



Advanced Placement

What is Advanced Placement?

Any class with the title of Advanced Placement is a course recognized by the College Board as being one that emulates the conditions of a first year university class. Therefore, when students enroll in AP courses, they can expect to be working with material that encourages the development of critical reading, writing, and thinking skills needed for success in college and the

contemporary work world.

What are the benefits of AP?

The major benefit of taking AP is that it exposes students to college level content at an earlier age. It has been statistically proven that students who have enrolled in AP courses are more likely to be successful in college.

Another reason why AP is beneficial is because it can help save money on college tuition. If a student takes

the AP exam and achieves a qualifying score, he or she may be able to receive college credit for his or her success.

Lastly, college admissions prefer to see students challenge themselves with AP coursework. Adding at least one AP course to a student's transcript may help in obtaining acceptance to a student's college of choice.

Who is Eligible for Advanced Placement?

Anyone is eligible for AP; that is, anyone who is *interested* and *willing* to do the work. At BVT, we support the College Board's vision of *open enrollment*. Sophomore students at both the Honors and College Prep levels are encouraged to carefully consider making the jump to AP starting in their junior year. Furthermore, freshmen are also encouraged to begin considering AP even though it is their first year within the walls of the school.

Students do not need a teacher recommendation for the course in order to decide to take it; however, professional recommendations should be taken into consideration when coming to a final decision about enrollment. What is most important is that students who decide to take AP need to want to be

there.

The AP staff is specially trained to help make the transition from College Prep courses to AP as easy as possible.

Prerequisites for Science and Math

In order to take the Math and Science Advanced Placement course offerings, students should be aware that there are certain prerequisites which must be met. If a student is interested in taking one of these courses and does not have all of the prerequisites, he/she should contact the curriculum coordinator to discuss course options.

AP Course	Prerequisites
AP Physics	Algebra II Physics I, II
AP Biology	Chemistry (1 Year) Biology I, II
AP Calculus	Honors PreCalc

What if AP isn't for Me?

If a student enrolls in AP and realizes that, after putting forth his or her best effort, it is too hard to adjust to the class, he or she may be permitted to drop the course. Usually a conference with the student, instructor, guidance counsellor, and curriculum coordinator is arranged to discuss the move. At BVT, we realize that AP isn't for everyone, but we really want to encourage our students to at least try it. This is because most will realize they can complete the work at a satisfactory level and gain a valuable educational experience.

Advanced Placement Grading: How Does it Work?

The common grading curve is based around the understanding that a C, numerically translated as a 75%, is considered average. In relation to AP grades, if a student receives a C, he or she is essentially being labeled as an average college thinker. Because most students are not entirely at the college level beginning in their junior year, a grade in the mid-to-high 70's, should not be looked down upon. This is not to say that students should not strive

to achieve grades higher than a C, but it should be known that getting the A or B that most students are used to is more difficult in the AP setting.

How does an AP grade translate on a transcript?

The actual number and letter grade a teacher assigns a student will be exactly what is presented on a transcript. However, it should be noted that, due to academic grade weights, any grade in AP will be scaled 10 points higher in terms of the effect it will have

on a student's GPA.

For most students, and seemingly most parents, the number grade a student receives is considered more important than what is being said about a student's progression in developing skills. If a student is working hard, learning new skills, and challenging him or herself, then this is what should be celebrated as an accomplishment.

What About the AP Exam?

All students who would like to receive AP credit on their high school transcripts are required to take the AP exam that corresponds with their course. This is an important part of the AP experience because taking the exam is another way of helping students prepare for the college atmosphere of timed exams in an arena setting.

It does cost money to register and

Opening Doors to Student Success

Valley Tech first began offering Advanced Placement courses in 2008 with its introduction of AP Calculus and AP U.S. History. Since then, the school has been devoted to the continuous development of its AP curriculum; BVT now offers AP courses in the four major content areas--English, History, Math, and Science--and is looking to add more. Each year AP student enrollment sets new records, and student achievement is greatly surpassing expectations.

Last year, Valley Tech students were given the goal of producing 12 qualifying scores (3 or greater) within the subjects of English, Math, and Science, and the student performance amounted to 19 qualifying scores. In conjunction with the 6 qualifying History scores, on the 2011 exam, 25 qualifying scores were obtained. The students at Valley Tech have been embracing the rigors of AP and have been succeeding.

