Abigail Gautreau's essay is organized around individual class dates, and lists out each assigned reading and field trip taken, along with a self-assessment of what worked well and what didn't, and her thoughts on why, for anyone tasked with teaching a public history course for the first time, this would be an excellent template from which to build. Jennifer Dickey details how she condenses a fifteen-week introductory course into a seven-week version, that is then paired with a similarly shortened museum studies introductory course. Anyone seeking to engage a similar model for a shortened semester, or pitch a collaboration between a history department and museum studies program, could learn a great deal from how Dickey negotiates just "seven weeks of heaven."

Overall, this book contributes much to a variety of fields. Obviously, it is useful for those already studying and teaching public history, or who will be. It also harmonizes nicely with readings in the history of postsecondary instruction, notably Jonathan Zimmerman's *The Amateur Hour: A History of College Teaching in America* (2020). Stemming from works such as Craig Wilder's *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (2013), many universities are engaging the tools of public history as they grapple with their own institutional ties to enslavement and Indigenous dispossession. The "town and gown" contradictions and frictions that public history instructors have long had to contend with as they partner with local institutions (especially as detailed here in Jim McGrath's essay on "Digital Restorative Justice in the Public History Classroom") can be insightful for any scholar, librarian, or administrator engaging restorative history approaches, or trying to build a case for why they should. *Teaching Public History* doesn't just *use* the word *reflect* often; it often *is* a reflection of the state of public history teaching today: collaborative, thoughtful, experience-based, containing multitudes, and doing quite a lot with the space it's given.

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## Annie Abrams. Shortchanged: How Advanced Placement Cheats Students

### Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2023, 230 pp.

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In *Shortchanged: How Advanced Placement Cheats Students*, education scholar Annie Abrams argues that the Advanced Placement (AP) program has strayed far from its architects' intentions, and that the current version harms students, teachers, and our

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democracy as a whole. While AP was designed in the 1950s as a bridge between high school and college, the program has only widened the divide between those spaces.

For Abrams, this issue is personal. As an AP English teacher, she noticed a disconnect between writing in her own college courses and writing in "college level" AP courses. She embarked on a research journey that became this book. *Shortchanged* provides glimpses into Abrams's own classroom, incorporating anecdotes throughout. This makes the text highly readable while centering the group most affected by AP's flaws: students.

The book's scope is ambitious but logical, divided into two clear parts. The first half contains a deeply researched history of AP's origins, setting the stage for a second half that critiques what the program has become. Abrams draws on academic research and journalism, as well as sources like Reddit comments from parents and students. The writing is sharp, unrestrained, and sometimes funny. A critical scholar, Abrams consistently foregrounds issues of race and inequality. Though the author is unambiguous in her stance toward AP, the research and writing feel evenhanded; she criticizes the College Board's curricular overreach, but acknowledges some course materials are worthwhile.

The introduction captures AP exam day anxiety: "You regurgitate what you've just barely digested … no time to think about it. Press on" (p. 3). Abrams then describes the enormous scale of AP, which holds schools and colleges nationwide to its standards, enshrined in law. The College Board's expansion of AP represents a concerning privatization of public services, centralizing control over a national curriculum to a powerful few. AP markets its expansion as equity-driven even as it exacerbates inequality. The whole approach, Abrams says, is "wrong" and "antidemocratic" (p. 16).

Part 1, "Validity," offers a deep (and dense) dive into AP's origins. Chapter 1 returns to the 1930s and 1940s to examine Harvard president James Conant's intellectual commitments to a "national culture" (p. 19) defined by rationality and humanistic education, and his hopes for class fluidity, school reform, and coherence between high school and college.

Chapters 2 and 3 describe the Blackmer and Kenyon committees—"always men, always white" (p. 50), all from elite institutions—whose work informed AP's actual formation in the 1950s. Funded by private entities like the Ford Foundation, these groups were tasked with "making accessible to a broad range of secondary schools the standards and practices of the nation's preeminent colleges" (p. 69). Amid the Cold War, these founders believed the key to sustaining democracy was a citizenry steeped in the humanities and liberal learning. They designed AP with pedagogical autonomy and individualistic thinking in mind, admonishing against prescriptive, test-driven, or standardized approaches. Gordon Keith Chalmers of the Kenyon Committee said, "The point was to make education meaningful, not to make it easily calculable" (p. 92).

So, what happened? Abrams says these architects did not have the same hand in the program's implementation. For example, the Blackmer Committee outsourced its appendix on examinations to Henry S. Dyer, a Harvard expert in testing. Abrams argues that choices like this had an outsized impact on how AP was actually operationalized in schools. Since then, AP's implementers have increasingly "worked

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backward from the fact of tests" (p. 66) and other means of efficiency, squandering the program's initial promise. After three chapters on the philosophies undergirding AP—including a wariness of standardization—the description of testing's proliferation felt sudden. Per Abrams, it's only gotten worse.

