**Four Historical Periods of the AP European History Course**

This course is structured around the investigation of five course themes (refer to “Thematic Learning Objectives Handout) in the following four chronological periods.

**Historical Periods**

Period 1: c. 1450 to c. 1648

Period 2: c. 1648 to c. 1815

Period 3: c. 1815 to c. 1914

Period 4: c. 1914 to the present

**Overview of the Four Historical Periods**

Period 1: c. 1450 to c. 1648 is roughly the period between the Renaissance and the end of the Thirty Years’ War and includes the following concepts:

* Worldview shifts from one based on religious authority to one based on inquiry and observation of the natural world.
* Struggle for sovereignty within and among states resulted in varying degrees of centralization.
* Religious pluralism challenged the concept of a unified Europe.
* Europeans explored and settled overseas territories, encountering and interacting with indigenous populations.
* Commercial and agricultural capitalism increasingly shaped society and experiences of everyday life.

Period 2: c. 1648 to c. 1815 is the period between the end of the Thirty Year’s War and the fall of Napoleon, and includes the following concepts:

* Different models of political sovereignty affected the relationship among states and between states and individuals.
* The expansion of European commerce accelerated the growth of a worldwide economic network.
* The Scientific Revolution and the application of its methods to political, social and ethical issues, leading to an increased, but not unchallenged, emphasis on reason in European culture.
* The experiences of everyday life were shaped by demographic, environmental, medical and technological changes.

Period 3: c. 1815 to c. 1914 is the period between the fall of Napoleon and the eve of World War I and includes the following concepts:

* The Industrial Revolution spread from Great Britain to the continent, where the state played a greater role in promoting industry.
* The experiences of everyday life were shaped by industrialization, depending on the level of industrial development in a particular location.
* The problems of industrialization provoked a range of ideological, governmental and collective responses.
* European states struggle to maintain international stability in an age of nationalism and revolutions.
* A variety of motives and methods led to the intensification of European global control and increased tension among the Great Powers.
* European ideas and culture expressed a tension between objectivity and scientific realism on ne hand, and subjectivity and individual expression on the other.

Period 4: c. 1914 to the Present is the period between the onset of World War I to the present and includes the following concepts:

* Total war and political instability in the first half of the 20th century gave way to a polarized state order during the Cold War and eventually efforts at transnational union.
* The stresses of economic collapse and total war created internal conflicts within European states and created conflicting conceptions of the relationship between the individual and the state, as demonstrated in the ideological battle between liberal democracy, communism and fascism.
* During the 20th century, diverse intellectual and cultural movements questioned the existence of objective knowledge, the ability of reason to arrive at truth, and the role of religion in determining moral standards.
* Demographic changes, economic growth, total war, disruptions of traditional social patterns, and competing definitions of freedom and justice altered the experiences of everyday life.