Furthermore, participating in Advanced Placement courses has led many students to have added confidence when applying to colleges. Members of Valley Tech's AP program are now gaining admission to some of the top schools in the nation such as Vassar, Rensselaer, Boston University, and MIT. In recent history, one of Valley Tech's AP students was accepted to MIT and has been successful in her studies.

The benefits of enrolling in AP reach much further than just receiving college credit. Students develop confidence, critical thinking skills, good study habits, and an understanding of what it takes to be successful in the world outside the walls of Valley Tech.

take an AP exam; however, the English, Math, and Science exams are less expensive at BVT because of funding we receive through MMSI. To register and take any of these exams, students can expect to pay approximately 50 dollars. (*Note: This projected price is subject to annual funding and may change.*)

The History exam is not covered under the school's MMSI agreement,

Words From Our Students

Taking AP classes in high school is something I would encourage all students to seriously consider. The courses I've taken have definitely helped prepare me for college because, not only did they offer a legitimate mental challenge, but they also instilled a strong sense of confidence in me because I found I was actually able to succeed in an environment that demanded and expected more than any other classes I'd taken thus far. The AP classes I've taken have conditioned me to work independently and think about subjects on an intellectually deeper level, both of which are important skills for college life. The long and short term benefits of taking AP or college level classes in high school far outweigh any qualms that may exist.

-Caitlin Carrington

Having the opportunity to take the rigorous coursework offered by Valley Tech's AP curriculum (Biology, U.S. History, English Language & Literature) has tremendously developed my skills as a student. I am better prepared to tackle the challenges that await me in the college setting due to the guidance of my AP instructors and my academic dedication. In these classes I have been introduced to college level texts, writing techniques, and assignments that will give me an advantage as I continue in my studies. The best part is that I did not have to be prepared to take these AP courses; I just had to be willing to complete the tasks laid out before me.

-Alma Lopez

As a sophomore, Advanced Placement classes seemed daunting and worrisome, but I'm grateful I took on the challenge. Participating in AP Language as a junior in conjunction with AP Literature and AP Biology senior year, has changed my

and students signing up to take this exam can expect to pay approximately 80 dollars.

Lastly, students who may be on IEP's or 504's can apply for accommodations on the exam. Just because a student has a Special Education plan doesn't mean that he or she can't take the exam or course.

ability as a student in multiple positive ways. These classes illustrate the type of work load students need to adjust to in order to succeed in college. Each class also fosters higher-level thinking when teaching us to synthesize and evaluate content material. Being in AP classes has given me great opportunities to further my learning abilities and take a deeper look into significant subject material.

-Melissa Burdick

Signing up for AP classes, I was hoping for a challenge. What I found was something more along the lines of trying to run uphill in a pair of roller blades. There have been late nights spent constructing a perfect thesis or proving a law of physics, but by having these experiences in high school, where my teachers are ever present to aid and guide me, I have been prepared for that first year of college when I will be entirely on my own.

-Stephanie Rivard

Being involved in several Advanced Placement courses has helped me immensely in my preparation for college. I was enrolled in AP English Language & Composition my junior year, earning a B+ average for the year and a qualifying score of four on the AP Exam, and I am currently enrolled in four AP courses this year, my senior year. By being so heavily involved in Advanced Placement these last two years at Blackstone Valley Tech, I have grown so much academically and am much more prepared for what is to come at college. Because of these courses with such high expectations, I know what is necessary for me to succeed after high school.

-Robert Jordan



AP English

What is the difference in Advanced Placement Workload?

Due to the fact that AP English is supposed to be the equivalent of a first year college course, the workload is adjusted accordingly. Students should expect to have homework every night; however, this work is mostly reading intensive. The reading is usually then utilized in classroom exercises the following day in order to assess a student's understanding and develop skills.

The prior overview of the workload may seem familiar in that it seems similar to most other English classes. This is because, it is! AP English isn't

about having students complete voluminous amounts of work; it's about having students complete rigorous work. AP is not about more work; it's about hard work.

With this being said, students taking AP should expect to be exposed to new ways of looking at the constructs of language through different rhetorical and literary lenses and know that learning how to do this will require dedication.

