

Advanced and Honors Levels U.S. History Syllabus

“The truth is found when men are free to pursue it.” - FDR

Course Description

Through this course, students study the ideals, significant figures, and milestone events that shaped the United States of America from its beginnings through its rise to world power. This class requires students to analyze the causes and long-term effects of important historical events, including the formation of our system of government, and to connect these events to the American systems that affect their lives today. Students are encouraged to think critically about how America functions as a nation and how it relates to and influences other nations. Throughout the course, students read and view primary and secondary sources to learn multiple perspectives. **This syllabus addresses both Advanced and Honors course levels. Text and assessment complexity as well as the level of independence required for learning activities will vary based on the level of the course.**

This course is directly aligned with the traits defined in the *Portrait of the Crusader*. Through the study of history, students observe the impacts of injustice and oppression versus justice and freedom, and they are encouraged to value and respect the rights and dignity of all people. This class encourages students to be inspired learners, faithful citizens, and honorable souls who respect the diverse people of these United States.

Assessment Practices

Student knowledge and skills are measured in a variety of ways throughout the course, which may include:

- Written assessments that include terminology, short answers, and constructed responses to assess content knowledge and make connections.
- Essays that ask students to research, analyze and respond with sound reasoning and insight.
- A project that may include a presentation or performative component.
- A creative connection assessment which asks students to put themselves into an historic situation and create a memoir, journal, or letters.
- A Socratic Seminar or other form of debate.

Essential Questions for the Course:

- How was the American government shaped? How does it continue to change?
- How was the economy of America shaped? How does it continue to change?
- What was the role of slavery in shaping the American economy and identity?
- How is America progressing as a nation of the people, by the people, and for the people?
- Does America have a dynamic national identity? What impacts this identity?
- How have wars impacted the course of America's future and identity? Why do we fight wars?
- What responsibilities come with being a world power?
- How have various presidencies shaped America's image on the world stage?
- How has technology shaped American lives? How has it impacted American policy?

Curriculum Framework

Unit 1: A New Government (Topics 4 & 5)

Pacing: 5 - 10 Classes

Focus Questions:

- What issues led to the development of the Confederation?
- What were the main flaws in the Articles of Confederation? How did the new Constitution address these issues?
- What were the challenges surrounding the ratification of the Constitution?
- What key precedents did George Washington set while he was in office?
- What was the XYZ Affair and what were its implications for American foreign policy?

Concepts and Skills:

- Explain how the states' new constitutions reflected republican ideas.
- Describe the structure and powers of the national government under the Articles of Confederation.
- Analyze how tensions with foreign countries revealed the weaknesses of the U.S. government.
- Summarize the rival plans for the government proposed at the Constitutional Convention.
- Describe the compromises made in order to reach agreement on the Constitution.
- Describe the needs of small states versus those of large states.
- Explain the reasons why leaders called for the Constitutional Convention.
- Analyze Hamilton's plans for the economy and the opposition to these plans.
- Explain how a two-party system emerged in the new nation.
- Describe American relations with Britain, France, and Spain during this time period.

Unit 2: America Takes Shape (Topics 5)

Pacing: 5 - 10 Classes

Focus Questions:

- How did Jefferson's interpretation of the Constitution make his presidency differ from Washington's?
- Why did the southern states overwhelmingly oppose Hamilton's plan to balance the national debt?
- How did the results of the War of 1812 affect American morale?
- How did the war of 1812 cause the demise of the Federalist party?
- What were the main points of the Monroe Doctrine and how did the doctrine affect U.S. foreign relations?

Concepts and Skills:

- Examine how Washington and Hamilton shaped the office of the presidency and the national economy.
- Analyze the efficacy of Hamilton's plans regarding the National Bank and industrialization.
- Trace the continued development and platforms of the first two political parties.
- Summarize the impact of the Jefferson presidency, including Judicial Review and the Louisiana Purchase.

- Explain why the War of 1812 intensified sectionalism.
- Examine the purpose and impact of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and how this foreshadowed the Civil War.
- Summarize the purpose and main ideas of the Monroe Doctrine. Determine how this doctrine impacted foreign relations.

Unit 3: America Expands (Topics 5 & 6)

Pacing: 5 - 10 Classes

Focus Questions:

- What is Jacksonian Democracy?
- What is the value of nullification?
- What caused the Mexican-American war?
- What were Polk's motivations, and how did his platform line up with his actions as president?
- Why did people want to move west?

