

GT Humanities I & II in Frisco ISD Information and FAQs

GT Humanities I will be offered in Frisco ISD beginning in the 2015-2016 school year and will begin with 9th graders who are identified as gifted and talented. GT Humanities II will be offered starting the following school year, 2016-2017. Both of these courses will be designated for students identified as gifted and talented.

Course Description

GT Humanities I / Pre-AP English I and GT Humanities II / AP World History are courses that provide gifted students with opportunities not available through regular or advanced classes. The courses combine Pre-AP English I with AP World History in a two-year interdisciplinary spiral. The basic content is a historical study of the commonalities of the fine arts, including literature, the visual arts, architecture, and music. Students will learn and practice the craft of writing through various products, including AP style writing. Literature from a variety of world traditions will also be a key focus. Beginning in 2016-17, ninth and tenth grade students will sit in the same class while earning credit in separate courses; ninth graders will earn Pre-AP English I credit while tenth graders will earn AP World History credit. At the conclusion of GT Humanities II, students can sit for the AP World History exam to possibly earn college credit.

Course Weighting

GT Humanities I / Pre-AP English I – Ninth grade GT students will receive Pre-AP GPA weighted credit. This course will count for their Pre-AP English credit during 9th grade.

GT Humanities II / AP World History – This course will be offered during the following school year (2016-17). Tenth grade GT students in GT Humanities II will receive AP GPA weighted credit because GT Humanities II will count as their AP World History course during 10th grade.

Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, both ninth and tenth graders will be scheduled into the same period of the day, as the curriculum rotates on a two-year cycle. The GT Humanities I and II designation would be *by grade level* to allow for easier GPA weighting and graduation planning; however, the curriculum will continue on a two year rotation. Ninth grade students will receive Pre-AP English I course credit. Tenth grade students will receive AP World History course credit.

GT Humanities does NOT fulfill the fine arts requirement for graduation and is not recognized as a fine arts course by TEA.

Structure & Curriculum

- The core focus of the GT humanities curriculum is an integrated study of the development of the arts – literature, history, art, architecture, philosophy, drama, music, dance, opera, etc.
- The AP World History content is taught over two years allowing for deep, cross-curricular connections that are more focused on regions, concepts, and themes than on chronology.
- The essential skills of language arts are applied to the content of AP World History as students delve critically into literary and visual texts, conduct research, and produce written products in a variety of genres.
- This course does not require double-blocking.
- Class size is 50-60 students taught by two teachers.
- GT Humanities I is a pre-requisite for GT Humanities II.
- This course will be co-taught and co-graded by a team of two teachers who are content experts and also have the GT training required by FISD and the state.
- The GT Humanities courses will prepare students for the English End of Course and the AP World History exams.

GT Student Schedule

- This course does not require double-blocking since it is a two-year experience - not two courses in one year.
- The GT Humanities course may occasionally be separated into specific 9th grade English and 10th grade AP World History classes in the spring for EOC exam (ELA teacher) and AP World History review (SS teacher).
- Suggested GT student's schedule:
 - 9th grade year
 - GT Humanities I (credit Pre-AP English I)
 - Science (Pre-AP or on-level)
 - Math (Pre-AP or on-level)
 - AP Human Geography or World Geography
 - Various electives
 - 10th grade year
 - GT Humanities II (credit AP World History)
 - Science (Pre-AP or on-level)
 - Math (Pre-AP or on-level)
 - ELA II (Pre-AP or on-level)
 - Various Electives

Frequently Asked Questions

What will be taught in the GT Humanities courses?

These courses offer a two-year interdisciplinary study for gifted students that combine the essential knowledge and skills of Pre-AP English I with the themes, concepts, processes, and skills of AP World History. Each historical period is organized around essential questions used to connect the history of the world to the literature, architecture, and visual and performing arts of the many peoples of the world. Students will learn and practice the craft of writing through various products, including AP style writing. Literature from a variety of world traditions will also be a key focus.

Why should my gifted student take GT Humanities?

GT Humanities will offer a differentiated AP experience for gifted students. The GT Humanities courses will provide a GT class for 9th and 10th grade students who have advanced academic interests and abilities. This class will also provide vital social/emotional support for gifted students and help GT freshmen transition to high school. A safe, supportive environment will be fostered for exploring personal beliefs, creativity, interpersonal skills, self-expression, and study skills for the gifted special needs population while still maintaining the rigor and complexity of AP courses. Once GT Humanities II is added beginning with the 2016-17 school year, there will be additional leadership and mentoring opportunities for 10th grade gifted students who will act as role models for younger students.