Saturday Sessions

In order to further prepare students for the AP exam, three times a year,

students from Valley Tech join students from neighboring districts on Saturdays in order to receive additional test taking strategies. During the January session, students actually participate in a mock exam, thus exposing them to the exam before having to take the real one in May. Although students are not required to attend such sessions, they are encouraged to do so because of the benefits additional study time offers.

What's the Difference Between the English Course Offerings?

AP English Language

AP Language and Composition is a course that explores the rhetorical constructs of predominately non-fiction prose. Students in this course are taught to analyze visual and verbal texts down to the smallest details in order to identify an author's purpose.

Furthermore, students are presented with a variety of strategies that help them organize their thoughts in order to promote clarity when constructing compositions.

AP English Literature

AP Literature and Composition is a course that explores the literary constructs of predominately fictional

works. Students of this course are taught to analyze the effects that literary strategies have on specific works as a whole.

Similar to AP Language, students are presented with a variety of strategies that help them organize their thoughts in order to promote clarity when constructing compositions.

Grading in AP English

Grading in AP English becomes more stringent as the year goes on. Many students need time to adapt to the rigor of the class and new material, so this is taken into account during the first term. Students are expected to develop their skills over the year, but should they not work toward continually progressing, what earned them a B+ in term one, will not earn them the same grade in terms two or three. The sliding grading scale can be viewed below:

T1	T2	T3
A-	B+	B
B	B-	C+

Current Instructors

AP Literature and Composition: Scott Diesenhaus

Mr. Diesenhaus has over 13 years of teaching experience at the high school level; over 12 of these years have been at Valley Tech. Before teaching high school, he gained experience teaching freshmen English at the University of Massachusetts (Dartmouth) where he also received his Master's Degree in English Education; he graduated with highest honors. He has completed over 45 hours of professional development focused on providing non-traditional AP students with quality AP instruction. He is currently instructing his first year of AP Literature and is excited about the prospects of his students' success.

AP Language and Composition: Timm Freitas

Before arriving at Valley Tech as an instructor, Mr. Freitas roamed the halls as one of its students. After graduating from BVT, he attended the University of Massachusetts (Dartmouth) and graduated with highest honors with a degree in Rhetorical Studies. He has completed over 90 hours of professional development focused on providing equal educational opportunities for non-traditional AP students. He is currently teaching his second year of AP Language, and based on last year's student success, he is incredibly optimistic about the future of the program.



AP Sciences

What is AP Biology?

The AP Biology course is designed to be the equivalent of a two-semester college introductory Biology course usually taken by Biology majors during their first year.

After showing themselves to be qualified on the AP Exam, some students, in their first year of college, are permitted to take upper-level courses in Biology or register for courses in which Biology is a prerequisite. Other students may use this course to fulfill the laboratory science general education

What is AP Physics?

The Physics B course includes topics in both classical and modern Physics. A knowledge of Algebra and basic Trigonometry is required for the course. The basic ideas of Calculus will be introduced in connection with physical concepts, such as acceleration and work. Understanding of the basic principles involved and the ability to apply these principles in solving problems are the major goals of the course. Consequently, the course utilizes guided inquiry and student-centered learning to foster the development of critical thinking skills. Physics B provides instruction in each of the following content areas: Newtonian mechanics, fluid mechanics, thermal physics, electricity and magnetism, waves and optics, and atomic and nuclear physics.

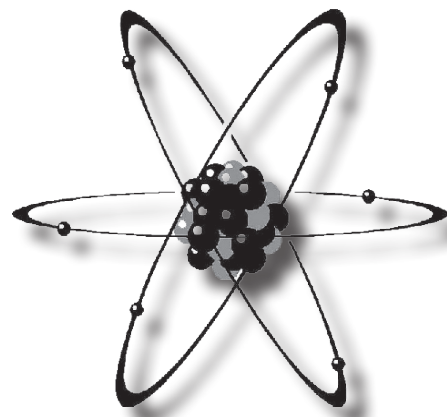
The Physics B course also includes a hands-on laboratory component comparable to introductory college-level physics laboratories, with a minimum of 12 student conducted laboratory investigations representing a variety of topics

requirement for their majors.

