

I. A.P UNITED STATES HISTORY

II. Statement of Purpose

Advanced Placement United States History is a comprehensive survey course designed to foster analysis of and critical reflection on the significant content, concepts, and themes that have affected the development of the nation.

III. Audience

A.P. U.S. History is open to all 11th grade students interested in a challenging, critical examination of U.S. history.

IV. Prerequisite

This course is offered as an Advanced Placement course. Prerequisites for the Advanced Placement level include teacher recommendation

V. Design and Description

The A.P United States History course is designed to provide students with the analytical skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in U.S. History. The program prepares students for intermediate and advanced college courses by making demands on them equivalent to those made by full-year college introductory courses. The curriculum is aligned with the College Board Advanced Placement guidelines, which focus on political institutions, social and economic changes, international relationships, and cultural and intellectual developments throughout the history of the United States. Students should learn to assess historical materials –their relevance to a given interpretative problem, reliability, and importance-and to weight the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship. An A.P. U.S. History course should thus develop the skills necessary to arrive at conclusions on the basis of informed judgment and the present reasons and evidence clearly and persuasively in essay format.

The course will incorporate several of the following historical themes throughout the year. We will emphasize the ways in which these themes are interconnected and examine the ways in which each helps to shape the changes over time that are so important to understanding United States History. Students will incorporate at least one of the following themes in the course research paper. (See Part VII of this syllabus, “Research and Historiography” below.)

Themes

American Diversity

- The diversity of the American people and the relationships among different groups.
- The roles of race, class, ethnicity, and gender in the history of the United States

American Identity

- Views of the American national character and ideas about American exceptionalism.

- Recognizing regional differences within the context of what it means to be an American

Culture

- Diverse individual and collective expressions through literature, art, philosophy, music, theater, and film throughout U.S. history.
- Popular culture and the dimensions of cultural conflict within American society.

Demographic Changes

- Changes in birth, marriage, and death rates; life expectancy and family patterns; population size and density.
- The economic, social, and political effects of immigration, internal migration, and migration networks.

Economic Transformations

- Changes in trade, commerce, and technology across time.
- The effects of capitalist development, labor and unions, and consumerism.

Environment

- Ideas about the consumption and conservation of natural resources.
- The impact of population growth, industrialization, pollution, and urban and suburban expansion.

Globalization

- Engagement with the rest of the world from the fifteenth century to the present: colonialism, mercantilism, global hegemony, development of markets, imperialism, cultural exchange.

Politics and Citizenship

- Colonial and revolutionary legacies, American political traditions, growth of democracy, and the development of the modern state.
- Defining citizenship, struggles for civil rights.

Reform

- Diverse movements focusing on a broad range of issues, including antislavery, education, labor, temperance, women's rights, civil rights, gay rights, war, public health, and government.

Religion

- The variety of religious beliefs and practices in America from prehistory to the twenty-first century; influence of religion on politics, economics, and society.

Slavery and Its Legacies in North America

- Systems of slave labor and other forms of “unfree” labor (e.g., indentured servitude, contract labor) in Native American societies, the Atlantic World, and the American South and West.

- The economics of slavery and its racial dimensions.
- Patterns of resistance and the long-term economic, political, and social effects of slavery.

War and Diplomacy

- Armed conflict from the pre-colonial period to the twenty-first century; impact of war on American foreign policy and on politics, economy, and society.

Essential Questions

- To what extent does history affect our understanding of the past, present, and future?
- To what extent does the study of historical themes help us understand change over time and adapt and respond to new challenges?
- To what extent does the study of historical periods, issues, and trends affect our understanding of the past present and future?
- To what extent do human migration, economic activity, and political units affect people and their way of life?
- To what extent have changing economic systems and conditions affected the allocation of goods and services in the U.S.?
- To what extent do limited resources affect choices by individuals, households, businesses, and governments?
- To what extent can citizens shape and influence democratic processes and government?
- To what extent do the principles of the United States Constitution impact individual, local, state, and national decisions?
- To what extent do global affairs impact the lives of people?
- To what extent have racial, ethnic, gender, and class differences affected American society?
- To what extent have various forms of cultural and artistic expression reflected popular culture and the dimensions of cultural conflict within American society.
- To what extent can the United States be considered a nation that guarantees religious freedom?
- To what extent have reformers and reform movements addressed the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence?
- To what extent do the system of slavery and segregation as experienced by African-Americans continue to impact American society?

