

# Fairfield Public Schools Social Studies Curriculum

## Contemporary United States History Grade 12



**FAIRFIELD  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## Contemporary United States History: Description

American society, politics, and culture have undergone remarkable changes since the end of World War II. From purely a thematic perspective, this course analyzes some of the major trends in contemporary American history from 1945 to the present, as well as addresses conflicting interpretations about the meaning of that experience. The themes addressed in this course include: Cultural Change and American Identity; The Role of the United States in World Affairs; The Struggle for Freedom, Equality, and Social Justice; and The Impact of Science and Technology on American Society. The curriculum is based on key compelling questions that allow students to trace strands of continuity and change within each of the four themes, analyze and synthesize information across recent eras of American history, and make connections with events and issues in our recent past to our lives today.

Objectives and Standards:

**Historical Understandings:** Shown as content objectives, these goals define what students should know about the history of contemporary America upon completion of each unit. These understandings are drawn from the record of American aspirations, accomplishments, and failures in the four themes described above. They also provide students with the historical perspectives required to analyze contemporary issues and problems confronting citizens today.

**Historical Thinking / Inquiry Skills:** These standards center on four dimensions driven by the use of questions to spark curiosity, guide instruction, deepen investigation, acquire rigorous content, and enable students to apply knowledge and ideas in real world settings so they can become active and engaged citizens. Drawn from the *Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks* (2015) and the *C3 Social Studies for the Next Generation National Framework* (2013), these standards enable students to evaluate evidence, develop comparative and causal analyses, interpret the historical record, and construct sound historical arguments and perspectives.

# Contemporary United States History: Overview

## Central Understandings

- Understand the fundamental and unique characteristics that define America's recent past.
- Analyze the cultural changes and the significant shifts in American values from 1945-present.
- Evaluate how the United States has interacted with the world in the decades since the end of World War II.
- Evaluate the impact of evolving American values on various ethnic, religious, social, and political groups from 1945-present.
- Analyze how recent developments in science and technology have impacted American society, with a focus on globalization and the information and technology revolution.
- Analyze and interpret different types of primary and secondary sources of fundamental importance and relevance to topical inquiry.
- Analyze and evaluate historical sources and interpretations (e.g. credibility, perspective, bias, and authenticity; verifiable or unverifiable; fact or interpretation).
- Utilize research strategies, methods, and sources to obtain, organize, and interpret historical data.
- Compose arguments / positions, and participate in debates on different interpretations of the same historical events; synthesize primary and secondary sources to justify a claim.
- Identify, analyze, and understand elements of historical cause and effect within themes; recognize and understand patterns of change and continuity.
- Develop open-ended historical questions that can be addressed through historical research and interpretation.

## Course Themes

- The Impact of Science and Technology on American Society
- The Role of the United States in World Affairs
- The Struggle for Freedom, Equality, and Social Justice
- Cultural Change and American Identity

## Course Compelling Questions

- How have globalization and the information technology revolution impacted contemporary American society?
- What does it mean to be American today and in what ways has the definition changed since 1945?
- How have politics and public policy changed since 1945 and how do those changes reflect changing American culture and values?
- How have the ways in which we live, work, and consume goods and services changed since 1945?

