Have 0 Need 40

Funding Source(s) for Costs and Instructional Materials

Grants (indicate specific grant and grant timeline)	
Categorical Funds (include related programs)	
Career Technical Education (must be for an approved CTE course)	
Department Funds	
Other (be specific)	

District Principal Review and Approvals:

Principals' Signatures	Site	Approved / Not Approved
	Elsie Allen High School	
<i>Amy Wiese</i>	Maria Carrillo High School	Approved
<i>April Santos</i>	Montgomery High School	Approved
<i>Andrea Correia</i>	Piner High School	Approved
<i>Donna Garibaldi</i>	Ridgway High School	Approved
<i>Monica Fong</i>	Santa Rosa High School	Approved

District Department Chair Review and Approvals:

Department Chair Signatures	Site	Approved / Not Approved
<i>Mike Charpiot</i>	Elsie Allen High School	Approved
<i>Jerry Deakins</i>	Maria Carrillo High School	Approved
<i>Matt Hillestad</i>	Montgomery High School	Approved
<i>Sean Sutherland</i>	Piner High School	Approved
<i>Jordan Lewis</i>	Ridgway High School	Approved
<i>Ashley Bell</i>	Santa Rosa High School	Approved