VI. Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- analyze to what extent the history of the United States has been impacted by economic forces of opportunity, competition, agrarianism, capitalism, industrialization, labor, and global economics

- appraise the influence of America's racial, ethnic, gender, and class diversity on development of American society
- explain and evaluate the various causes and effects of immigration, migration, and expansion throughout American history.
- analyze and evaluate the competition of political theory and political reality on the development of American democratic principles and institutions.
- examine and explain the development of the concept of citizenship and its concomitant impact on equality and civil rights
- evaluate the significance and impact of religion throughout American history from the colonization to the present
- analyze both the desire for and the resistance to social, political, and economic reform in America
- interpret the influence of the establishment of, resistance to, and political, economic, and social developments surrounding slavery in the United States
- identify the causes and effects of armed conflict and its influence on domestic and foreign policy throughout American history
- evaluate the impact and interplay of national, regional, and local forces on American identity
- analyze the influence of various forms of cultural expression such as literature, art, theater, film, and music as a reflection of both ideals and conflict in American society
- judge the significance and impact of the struggle between forces for consumption and conservation of natural resources
- measure and appraise the development of American engagement around the globe from the colonial period to the present
- explain the underlying causes of European colonization of North America and the impact of contact with Native Americans
- analyze and compare the importance of regional factors effecting the colonial economy
- determine and evaluate the conditions responsible for the emergence of slavery in the Chesapeake region
- explain the elements of and compare the impact of the Great Awakening and the Enlightenment on American society
- identify and compare the domestic and international causes of the American Revolution
- summarize the political, economic, and social impact of the American Revolution on both the regional and national level
- use the Declaration of Independence, state constitutions, the Articles of Confederation, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights to evaluate the goals and success of the founders in the creation of a republic
- examine and compare the rights of women and minorities in the early years of the republic
- describe the conditions that resulted in the Federalist-Anti Federalist schism and compare and contrast their respective supporters and goals

- evaluate the impact of the election of 1800 and the subsequent presidency of Thomas Jefferson
- describe the foreign policy issues encountered by the United States in the first decades of the republic and its efforts to deal with them
- evaluate the impact of Jacksonian democracy and the era of the “Common Man” on the social and political landscape
- analyze the importance of developments in transportation and population growth on the political, social, and economic growth of antebellum America
- summarize and compare the causes and effects of reform movements in America prior to the Civil War especially regarding the rights of women and minorities
- analyze the causes and impact of territorial expansion, Manifest Destiny, and war with Mexico
- evaluate the issues dividing pro-slavery and antislavery forces and the efforts to diffuse the resulting conflicts
- appraise the federal government’s failure to avoid war in 1861
- explain and compare the strengths, strategies, and goals of the North and the South during the Civil War
- analyze the social, political, and economic effect of the Civil War on both the regional and national levels
- summarize the goals of the Reconstruction and evaluate its successes and failures, particularly with regard to the rights of African-Americans and the power of the federal government
- compare and contrast the “New South” and the old South
- formulate a thesis on the west in the late nineteenth century as land of opportunity or exploitation
- determine the critical political, social, economic, and technological elements responsible for America’s industrial growth in the late nineteenth century
- assess the economic, political, and social impact of corporations and the rise of big business
- evaluate the intellectual, cultural, and social impact of industrialization and urbanization
- describe the causes and evaluate the significance of the Populist movement
- Describe the changing political, economic, and social issues facing women and African-Americans at the close of the nineteenth century
- assess the economic, political, and intellectual factors that encouraged the emergence of the United States as an imperial power
- examine the origins of the Progressive movement and evaluate its success at political, social, and economic reform
- evaluate the events that led to the United States’ entry into WWI
- develop a thesis on the effect of WWI on American democracy
- analyze the key social issues confronting Americans in the 1920’s
- judge the importance of the 1920’s to African-Americans and women
- develop a hierarchy of the causes of the Great Depression
- analyze the goals of the New Deal and compare it to previous government efforts to address the needs of citizens