This course differs significantly from the typical introductory high school course in Biology in relation to the kind of textbook used, the range and depth in which topics are covered, the type of laboratory work that is completed by students, and the time and effort required for student achievement.

The AP Biology course is designed to be taken by students who have successfully completed Biology I and II and Chemistry during their

underclassman years. The course aims to provide students with the conceptual framework, factual knowledge, and analytical skills necessary to deal critically with the rapidly changing science of Biology.



covered in the course. Each student will complete a lab notebook or portfolio of lab reports.

Current Instructors

AP Biology: Dr. Phil Lemarbré

Dr. LeMarbré is in his 5th year as a science teacher at Blackstone Valley Tech. He graduated from Assumption College with a B.A. in Science, Worcester State College with an M.S. in Biology, and Boston University with a PhD in Cell Biology. As a teaching fellow, he instructed both Histology and Anatomy/Physiology labs at Boston University. Since 1980, Dr. LeMarbré has had varied careers in the fields of construction and operation of a large farm animal plasmapheresis laboratory (NVF Biologicals), General Contracting (PCA, Inc.), and computer animation (PCA Graphics). He and his wife have five children, five grandchildren and currently reside in Hopedale, MA.

AP Physics: Ray Lehner

Mr. Raymond Lehner has been teaching for 18 years, 13 of which have been at Blackstone Valley Tech. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Worcester State College in Mathematics, Physics, and Computer Science. He holds Massachusetts DESE certifications in Mathematics, Math/Science, and Physics at the high school level. In addition, he holds a Master's degree in Education from the University of New England. He was the valedictorian of his Master's program having achieved a 4.0 GPA. Before teaching in public schools, and up until the present day, he has worked as a flight instructor and commercial pilot. He and his wife currently own two aircraft that are accessible to the students of Valley Tech through the Blackstone Valley Tech Aviation Club.



AP Calculus

What is AP Calculus?

AP Calculus AB is offered to any student who has successfully completed Pre-Calculus. AP Calculus AB emulates the conditions of a first year college Calculus course through the study of properties of functions, graphs, limits, differential calculus, and integral calculus. There is a strong focus on the applications of these concepts and technology is used to help solve problems,

experiment, interpret results, and verify conclusions.

AP Calculus is a rigorous, fast-paced course, and students will find themselves challenged as they delve into mathematical concepts that are new and foreign to them. However, the sense of accomplishment and the college-level experiences they gain will be invaluable. In addition, students enrolled will prepare to take

the Advanced Placement AB Calculus Exam and seek college credit. Valley Tech, in partnership with Mass Bay Community College, is pleased to offer dual enrollment to students in the AP Calculus AB course. Students who earn a C or better in the AP Calculus course can earn college credit from Mass Bay Community College.

What is the Difference Between AP and Honors Calculus?

AP Calculus is designed for students who plan on going to college and would like to receive college credit, whereas the Honors Calculus course is designed for students who do not wish to earn college credit during high school. The workload in AP is similar to that of the Honors course, but in addition to covering the Honors Calculus curriculum, AP reinforces and reviews critical thinking strategies that are designed to help students adequately respond to the questions on the AP Calculus exam.

exam, three times a year students from Valley Tech join neighboring school districts on Saturdays to review concepts and test taking strategies that complement the AP Calculus course. These additional review days have been proven to lead to higher test scores on the actual exam.

It should be noted that there is no summer assignment for AP Calculus. Students are expected to be prepared on day 1 to start the curriculum that builds upon the concepts they learned in Pre-Calculus.

