

AP EUROPEAN HISTORY

Mr. Sean Moser – St. Paul's School - Grade 10

SUMMER READING STUDENT INFORMATION

OVERVIEW

In Advanced Placement European History we will examine the origin and development of European nations from the peopling of the region to the advent of the European Union. We will be studying the political, social, economic, intellectual, and religious ideas that have contributed to the growth of Western Civilization and the world. In preparation for this rigorous course, you have been given a summer reading assignment that includes assessment comprising a part of your first quarter grade.

OBJECTIVES

1. To acquaint you with the level and rigors scholarship required to succeed in AP History;
2. To enable you to become familiar with some of the seminal ideas which have shaped Western thought and civilization;
3. To maintain and develop skills in the analysis of ideas throughout the summer months;
4. To sharpen study and critical thinking skills to meaningfully and effectively use historical data to support one's position;
5. To stay sharp in preparing for the AP European History Course and Exam...

HOW TO READ...

Your summer reading for AP European History requires you to read two books. The purpose of this handout is to acquaint you with *how* to read those books in order to properly prepare for their incorporation into class in the fall.

BOOK FROM LIST ONE

The first book, being an overview of Western philosophy, requires careful reading and should prompt you to take thoughtful notes on each of the various philosophies, noting in particular how one philosophy builds on, responds to, or contradicts, prior philosophies.

1. *Total Truth*, Nancy Pearcey
2. *An Introduction to Philosophy*, Jacques Maritain
3. *Sophie's World: a Novel About the History of Philosophy*, Jostein Gaarder

SUMMARIZING SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

The book you choose from **List One** requires you to write a one-paragraph summary of **four** different schools of philosophical thought (you may choose any four from the list below), and to write a 1½ -2 page essay (using standard MLA format) analyzing a **fifth** from the same list. The list below attempts to collect under a few major headings the various terms used to label philosophical movements/schools of thought as they appear in the books in List One.

Whichever label best applies to your reading may be used.

- Sophism
- Platonism
- Aristotelianism

- Rationalism/Empiricism/Materialism
- Romanticism/Naturalism
- Existentialism
- Darwinianism/Evolutionary Philosophy/Nihilism

Your one-paragraph summaries should include:

1. The name of the philosophical school
2. The names of important philosophers (or popularizers of the philosophy) who contributed to its development or influence
3. The major tenets, or beliefs, of the philosophy, including its view of
 - a. origins (how things began)
 - b. present crisis (how things are now and how they got that way)
 - c. restoration (how the present crisis can be fixed)

ESSAY OF ANALYSIS

Your essay should include all of the elements listed above, as well as a thoughtful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the philosophy, and consideration of its impact on how people think and act. Consider, for example:

1. How satisfactorily does this philosophy answer the questions of origin, crisis, and restoration?
2. Has this philosophy proven to be durable, remaining viable over time?
3. Has this philosophy shown itself in the actions or ideals of important political figures or influential people? What has been the result of those actions or ideals?
4. Has this philosophy contributed to societal change – either positively or negatively?
5. How should we, as Christians, view this philosophy? Can it be embraced? Are there points of agreement, even if it cannot be accepted wholesale? Are there dangers inherent in the philosophy? What are they and how should Christians combat or deal with the dangers? Do not simply list out answers to these questions, but write a carefully-planned essay, which addresses the questions above as a *part* of your analysis. Also, if you read *Total Truth*, you will need to be sure to analyze your chosen school of thought for yourself and not simply parrot whatever Nancy Pearcey may have to say about it.

BOOK FROM LIST TWO

The second book is a meaningful work of fiction/non-fiction from one of the eras covered in class. You will be tested not only on the content (characters, plot, conflict, theme, *etc.*), but on your ability to analyze for yourself the validity and importance of the author's ideas.

1. *King Leopold's Ghost*, Adam Hochschild
2. *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens
3. *Candide*, Voltaire
4. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn

For example, in Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* there is more happening than simply a love story set in the French Revolution. What is Dickens' view of revolution in general? The French Revolution, in particular? Is England, in Dickens' view, better off than France? Why or why not? What role does *redemption* play in the novel? Who is redeemed and

how (and by *whom*)? Be able to answer such questions as these in well-written short essays, supporting your answers from the novel.

PLAGIARISM

Students may incorporate material into their work only when properly crediting the source. The guidelines for doing so are outlined in the MLA Handbook. This applies to work of any kind whether homework, test, essay, *etc.*, and includes material derived from books, articles, other students, the internet, software, multimedia, *etc.* The use or incorporation of any portion of another's work (published or unpublished, including websites, blogs, and essay "helpers," such as GradeSaver, Cliffs Notes, Spark Notes, *etc.*) without proper attribution is strictly prohibited and is considered cheating.

**SUMMARIES AND ESSAY ARE DUE THE BEGINNING OF school , sometime in AUGUST 2015