- evaluate the arguments of the New Deal's critics
- summarize the social impact of the Great Depression
- formulate a thesis on the New Deal's impact on the role of the federal government
- demonstrate the impact of America's desire to remain neutral prior to WWII and its eventual involvement in the war
- assess the impact of WWII on the American home front, especially regarding women and minorities
- evaluate the efforts of America and its allies to influence the postwar world both during and immediately after the war
- analyze the importance of WWII to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's – 1960's
- analyze the ideological and practical origins of the Cold War
- evaluate the domestic impact of the Cold War and the Red Scare especially regarding government policy and civil liberties
- assess the limitations imposed by the Cold War on foreign policy
- construct a thesis accounting for the affluent society and "the other America"
- evaluate the strength of the forces for conformity during the 1950's versus its social critics
- assess the goals and impact of the New Frontier and the Great Society as well as the strengths of the arguments of its critics
- describe the impact of Cold War conflicts Asia, Latin America, and Europe on domestic policy
- analyze the shifting goals and tactics of the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960's
- formulate a thesis on the election of 1968 and its reflection of the clash of fundamental American values and the rise of the New Right
- analyze the path from post-war prosperity to the "stagnant seventies"
- evaluate the impact of aging, migration, and multiculturalism on American society
- assess the social, political, and economic impact of computers, biotechnology, and mass communication
- describe the issues challenging the United States presented by globalization
- assess the political, economic, and social impact of terrorism
- evaluate the influence of environmental issues on domestic and international policy

Skill Objectives:

Students will:

- analyze cause and effect
- evaluate information regarding veracity, relevance, author, agenda, omission, and type of document
- compare, analyze, interpret, and apply complex information from various sources
- demonstrate effective and appropriate questioning and thinking skills
- synthesize information from various sources

- appropriately cite information
- write structured, thesis-driven essays
- apply study skills to improve test taking
- apply principles to solve authentic problems
- use technology in constructing models, preparing publications, and producing other forms of creative work
- use technology to locate, collect, evaluate, and communicate information

VII. Social Studies Standards

Historical Thinking

Students will develop historical thinking skills, including chronological thinking and recognizing change over time, contextualizing, comprehending and analyzing historical literature; researching historical sources; understanding the concept of historical causation; understanding competing narratives and interpretation; and constructing narratives and interpretation

Students will gather, analyze, and reconcile historical information, including contradictory data, from primary and secondary sources to support or reject hypotheses.

Students will evaluate data within the historical, political, and economic context in which it was created, testing its credibility and evaluating its bias.

Historical Themes

Students will apply their understanding of historical periods, issues and trends to examine such historical themes as ideals, beliefs and institutions; conflict and conflict resolution; human movement and interaction; and science and technology in order to understand how the world came to be the way it is.

Students will describe, explain and analyze political, economic and social consequences that came about as the resolution of conflict.

Students will analyze the causes and consequences of major technological turning points in history.

Applying History

Students will recognize the continuing importance of historical thinking and historical knowledge in their own lives and in the world in which they live.

Students will initiate questions and hypotheses about historic events they are studying

United States Constitution and Government

Students will apply knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, how the U.S. system of government works and how the rule of law and the values of liberty and equality have an impact on individual, local, state and national decisions.

Students will apply an understanding of historical and contemporary conflicts over Constitutional principles.

Students will explain why state and federal court powers of judicial review reflect the United States idea of constitutional government.

Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of citizens to participate in and shape public policy, and contribute to the maintenance of our democratic way of life.

Students will establish, explain and apply criteria to evaluate rules and laws.

International Relations

Students will demonstrate an understanding of how the major elements of international relations and world affairs affect their lives and the security and well being of their community, state and nation.

Students will analyze and evaluate the significance of major U.S. foreign policies and major international events and conditions over time.

Economic Systems

Students will demonstrate that various economic systems coexist, and that economic decisions are made by individuals and/or governments, influenced by markets, cultural traditions, individuals and governments in the allocation of goods and services.

Students will explain reasons for government action in the economy, including providing public goods and services, maintaining competition, redistributing income, promoting employment, stabilizing prices and sustaining reasonable rates of economic growth.

Students will understand the causes and effects of periods of growth and recession evident in history of market economies.

Computer Technology

Students will understand the ethical, cultural and societal issues related to technology.

Students will practice responsible use of technology systems, information and software.