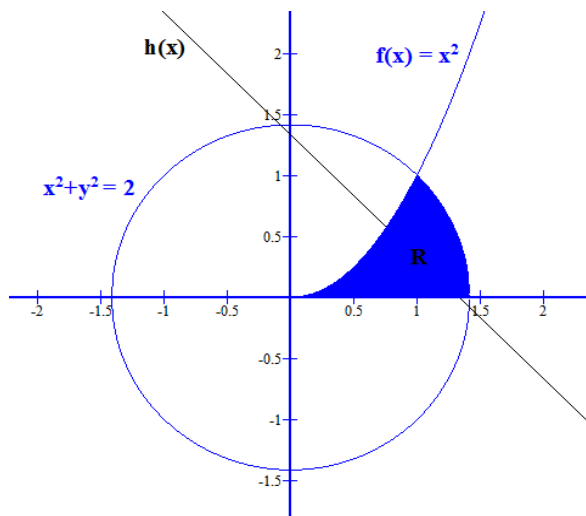
In order to further prepare for the AP



Current Instructor

AP Calculus: Brian Lehtinen

Mr. Lehtinen has been teaching for 8 years, all of them at Valley Tech. In addition to his tenure at Valley Tech, he is also an adjunct professor at Mass Bay Community College. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). While there, he was awarded the provost's MQP award in Mathematics for an outstanding Major Qualifying Project. His Master's degree in Mathematics for Educators was also earned at WPI, and he is currently working on a second Master's degree in Administration. Mr. Lehtinen was instrumental in starting the AP Calculus program at Valley Tech in 2008. He has completed over 100 hours of professional development focused on developing and implementing a quality AP Calculus program. He participated as a New England Association Schools and Colleges accreditation committee member at the Greater Lowell Vocational Technical High School visit in 2010. In addition to teaching, Mr. Lehtinen also coaches golf, ice-hockey, and boys' volleyball.





AP U.S. History

What is AP U.S. History?

History is more than a set of dates and facts to be memorized. History is an organic and ever-changing discipline, periodically discovering new evidence and revising old commonly held beliefs. It's not enough to learn history itself; one must learn from history the true essence of the human experience. This course is designed for that purpose.

The ultimate goal of this course is preparation for the AP Exam in the spring. Through this course, students will be provided with content, practical knowledge of U.S. history, practice in critical thinking activities, and experience in effective writing techniques that will better prepare them for not only the AP exam, but also their future educational areas. This

course is divided into periods of time and emphasizes themes throughout American history. This will be a rigorous course, but it will also be enjoyable. Students will be held to a high level of expectation. This course is designed to challenge students. Hard work and dedication will be essential to success.

What is the Difference Between AP U.S. History and Honors American Government?

There are a few areas in which this course differs from its Honors senior counterpart.

1. The Summer Assignment. Students at the Honors level are required to read one book and complete an exam on it within the first weeks of school. At the AP level, students are required to read three books and complete 3 critical thinking assignments. Assignments include a 100 question review, a 3-5 page essay, and a 20 entry journal tracing a historical theme. Each assignment is worth one test grade and is due on the first day of class.

2. The Pace. The AP course runs at a faster pace than the traditional class and requires self motivation. Due to the amount of material that must be covered, students are expected to keep up with course readings. The class does not contain a traditional lecture and notes component, but rather, a daily discussion and analysis piece. Events are outlined and evaluated through various primary sources and in class activities.

3. The Workload. The AP workload is heavier than that of a normal class. Students are expected to read anywhere from 2-4 chapters in a shop week and complete multiple assignments based on these chapters. In class assignments include weekly writing prompts, primary source analysis, multiple choice assessments, and debates.

4. The Document Based Question. Students are introduced to the DBQ within the first week of class. The DBQ is an essential part of the AP exam. Students begin by learning the components of the DBQ and how to structure an appropriate answer. The first DBQ is simply an outline and each one after that becomes a full writing experience. Students begin with DBQ's as homework assignments, and by the middle of the first term are completing timed examples in class. Students will peer correct these using a rubric. Students will complete DBQ's on an almost weekly basis during the course of the year.



5. Extra Help Sessions. Additionally, the instructor holds two or three review sessions outside of normal class meeting times. These are either on Saturdays, after school, or during vacation weeks. These sessions are not mandatory, but attendance is strongly recommended. Students complete a full practice exam during one session. Other sessions include work on DBQs and open response questions and Jeopardy style test review.

Current Instructor

AP American Government: Megan Potenti

Megan Potenti graduated from Stonehill College in 2005 with a BA in History and a minor in Secondary Education. She is currently working on her Master's degree at Worcester State University. While at Stonehill, Megan completed a practicum at East Bridgewater High School. Megan has been employed as a History teacher for the past 7 years. She spent five years teaching at Quaboag Regional Middle/High School in Warren, MA. She has been teaching at BVT since the fall of 2010 and has been teaching AP US History since her arrival. In addition to teaching, Megan is also the Co-Advisor for the Student Council and Humanities Scholars club.

