

Humanities Mission Statement

January 2021

The Humanities Team's goal is to diversify the upper level AP courses. The team envisions Humanities level English and History classes to be for students who possess the ability to think critically but who come in with less exposure to or less success in traditional Honors/Advanced Academics environments. Humanities will provide an alternative path towards success in upper-level advanced courses classes with additional supports.

One history teacher and one English teacher are paired together to lesson plan, and at times, teach and grade together. As a result of this pairing, the team has experienced how powerful relationship building has been in these classes. The paired format of the Humanities classes allows for the creation of an academic community that reaches outside an individual classroom. It also creates a culture of support in which students see teachers working together to get to know their students and to understand how to challenge and support each individual student within the high expectations of an honors class. In this environment, we can fill in the traditional academic skills and shift the student's academic identity, which will increase their chances of succeeding in upper level classes.

When a student enrolls in Humanities, that means he is enrolling in both English and history honors courses. A teacher must recommend a student for this course to be enrolled. This can happen by either the teacher speaking with the student or vice-versa; if a student shows interest, and his current teacher thinks he will be a good fit, then a recommendation to his counselor can be made.

The ideal Humanities student is not a student who has been consistently enrolled in honors/advanced classes or programs going back through middle and elementary school. We want to encourage students from underrepresented demographics to recognize and grow their potential.

Students who have disabilities that impede reading and writing skills also have found success in the Humanities course. Students with dyslexia or dysgraphia, for example, benefit similar to those who may need support in filling traditional academic skills. Struggling to read or write due to a severe disability may deter students from taking an honors or AP course, but the support elements of the course help with this. At the same time, the class will allow for the student's critical thinking skills to come through and not feel as hindered by the disability.

Types of students Humanities is looking for:

1. Non-advanced academic (AA) background with AA potential (on-level or first-time honors students).
 - a. Many students who fall in this category are Black or Hispanic.
2. SPED or ELL profile with strong critical thinking skills
3. AVID students

If you have any questions, feel free to contact any of the following parties:

- Kevin McMahon, Director of Student Services
- Kelly Ashton, English Department Chair
- Brian Bishop, History Department Chair
- Colin O'Grady, English Humanities teacher
- Heather O'Grady, History Humanities teacher
- James Dahlgren, History Humanities teacher