## Contemporary United States History: Year-at-a Glance

Unit	Title	Unit Compelling Questions
1	The Impact of Science and Technology on American Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has technology impacted the standard of living in the United States since 1945?</li> <li>• How has the government, as well as private entrepreneurs fostered technological innovation since 1945?</li> <li>• What has been the role of nuclear power since 1945?</li> <li>• Have developments in science and technology led to a more democratic society?</li> <li>• How has the information technology revolution influenced how Americans live, work, and learn?</li> </ul>
2	The Role of the United States in World Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did World War II reposition the United States in world affairs in a way that still influences foreign policy today?</li> <li>• Was the United States successful in containing Communism?</li> <li>• What were the long term consequences of U.S. involvement in Vietnam?</li> <li>• Were the attacks of September 11, 2001 a turning point in American history?</li> <li>• What is the current role of the United States in world affairs?</li> </ul>
3	The Struggle for Freedom, Equality, and Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of economic, social, and political opportunities were available or denied to different groups of people such as African Americans, Latinos, Indigenous and women?</li> <li>• What kinds of opportunities and what kind of obstacles were experienced by different groups of immigrants to the United States since 1945?</li> <li>• What role has the government played in supporting or hindering civil rights movements?</li> <li>• What are the factors that support or prevent socioeconomic mobility in the United States?</li> <li>• Are the freedoms and liberties of traditionally underrepresented groups protected in contemporary America?</li> </ul>
4	Cultural Change and American Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a uniquely “American identity” and how has that identity changed in the decades since 1945?</li> <li>• How have trends in art, literature, music, film, and other forms of fine and popular art reflected cultural shifts in the United States from 1945 to the present?</li> <li>• How has the growth of the media industry in the United States since 1945 impacted political, social, and economic life in the United States?</li> <li>• How has the process of globalization impacted American culture? How has American culture influenced global culture?</li> </ul>

## Monitoring Student Progress

Students' progress in relation to the content and skill standards will be measured with teacher-generated, as well as district-wide, formative and summative assessments in the following areas:

1. Determine the central ideas or information of historical content; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas (INQ DIM 1-3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH11-12.2).
2. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the content as a whole (INQ DIM 1-4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH11-12.1).
3. Evaluate differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing various claims, reasoning, and evidence (INQ DIM 1-3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH11-12.6).
4. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g. visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem (INQ DIM 3-4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH11-12.7)
5. Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources (INQ DIM 3-4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH11-12.9).
6. Produce arguments (written or presented) focused on discipline-specific content (INQ DIM 3-4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.1).
7. Produce informative / explanatory interpretations (written or presented) focused on discipline-specific content INQ DIM 3-4; (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.2).
8. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation (INQ DIM 1-4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.7).
9. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source; integrate information into the text selectively; avoid plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and follow a standard format for citation (INQ DIM 1-4; CSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.8).

# The Impact of Science and Technology on American Society 1945-Present

## Overview

This unit will focus on an in-depth exploration of the incredible advancements in science and technology since 1945 and their impact on American society. Students will gain an understanding of how postwar science augmented the nation's economic strength, transformed daily life, and influenced the world economy. Focusing on how American technology ushered in the communications revolution, students will explore the significance of research and scientific breakthroughs in nuclear energy, the evolution of the U.S. space program, the advances in medical science, and the rise of the digital age. Students will have an opportunity to explore the roots of the digital world in which they live and make predictions about where this technology will lead American society in the future.

## Unit Content Objectives

At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Evaluate how science and technology has changed everyday life for Americans since 1945 and has impacted Americans' standard of living.
- Evaluate the benefits and challenges of science and technological change from 1945 to the present.
- Analyze how changes in transportation, information, and communication technologies have affected U.S. trade, investment, and financial dealings in the global economy.
- Analyze how society has reacted to environmental challenges since 1945 and how public policy has sought to address these challenges.

## Unit Compelling Questions

Students will apply disciplinary concepts to investigate compelling questions such as:

- How has technology impacted the standard of living in the United States since 1945?
- How has the government, as well as private entrepreneurs fostered technological innovation since 1945?
- What has been the role of nuclear power since 1945?
- Have developments in science and technology led to a more democratic society?
- How has the information technology revolution influenced how Americans live, work, and learn?

## Standards Emphasized in the Unit: Inquiry in the Social Studies

### **DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRY**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

**INQ 9–12.1** Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.

**INQ 9–12.2** Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

**INQ 9–12.3** Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a supporting question.

**INQ 9–12.4** Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge.

**INQ 9–12.5** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources

**Corresponding CT Core Standards: CCSS.ELA-Literacy, RH.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.7**

**Key academic vocabulary: *questioning, argument, explanation, point of view***

### **DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY CONCEPTS AND TOOLS**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