Part 2, "Accountability," critiques the current state of AP and how far it has strayed. Chapter 4 describes how the College Board's new digital platform, "AP Classroom," turns the study of AP US History into a "perversely dehumanized transaction" (p. 105). According to Abrams, AP Classroom's rigid interface moves students through discrete, narrow, exam-aligned units, prioritizing compliance. This alternative to the physical classroom reduces social and cultural exchanges, recasting the teacher as a manager of assigned modules.

Chapter 5 outlines how automated grading software and corresponding rubrics have corrupted writing in AP's popular English courses. Test-driven, formulaic writing is not a new phenomenon. But Abrams says the problem is getting worse as course quality takes a back seat to software compatibility, efficiency, scale, and profit: "More than ever, AP essays measure a basic ability to conform and regurgitate" (p. 126). Though AP Classroom touts widespread access as a means of equity, elite schools are moving away from hollow AP courses while the rest are left with this "flatter experience" (p. 135). Fewer colleges are giving credit for AP English, viewing it as a cheapened version of the subject.

Chapter 6 recounts how the College Board's changes to AP US Government have fostered more prescriptive instruction and a narrowed take on civics. Overseeing an expansion into curriculum design, CEO David Coleman promised the revamped course would be a "timeless," "nonpartisan" introduction to public life (p. 145). From 2009 to 2019, the course guide doubled in size, with rigid sequencing and fixed text sets. While acknowledging the value of some content, Abrams laments, "The uniformity of the national curriculum they envision threatens to dull the very liberalism that course readings and framework aim to promote" (p. 146). She advocates for more local, community input into the curriculum.

In the conclusion, Abrams follows the money behind the "College Board's opaque empire" (p. 164). As states enable AP's commoditization, even families who see it as "a racket" (p. 139) have little choice but to buy in. Abrams is blunt: AP "creates more problems than it solves" (p. 167). Without claiming to have easy solutions, she does suggest some ways forward, such as reevaluating notions of eliteness and democratic citizenship; strengthening school-university ties; overhauling college admissions; better balancing public and private funding; and de-emphasizing standardized tests.

*Shortchanged* is a valuable read for anyone connected to AP, from students and families to policymakers. Education historians will appreciate part 1, but policymakers would also do well to learn that history to see how warped AP has become. Readers interested in critiques of the current program might jump directly to part 2.

After finishing *Shortchanged*, readers may wonder: What would it mean to reconvene and reimagine AP today? Clearly there would need to be different folks at the table this time, with greater emphasis on implementation. Per Abrams, these new architects would need to leave space for local community input (though they'd have to reckon with situations like in Florida, where AP has become a political football). They would

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need to guard against corporate expansion masquerading as equity, and address why elite schools and colleges have moved away from AP.

The book makes clear the College Board has no motivation for any such redesign. The epilogue warns, "There is so much hope in students. We are squandering it. And as we fail to invest in the nation's future, a private company is making a killing" (p. 178).

We shouldn't especially care what the individual founders might think of AP today, although they'd be horrified, to be sure. Abrams, however, insists that we ourselves should be horrified. *Shortchanged* provides that opportunity.

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## Lawrence Blum and Zoë Burkholder. Integrations: The Struggle for Racial Equality and Civic Renewal in Public Education

### Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021. 268 pp.

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Lawrence Blum and Zoë Burkholder's *Integrations* provides a historical and philosophical examination of racial inequality in American public schools. By illuminating the origins and nature of racial inequality in public education, the authors seek to identify mechanisms for more equitable schooling. They center Black, Indigenous, Latino, and Asian American educational experiences, focusing their analysis on integration as a historical and contemporary response to educational inequality.

The authors assert that a robust approach to integration can enhance both public education's civic potential and the pursuit of educational equality. Specifically, they advocate for "a conception of integration closely tied to egalitarian, civic-minded schools committed to the training of future citizens for a pluralistic democracy" (p. 4). But they conclude that neither integration nor public schools can independently eradicate educational inequality. To achieve that end, Americans must first "dismantle the interlocking external structures of racial and class injustice" (p. 184) that shape and constrain public education.

While historians of education have long argued that educational inequality stems from factors external to schools, Blum and Burkholder effectively distill the significance of that history for the present. Given the sweep of their historical synthesis, the cogency of their analysis, and the clarity of their prose, their book is particularly well suited for undergraduate classes in educational foundations and the history of American education. Graduate students and specialists will also benefit from tackling

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