**Latin American Studies Course Description and Syllabus**

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Eagle Rock Jr./Sr. High School

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Dear Students, Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

 I would like to welcome you and your child to my Latin American Studies class. My name is Brian McGuire and I will do everything in my power to ensure that your child has a successful and fulfilling school year. Latin American Studies is a one semester course.

**Course Overview**

**Program:** Latin American Studies is taken by all ninth-grade students to fulfil requirements for Social Studies in that grade.

**Latin American Studies Class Size:** 35-45 students.

**Course Design:** Latin American Studies is a one-semester academic course with an emphasis on Latin American history and culture. The course relies heavily on historical texts, as well as on primary source documents, historical maps, and outside readings. Students are required to participate in class and to demonstrate the academic skill of notetaking from both class discussions and assigned readings. Students will be evaluated by means of objective examinations, written-work, individual and group projects and presentations. Historical writing in the form of essays and document-based questions is a specific focus of this course.

**Course Themes:** The Latin American Studies course revolves around four themes that identify broad patterns and processes that explain change and continuity over time. The four themes are:

1. Pre-Colombian civilizations
2. European conquest of the Americas
3. Independence movements
4. Revolution and change

**Grade Policy:** Every assignment/activity is worth points. The length and difficulty of the assignment determine the point value assigned. Letter grades will be assigned according to the following grade scale. Students are expected to participate in all class discussions and activities and to come to class prepared to do so each day. I use a weighted scale of grading. Homework, classwork, projects and participation make up 50% of your grade. Quizzes, tests and the final exam make up the other 50%. In other words, it is imperative that you do your daily work, and your assessments will be the proof of your learning.

# Grade Scale

100-90% = A

89-80% = B

79-70% = C

69-60% = D

59-0% = Fail

**Classroom Assignments**

1. Textbooks: Your student will be assigned a textbook for this class. This text should be kept covered at all times with a book cover of some type. Students are required to bring the text to class everyday.
2. Homework: Homework will be assigned out of the textbook each week. On average we will cover one chapter every two days of class. Homework typically consists of reading the text and taking notes/outlining the charter.
3. Maps: Geography is an integral part of history; an understanding of where events took place and where things are is essential to do well in this course as well as the AP World History Exam. Accordingly, students will receive frequent map based assignments.
4. Tests: Chapter tests are typically given once or twice every week. Chapter tests usually consist of 20-30 multiple-choice questions.
5. Unit Exams: The AP World History course contains five units of study. A comprehensive examination will be given at the completion of each unit.
6. Notes: Students are required to take and keep notes in this class. These notes are to consist of an outline of the information covered in the text as well as notes over the topics covered in class. The notes from each chapter are due in class on the day of the chapter test.
7. Essays: Written communication is an essential part of the work of historians and as such the written portion of the AP World History Exam is worth half of the total points possible. For both of these reasons, students will be assigned frequent essay assignments during this course. Every 1-2 weeks students can expect an essay assignment. All of the essays assigned will conform to one of the three essay types found on the AP World History Exam. These three essay types are Document Based Questions, Change-Over-Time Questions, and Comparison Questions.
8. Projects: During the course of the school year, students will be asked to complete both independent and group projects. Projects may consist of individual or group presentations, short written reports, or even posters. Instructions for each project will be provided and discussed in class.

**Policies and Procedures**.

**ATTENDANCE:** Poor attendance interferes with student learning. Therefore, it is imperative that students attend class every day. If they are absent, they’ll need to give me a PRC (permit to re-enter class) as soon as they walk into the classroom. If the student does not have a PRC, they will not be allowed to stay in class, Leaving the classroom to retrieve a PRC will result in an unexcused tardy. Students, remember that it is your responsibility to have your PRC. For every three unexcused tardies, students will receive a “U” on their progress report that will NOT be removed all semester. A student is considered tardy if he/she is not in his/her seat and ready to work when the tardy bell rings. If a student is participating in sports and an assignment or test is due on a particular day, they are required to give me that assignment on the day due before their game/meet. They must also take the test PRIOR to the other students. If a student is absent due to an illness, they must find out what they missed and turn it in with their PRC on the day they return to class.

**MISSED WORK POLICY:** Students will be allowed to make up any missed assignments that were due on the day(s) that the student was absent. However, a student has 1 day (the day you return from an absence) to request missed work from the teacher. If the student doesn't request the missing work within the allotted time frame (1 day), his/her grade will become O for the missed work. It is the student's responsibility to find out what he/she has missed. The students will be given a reasonable amount of time by the teacher to make up the missed work. If a student is **truant,** he/she **will not** be allowed to make up any work.

**LATE WORK POLICY:** An assignment is considered late when a student submits his/her work after the teacher has collected the work. Late work will not be accepted. If you need to be absent when an assignment is due, please make arrangements with a sibling or friend to deliver your work to the teacher. If there is a serious emergency or medical crisis, please contact the teacher as soon as possible so that special arrangements can be made. There will be no penalties for these special circumstances.

**ELECTRONICS POLICY:** No electronic devices are allowed at any time. If I see one, it will be confiscated until the end of the day. If this happens three times, you will receive a “U” on your report card.

**MATERIALS POLICY:** Students must bring their materials every day. Once again, they will receive a “U” on their report card for every third time that they don’t have their materials.

**FOOD AND DRINK POLICY:** No food or drinks are allowed at any time. A bottle of water is the only thing allowed. Three offenses will result in a “U” on the report card. The selling of food is strictly forbidden and is against school rules. If a student is selling food he/she will be reported to the administration.

If at any time you require my assistance, I can be reached via the internet at the following address: bmm8226@lausd.net

Sincerely,

Mr. Brian McGuire