#### Change, Continuity and Context

**HIST 9–12.1** Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

**HIST 9–12.2** Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.

#### Perspectives

**HIST 9–12.3** Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

**HIST 9–12.4** Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives. (e.g., immigration, labor, the role of women).

**HIST 9–12.5** Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.

**HIST 9–12.6** Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.

**HIST 9–12.7** Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

#### Historical Sources and Evidence

**HIST 9–12.8** Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations.

**HIST 9–12.9** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

**HIST 9–12.10** Critique the appropriateness of the historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.

Causation and Argumentation

**HIST 9–12.11** Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

**HIST 9–12.12** Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

Processes, Rules, and Laws

**CIV 9–12.4** Analyze how public policies promote changes, intended and unintended, in society.

**CIV 9–12.5** Analyze how societies institute change in ways that both promote and hinder the common good and that protect and violate citizens' rights.

Economic Decision-Making

**ECO 9–12.1** Analyze how incentives influence choices that may result in policies with a range of costs and benefits for different groups.

Exchange and Markets

**ECO 9–12.3** Describe the possible consequences, both intended and unintended, of government policies to improve market outcomes.

The National Economy

**ECO 9–12.4** Use current data to explain the influence of changes in spending, production, and the money supply on various economic conditions.

**ECO 9–12.5** Explain why advancements in technology and investments in capital goods and human capital increase economic growth and standards of living.

The Global Economy

**ECO 9–12.6** Explain how current globalization trends and policies affect economic growth, labor markets, rights of citizens, the environment, and resource and income distribution in different nations.

Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World

**GEO 9–12.1** Use maps and other geographic representations to analyze the relationships between the locations of places and their political, cultural, and economic history.

Human-Environmental Interaction: Places, Regions, and Culture

**GEO 9–12.2** Evaluate the impact of human activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of the various places and regions in the United States.

Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movement

**GEO 9–12.3** Evaluate the impact of economic activities, political decisions, cultural practices, and climate variability on human migration, resource use, and settlement patterns.

Global Interconnections



**GEO 9-12.4** Evaluate how globalization, competition for scarce resources, and human migration contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among countries.

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**DIMENSION 3: EVALUATING SOURCES AND USING EVIDENCE**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

**INQ 9–12.6** Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

**INQ 9–12.7** Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the sources.

**INQ 9–12.8** Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantively from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.

**INQ 9–12.9** Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.

**Corresponding CT Core Standards: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1-10; CCSS.ELA-WHST.11-12.1-2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.7-10**

**Key academic vocabulary: *argument, sources, evidence, claims, counterclaims***

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**DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS AND TAKING INFORMED ACTION**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

**INQ 9–12.10** Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.

**INQ 9–12.11** Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical)

**INQ 9–12.12** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).

**INQ 9–12.13** Critique the use of claims and evidence in arguments for credibility.

**INQ 9–12.14** Critique the use of the reasoning, sequencing, and supporting details of explanations.

**INQ 9–12.15** Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

**INQ 9–12.16** Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.

**INQ 9–12.17** Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms, schools,

and out-of-school civic contexts.

**Corresponding CT Core Standards: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1-8**

**Key academic vocabulary: *argument, explanation, sources, evidence, claims, counterclaims, visually / visualize, credibility***

# The Role of the United States in World Affairs 1945-Present

## Overview

This unit will trace the major trends in U.S. foreign affairs since the end of World War II with a focus on analyzing the roots of our nation's current role in the world and evaluating current foreign policy. Students will explore the international origins of the Cold War and the advent of nuclear politics. This will include an analysis and evaluation of the U.S. policy of containment and the eventual change in the relationship with the Soviet Union from confrontation to coexistence. Specific Cold War topics will include the U.S. response to the Chinese Revolution, the causes and consequences of the Korean War, an analysis of American policies toward independence movements in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Middle East, an evolving foreign policy in Latin America, and U.S. relations with Israel. Furthermore, a specific focus will be an analysis of the consequences of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Much attention will be given to collapse of communist governments in Eastern Europe and the USSR and an evaluation of foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Students will also be analyzing the causes and effects of global terrorism and evaluating U.S. policy in confronting this threat using September 11, 2001 as a major turning point.

