



African American History Courses Debut In CCSD

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This year, for the first time, Creek is offering a semester-long CP African American Studies course. The College Board is currently developing an AP African American Studies class that will likely be available to all high schools by 2025.

The idea of a CP African American Studies program arrived at Creek when US and World History teacher Marc Ramsey did, in 2020. Ramsey is now the first and only CP African American Studies teacher at Creek.

"[During] my interview with Principal Silva, he asked me 'What can you do? What makes you unique? Why should I hire you?'" Ramsey said. "And one

thing I mentioned was: 'I'm going to bring an African American class to this school because you don't have one.'"

Two years in the making, the CP course was finally approved in February 2022.

Other history courses touch on the subject of African American history, but don't go into much detail, according to Ramsey. As a result, many students go into CP African American History with very little background knowledge.

"A lot of what we talk about can be very disturbing and shocking, and it catches them off guard sometimes, but that's a good thing," Ramsey said. "Not that I'm here to shock or surprise them, but they're learning and they're internalizing it."

The AP course would go into even more depth. Accompanied by the rigor of taking a weighted course, students will have the opportunity to

AMPLIFYING AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY: Marc Ramsey teaches his CP African American History class. Ramsey himself pushed for the course to be a part of Creek's curriculum. "As soon as I learned [Creek] didn't have this class I was like: 'They should have one.'"

PHOTO BY WRYN DUEPRE
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY NICK RUI

I learn about a range of topics.

"It's really not a history class. They're gonna be talking about history, they're talking about culture, they're talking about religion, music - there's a lot of other things that are going into this." Social Studies Coordinator Michael Kraft said.

Some students around the country don't have to wait for the course to be officially implemented to take the class. According to the Washington Post, 60 high schools nationwide, including Overland, are providing a demo version this year where students enrolled can take the course.

Nathan Umetsu, who teaches the AP course at Overland, says the class shines light on African American identity rather than solely focusing on history.

"My very first week with them, we read an article by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and the article was titled '42 Million Ways to be Black.' [Gates] made a very thoughtful argument about not defining African American or black society by just one word," Umetsu said. "There's 42 million African Americans living in America right now so there are 42 million different ways to be black."

Quincy Evans, an Overland student en-

rolled in the demo course, feels that the course explores sides of African American history that he hadn't been previously exposed to.

"I had a lot of [background knowledge] due to me being African American and just the knowledge that my pops and ma would give me," Evans said. "I learned some things that I hadn't learned before."

In addition to teaching the course material, Umetsu intends to integrate discussions in his class that students can relate to on a personal level.

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*Nathan Umetsu
AP African American Studies
Teacher at Overland*

"With [AP] African American Studies, you're able to take that history course and dive a little bit deeper into it, have more connection with it," Umetsu said. "You can connect it with what we're studying right now, you can connect it with what happened in recent history, you can connect it with family events or a family tradition."

Before the course becomes official, the College Board has to undergo another round of demos next year involving approximately 150 schools.

"They're doing this year's pilot demo, getting feedback back from the teachers and classes they did this year, and then they will write the test based on that feedback," Kraft said.

Once more information about the course is disclosed, the administration can vote on whether or not to offer the course at Creek in the fall of 2024.

New AP Course Unit Overview

Overland teacher Nathan Umetsu is teaching the pilot version of the AP African American Studies course this school year. These are the topics Umetsu is covering.

Unit 1: African Empires



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Unit 2: Transatlantic Slave Trade

Unit 3: The Enslavement Process



AMERICAN ANTISLAVERY SOCIETY

Unit 4: Immigration & Emigration

Unit 5: The Civil War



JSTOR

Unit 6: Civil Rights Era