Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to IB History of Europe/AP European History. Attached you will find a copy of the Summer Independent Study Assignment. Please read through this completely and discuss it with your student before signing the parent permission form. A completed summer assignment is their admission ticket to success in this class.

In order set students up for success in IB/AP courses, we must ask students to read during the summer because students need exposure to a wide array of primary and secondary sources. The Independent Study Assignment provides reading material that is interesting, worthwhile, and eases the transformation to entry level university courses. In order to facilitate the continued success of the humanities program, we need parental support regarding the completion of the summer assignment. Students choosing to accept the challenge of IB History of Europe need encouragement and praise, beginning with the Independent Study assignment and continuing throughout the course. Should students need faculty support on the Independent Assignment, they may contact Mr. Gallo at lou.gallo@knoxschools.org.

Enrollment in this course is a commitment to perform at the highest level and to display a positive attitude within the class. Also, a maturity level demonstrating seriousness in maximizing one’s comprehension and composition skills and a love for history are expected. Due to the advanced level of the course, some of the material we will use is very graphic in terms of violence, language, and sexual content. This is an important part of social history and past students have commented on how much it has helped them to understand everyday life as well as the morals and values of the different time periods. If you would like to speak about this, please feel free to call me at West High School (594-4477), leave a message, and I will return your call.

The focus of this course is, obviously, preparing each student for the IB and AP history exams at the end of their junior and senior years. Students must expect anywhere from 2-5 hours of homework per week. Parents/Guardians and students must understand that the requirements and time limits are not negotiable.

If you feel that you and your student are up for the challenge, please sign the next page indicating that you have read this letter and return it as soon as possible. I will not turn down any student who truly wants to be in the class, but my standards cannot be compromised.

Sincerely,

Louis J. Gallo
Instructor—IB History of Europe
Part I: Book Review

Your summer reading/writing assignment is designed to enrich your knowledge of European History, enhance your interest, and increase your commitment to our course. Learning, thinking, and commitment should help you to enjoy and succeed in the class. **Observe formal writing guidelines.**

**Required Summer Reading and Assignment—Book Review for one of the following:**

- *Brunelleschi’s Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Invented Architecture* by Ross King
- *Galileo’s Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love* by Dava and David S. Sobel
- *Out of the Flames* by Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone

**The Summary**

A summary consists of a discussion of the major features, trends, themes, ideas, and characteristics. It should be no more than 2 typed pages.

- Use your own words. Combine ideas from the book into new sentences of your own. Avoid copying the original language, and put quotes around any that you do borrow. Summarizing is a good way to learn, to assimilate material, but the process doesn't work very well unless you translate the original into your own language.
- Generally, it is best when summarizing to follow the organization of the original.
- Your aim should be to give a true but condensed picture of the book, including the way it is organized.
- **Give a background review on the author.** You may need to look him/her up in the library or on the internet.
The Critique
A critique consists of your thoughts, responses, and reactions to what you have read. This is the heart of your review. It should be no less than 3-4 typed pages and the following questions are examples of the kind you should consider as you read your book and prepare the critique.

- What are the **theme(s) of the book** and how effectively and in what ways does the theme(s) of the book or arguments of the author reflect what you already know? Explain your response.
- What do you believe to be the **author’s aims**? How well has the author achieved his/her aims? Are these aims supported or justified? Explain.
- Does the **author seem fair and accurate**? Is there any distortion, exaggeration, or diminishing of material? Is the overall interpretation biased, subjective, slanted, and/or objective? Does the author try to look at both sides of the issue? Use evidence from the book to support your answer.
- Is there **enough information** in the book? Explain.
- What is your **overall opinion of the book, and why**? Is the book interesting or boring? Does the material presented raise your curiosity about the subject? Did you feel satisfied, disappointed, or puzzled by the book? How well is the book written? (Should you use quotes as examples, keep them very short—preferably no more than one sentence.) Explain all responses.
- What is **distinctive or noteworthy** about the book? (Give examples where useful.)

Part II: Background Material
Your assignment for the summer is to use a history textbook, encyclopedia articles, and/or the internet to learn about the Europeans prior to the Renaissance. You will be tested on this information the first week of the school year.

1. Read Chapters 10-11 of the Spielvogel textbook, *Western Civilization*.

2. Gather information on the topics listed below. These topics all pertain to the history of Europe prior to the Renaissance. Some topics will require much more detailed explanations than others. Some are not in your reading—please use other resources. All descriptions may be in bullet form. Remember—SCAR—Subject, Causes (Underlying and Immediate), Actions (Who, What, When, Where, How) and Results (Long-Term and Short-Term). You will be expected to write these in paragraph form for the test on the second day of class.

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IB History of Europe
Parent Permission Form

___________________(parents/guardians) request that ____________________ (student) be enrolled in IB History of Europe (Year 1). We understand that students will be expected to fulfill the requirements of this course as published and provided to each student. Furthermore, we understand that due to the advanced level of the course, some of the material we will use is very graphic in terms of violence, language, and sexual content and give permission for such materials to be read or viewed. We also give permission for the student to attend any out of school activity related to the course. This may include movies, plays, review sessions, and/or dinners. We understand that transportation will not be provided by the school and is the responsibility of the student.

NAME OF STUDENT

DATE

NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN  SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

PHONE NUMBER (Home)

PHONE NUMBER (Mobile or Work)

Which would you prefer for me to call if I need to contact you by phone?

Parent/Guardian E-mail (Please print)

Parent/Guardian E-mail (Please print)