## Unit Content Objectives

At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Analyze the impact of the Cold War on America's foreign policy from the postwar era through the early 1990s.
- Analyze America's involvement in regional conflicts since the early 1990s (e.g. First Gulf War, Afghanistan, Iraq).
- Analyze the causes and effects of global terrorism and evaluate America's response, using September 11, 2001 as a major turning point.
- Evaluate the effects of globalization on the national sovereignty of the United States.

## Unit Compelling Questions

Students will apply disciplinary concepts to investigate compelling questions such as:

- How did World War II reposition the United States in world affairs in a way that still influences foreign policy today?
- Was the United States successful in containing Communism?
- What were the long term consequences of U.S. involvement in Vietnam?
- Were the attacks of September 11, 2001 a turning point in American history?
- What is the current role of the United States in world affairs?

## Standards Emphasized in the Unit: Inquiry in the Social Studies

### **DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRY**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

**INQ 9–12.1** Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.

**INQ 9–12.2** Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

**INQ 9–12.3** Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a supporting question.

**INQ 9–12.4** Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge.

**INQ 9–12.5** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources

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**Key academic vocabulary: *questioning, argument, explanation, point of view***

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### **DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY CONCEPTS AND TOOLS**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

#### Change, Continuity and Context

**HIST 9–12.1** Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

**HIST 9–12.2** Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.

#### Perspectives

**HIST 9–12.3** Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

**HIST 9–12.4** Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives. (e.g., immigration, labor, the role of women).

**HIST 9–12.5** Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.

**HIST 9–12.6** Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.

**HIST 9–12.7** Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

#### Historical Sources and Evidence

**HIST 9–12.8** Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations.

**HIST 9–12.9** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

**HIST 9–12.10** Critique the appropriateness of the historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.

Causation and Argumentation

**HIST 9–12.11** Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

**HIST 9–12.12** Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

Civic and Political Institutions

**CIV 9–12.1** Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, and the theory and practice of democracy in America.

**CIV 9–12.2** Evaluate the effectiveness of citizens and institutions in solving social and political problems.

Participation and Deliberation

**CIV 9–12.3** Evaluate how social and political systems in the U.S. promote civic virtues and democratic principles across different contexts, times, and places.

Processes, Rules, and Laws

**CIV 9–12.4** Analyze how public policies promote changes, intended and unintended, in society.

**CIV 9–12.5** Analyze how societies institute change in ways that both promote and hinder the common good and that protect and violate citizens' rights.

Economic Decision-Making

**ECO 9–12.1** Analyze how incentives influence choices that may result in policies with a range of costs and benefits for different groups.

Exchange and Markets

**ECO 9–12.2** Evaluate the extent to which competition among sellers and among buyers exists in specific markets.

**ECO 9–12.3** Describe the possible consequences, both intended and unintended, of government policies to improve market outcomes.

The Global Economy

**ECO 9–12.6** Explain how current globalization trends and policies affect economic growth, labor markets, rights of citizens, the environment, and resource and income distribution in different nations.

Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World

**GEO 9–12.1** Use maps and other geographic representations to analyze the relationships between the locations of places and their political, cultural, and economic history.

Human-Environmental Interaction: Places, Regions, and Culture

**GEO 9–12.2** Evaluate the impact of human activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of the various places and regions in the United States.

Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movement

**GEO 9–12.3** Evaluate the impact of economic activities, political decisions, cultural practices, and climate variability on human migration, resource use, and settlement patterns.

Global Interconnections

**GEO 9-12.4** Evaluate how globalization, competition for scarce resources, and human migration contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among countries.

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**INQ 9–12.8** Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantively from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.

**INQ 9–12.9** Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.

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**Key academic vocabulary: *argument, sources, evidence, claims, counterclaims***

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**DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS AND TAKING INFORMED ACTION**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

**INQ 9–12.10** Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.

**INQ 9–12.11** Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical)

**INQ 9–12.12** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).

**INQ 9–12.13** Critique the use of claims and evidence in arguments for credibility.

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**INQ 9–12.16** Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.