How will GT Humanities be different than AP World History?

GT Humanities will move beyond content acquisition to metaphorical thinking, synthesis, evaluation, and the identification of conceptual patterns that will endeavor to meet the intellectual needs of gifted students. This course will foster and encourage creativity through a historical study of the commonalities of the fine arts, including literature, drama, the visual arts, architecture, and music. This course will also provide opportunities for students to make authentic connections between English and history content.

What about the skills that are taught in Pre-AP English and AP World History? Will my student be prepared for the EOC English exam and the AP World History exam if he or she takes GT Humanities?

Basic skill development, such as writing, is not abandoned in GT Humanities. Proficiency is often acquired at a faster rate for gifted learners. Students will move on to more complex writing tasks that will prepare them for EOC and AP exams and better prepare them for the pursuit of challenging academic endeavors. The GT Humanities curriculum will actually supplement a student's preparation for the AP World History Exam by providing interdisciplinary connections that will aid in the level of analysis, depth, and breadth of arguments used on this national exam. The new AP World History exam for 2017 will allow students to earn credit if their responses include cross-curricular connections.

Do other school districts offer a course like this?

Yes. Many other school districts offer humanities courses for gifted students that combine English and history skills at various grade levels. It is also common practice to co-seat students in different grade levels together if the curriculum is offered on a rotating basis.

Does this course receive extra course weight because it is a GT course?

No, but it will receive extra weight because it is a Pre-AP or AP course. Ninth graders seated in GT Humanities I next year will earn credit for Pre-AP English I. These GT courses will not receive additional weighting. This is consistent with district practice at the middle school level. The GT Pre-AP English class gifted students take in middle school does not “weigh” more than Pre-AP English.

My student can also take AP Human Geography in 9th grade. What is the difference between AP Human Geography and GT Humanities I?

AP Human Geography and AP World History are completely different courses. Gifted students will probably want to take GT Humanities I and AP Human Geography during their 9th grade year. They need a geography credit for graduation, and ninth grade is the traditional year to earn this credit. As is explained below, these courses cover different content as well.

The purpose of AP Human Geography is to introduce students to the systematic study of patterns and processes that have shaped human understanding, use, and alteration of the Earth’s surface. They will also learn about the methods and tools geographers use in their science and practice. Some examples of topics studied are as follows: geography, human population, cultural patterns and processes, agricultural and rural land use, industrialization and economic development, and cities and urban land use.

AP World History covers more than ten thousand years of history. Various topics of study include the following: the development of civilizations, the rise and fall of empires, the development of networks of exchange and communication, cross-cultural contacts and global conflict, revolutions, political and legal systems, and independence movements.

Will my 9th Grade GT student automatically be placed in GT Humanities I next year?

Yes. He or she will automatically be placed in GT Humanities I. The expectation in Frisco ISD is that students who have been identified as needing gifted education services will continue receiving the differentiated academic instruction and the social and emotional support offered in the GT Humanities courses. Students can opt out and select an on-level English I or Pre-AP English I course prior to the start of the school year. Once school starts, the drop policy for the GT Humanities courses will be consistent with district policy for when students are permitted to drop Pre-AP and/or AP courses.

Is this a two-year commitment?

Taking GT Humanities I and II is strongly suggested. The GT Humanities is a rich course that will explore many topics in engaging, differentiated, and creative ways. It is the expectation in Frisco ISD that students who have been identified as needing gifted education services will continue receiving the differentiated academic instruction and the social and emotional support offered in the GT Humanities courses. It is extremely beneficial for gifted students to engage with other gifted students, and these GT courses provide that opportunity. Based on individual needs, a student may opt not to continue on to GT Humanities II.

What if my student doesn't take GT Humanities in 9th grade? Can he or she take the course in 10th grade?

No. GT Humanities I is a prerequisite for GT Humanities II because the AP World History content is studied over the course of two years. If a student does not enroll in GT Humanities I in 9th grade, he or she cannot enroll in GT Humanities II during his or her 10th grade year.

Does a student have to be identified gifted to take GT Humanities?

Yes. This course is specially designed to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of gifted students.

How can I learn more about this course?

Several informational meetings will be held during the evening in January. Parents are invited to attend to learn more. Dates and locations are forthcoming.