**INQ 9–12.17** Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms, schools, and out-of-school civic contexts.

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**Key academic vocabulary: *argument, explanation, sources, evidence, claims, counterclaims, visually / visualize, credibility***

# The Struggle for Freedom, Equality, and Social Justice 1945-Present

## Overview

This unit will examine the struggle for equality and for the extension of civil liberties since the end World War II, focusing on various racial, gender, and social groups. Students will explore the origins of the postwar civil rights movement and evaluate the agendas, strategies, and effectiveness of various African Americans, Asia Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans, as well as women, the disabled, and LGBTQ Americans. A key focus of this unit will be in assessing the effectiveness of the judiciary as opposed to the legislative and executive branches of government in promoting civil liberties and equal opportunities. Much attention will be given to the leadership and ideology of significant civil rights leaders, and on conflicting perspectives on key issues.

## Unit Content Objectives

At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Analyze the origins and methods of the Civil Rights Movement and its continued influence today.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Civil Rights Movement in improving political, economic, and social conditions for African Americans in the United States.
- Analyze the role of the federal government in supporting and inhibiting various civil rights movements.
- Analyze the causes and effects of domestic economic problems, such as income inequality and poverty, and the changing role of the government in the economy.
- Analyze other social reform movements since 1945 including those dealing with the rights and opportunities for women, racial and ethnic minorities, the disabled, LGBTQ community and other underrepresented groups.
- Evaluate the impact of immigration on politics, social movements, and economic conditions since the 1945.

## Unit Compelling Questions

Students will apply disciplinary concepts to investigate compelling questions such as:

- What type of economic, social, and political opportunities were available or denied to different groups of people such as African Americans, Latinos, Indigenous and women?
- What kinds of opportunities and what kind of obstacles were experienced by different groups of immigrants to the United States since 1945?
- What role has the government played in supporting or hindering civil rights movements?
- What are the factors that support or prevent socioeconomic mobility in the United States?
- Are the freedoms and liberties of traditionally underrepresented groups protected in contemporary America?



## Standards Emphasized in the Unit: Inquiry in the Social Studies

### **DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRY**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

**INQ 9–12.1** Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.

**INQ 9–12.2** Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

**INQ 9–12.3** Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a supporting question.

**INQ 9–12.4** Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge.

**INQ 9–12.5** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources

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**Key academic vocabulary: *questioning, argument, explanation, point of view***

### **DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY CONCEPTS AND TOOLS**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

#### Change, Continuity and Context

**HIST 9–12.1** Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

**HIST 9–12.2** Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.

#### Perspectives

**HIST 9–12.3** Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

**HIST 9–12.4** Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives. (e.g., immigration, labor, the role of women).

**HIST 9–12.5** Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.

**HIST 9–12.6** Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.

**HIST 9–12.7** Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

#### Historical Sources and Evidence

**HIST 9–12.8** Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations.

**HIST 9–12.9** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

**HIST 9–12.10** Critique the appropriateness of the historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.

Causation and Argumentation

**HIST 9–12.11** Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

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Participation and Deliberation

**CIV 9–12.3** Evaluate how social and political systems in the U.S. promote civic virtues and democratic principles across different contexts, times, and places.

Processes, Rules, and Laws

**CIV 9–12.4** Analyze how public policies promote changes, intended and unintended, in society.

**CIV 9–12.5** Analyze how societies institute change in ways that both promote and hinder the common good and that protect and violate citizens' rights.

Economic Decision-Making

**ECO 9–12.1** Analyze how incentives influence choices that may result in policies with a range of costs and benefits for different groups.

Exchange and Markets

**ECO 9–12.2** Evaluate the extent to which competition among sellers and among buyers exists in specific markets.

**ECO 9–12.3** Describe the possible consequences, both intended and unintended, of government policies to improve market outcomes.

The National Economy

**ECO 9–12.4** Use current data to explain the influence of changes in spending, production, and the money supply on various economic conditions.

**ECO 9–12.5** Explain why advancements in technology and investments in capital goods and human capital increase economic growth and standards of living.

The Global Economy

**ECO 9–12.6** Explain how current globalization trends and policies affect economic growth, labor markets, rights of citizens, the environment, and resource and income distribution in different nations.

Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World

**GEO 9–12.1** Use maps and other geographic representations to analyze the relationships between the locations of places and their political, cultural, and economic history.

Human-Environmental Interaction: Places, Regions, and Culture

**GEO 9–12.2** Evaluate the impact of human activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of the various places and regions in the United States.

Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movement

**GEO 9–12.3** Evaluate the impact of economic activities, political decisions, cultural practices, and climate variability on human migration, resource use, and settlement patterns.

Global Interconnections

**GEO 9–12.4** Evaluate how globalization, competition for scarce resources, and human migration contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among countries.

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**DIMENSION 3: EVALUATING SOURCES AND USING EVIDENCE**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

**INQ 9–12.6** Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

**INQ 9–12.7** Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the sources.

**INQ 9–12.8** Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantively from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.

**INQ 9–12.9** Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.

**Corresponding CT Core Standards: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1-10; CCSS.ELA-WHST.11-12.1-2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.7-10**

**Key academic vocabulary: *argument, sources, evidence, claims, counterclaims***

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**DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS AND TAKING INFORMED ACTION**

It is expected that students in high school U.S. History will individually and with others:

**INQ 9–12.10** Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.

**INQ 9–12.11** Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical).

**INQ 9–12.12** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of

audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).

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**INQ 9–12.16** Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.

**INQ 9–12.17** Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms, schools, and out-of-school civic contexts.

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# Cultural Change and American Identity 1945-Present

## Overview

In this unit, students will explore the major changes and trends in American culture from the postwar era to the present. American culture encompasses the customs and traditions of the United States, including language, religion, fine and popular art, belief systems, traditions, and customs. The United States is sometimes referred to as a “melting pot” in which different cultures have contributed their own distinct elements to American culture and is what makes our nation one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. Students will explore how events and personalities have influenced contemporary American culture and how that culture has, in turn, influenced political, economic, and social life. Furthermore, students will investigate the different ways in which various groups have been integrated into American life.

## Unit Content Objectives

At the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Analyze major cultural trends and cultural shifts in the United States and the factors that led to those changes from the postwar era to the present.
- Examine different forms of cultural expression including art, literature, music, film and television, and other forms of fine and popular art to evaluate how art reflects American culture from the postwar era to the present.
- Analyze significant cultural shifts in demographics, language, religion, and leisure activities in the United States from the postwar era to the present.
- Evaluate how the media has influenced American culture and identity throughout different eras of recent American history.
- Analyze the ways in which American culture has influenced global culture through globalization.

## Unit Compelling Questions

Students will apply disciplinary concepts to investigate compelling questions such as:

- Is there a uniquely “American identity” and how has that identity changed in the decades since 1945?
- How have trends in art, literature, music, film, and other forms of fine and popular art reflected cultural shifts in the United States from 1945 to the present?
- How has the growth of the media industry in the United States since 1945 impacted political, social, and economic life in the United States?
- How has the process of globalization impacted American culture? How has American culture influenced global culture?

## Standards Emphasized in the Unit: Inquiry in the Social Studies

### **DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRY**

It is expected that students in Contemporary U.S. History will individually and with others:

**INQ 9–12.1** Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.

**INQ 9–12.2** Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

**INQ 9–12.3** Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a supporting question.

**INQ 9–12.4** Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge.

**INQ 9–12.5** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources

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**Key academic vocabulary: *questioning, argument, explanation, point of view***

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## **DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY CONCEPTS AND TOOLS**

It is expected that students in high school U.S. History will individually and with others:

### Change, Continuity and Context

**HIST 9–12.1** Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

**HIST 9–12.2** Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.

### Perspectives

**HIST 9–12.3** Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

**HIST 9–12.4** Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives. (e.g., immigration, labor, the role of women).

**HIST 9–12.5** Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.

**HIST 9–12.6** Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.

**HIST 9–12.7** Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

### Historical Sources and Evidence

**HIST 9–12.8** Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations.

**HIST 9–12.9** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

**HIST 9–12.10** Critique the appropriateness of the historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.

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