Concepts and Skills:

- Explain why some people saw Jackson as a tyrant while others connected him with the common man.
- Evaluate the policies of Andrew Jackson, including those that forced Native Americans to leave their lands and the Trail of Tears. Analyze the financial motivations for specific policies.
- Determine the reasons for choosing a war with Mexico over a war with Britain.
- Investigate the causes and effects of westward expansion at this time and the concept of Manifest Destiny.
- Explain the role of mining in westward expansion.
- Analyze the debate over California's statehood.

Unit 4: The Civil War (Topic 7)

Pacing: 5 - 10 Classes

Focus Questions:

- How did enslaved people retain their culture and search for freedom?
- How did Nat Turner's rebellion influence anti-slavery sentiment in the north?
- How did southerners defend slavery?
- How did the Civil War change the nation?
- What were the primary differences between the northern and southern states?
- How did Lincoln's death affect the nation?

Concepts and Skills:

- Analyze the importance of oral traditions in retaining culture.
- Explain both sides of the slavery debate.
- Analyze the Lincoln and Douglas debates and Lincoln's journey to the presidency.
- Determine how the Civil War reflected the struggle between federal and states' rights.
- Trace the process of state secession and the attack on Fort Sumter.
- Describe the important tenets of the Emancipation Proclamation, and why some abolitionists didn't think it went far enough.

- Analyze Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address (1863).
- Determine why the Civil War is considered the deadliest war in American History.

Unit 5: Reconstruction (Topic 8)

Pacing: 5 - 10 Classes

Focus Questions:

- What problems did Reconstruction need to address?
- What rights did African Americans have during this time period?
- How did the southern states rebuild their governments, economies, and social structures?
- How did the political landscape change in the South?
- How did African American leaders attempt to shape the role of African Americans in this new society?

Content and Skills:

- Analyze the impact of Lincoln's death and Johnson’s presidency on the policies of Reconstruction.
- Describe the challenges faced by the South after their loss in the Civil War.
- Explain the varied plans for reconstruction.
- Examine the impact of *Plessy v Ferguson*.
- Compare and contrast the ideas of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois.
- Compare the impacts of the institution of slavery with the black codes enacted under Johnson.
- Examine African American opportunities as sharecroppers or tenant farmers.
- Explain the purpose of the Civil Rights Act of 1875 and the 13th, 14th, 15th Amendments.
- Analyze how the purposes of this legislation were thwarted by literacy tests, grandfather clauses, poll taxes, voter registration requirements, Jim Crow Laws, and intimidation practices.

Unit 6: The Progressive Era (Topic 11)

Pacing: 5 - 10 Classes

Focus Questions:

- What was the Progressive movement?
- What was the role of journalists and novelists during the Progressive Era?
- What workplace reforms were made during this time?
- What reforms were made in government and politics?

Concepts and Skills:

- Trace the transition from the Gilded Age to Progressive Era.
- Analyze the changing role of women during this time period, including their impact on settlement houses, consumer protection, child labor, and the rights of women and minorities.
- Describe the value of dedicated muckrakers exposing corruption and poor conditions.
- Examine the progress made in civil rights protections for ethnic and religious minorities.
- Explain the value of changes made to American lives from the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act.
- Analyze the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, including environmental preservation.

Unit 7: America During the World Wars (Topic 12)

Pacing: 5 - 10 Classes

Please Note: World War I, World War II, and the Cold War are covered in detail in World History II. This course focuses on how those wars impacted America specifically.

Focus Questions:

- How did the world wars affect the homefront? The federal and state governments?
- What was the Harlem Renaissance?
- What caused the Great Depression?
- What was the impact of the Great Depression on America? On the rest of the world?
- How did America survive the Great Depression?
- What lasting impacts did the New Deal and New Deal programs have on America?

Concepts and Skills:

- Analyze the impact of the Harlem Renaissance on American culture.
- Define the terms *speculation* and *buying on margin*; examine the stock market crash of 1929.
- Analyze the factors that contributed to depression in America, including the challenges faced by farmers, newly enacted tariffs, and the policies/decisions of Hoover.
- Explain life during the Great Depression in different areas of the nation. Trace the growth of unemployment in the nation.
- Explain the renewed discrimination practices towards African Americans, Hispanics, and women during the Depression.
- Examine the causes and effects of the Dust Bowl.
- Contrast supply-side and trickle-down economics.
- Explain FDR's New Deal: Recovery, Relief and Reform, including key programs put into place (FDIC, Social Security, CCC).
- Analyze how the New Deal changed the role of the federal government.

Unit 8: The Push for Equality (Topics 16 & 18)

Pacing: 5 - 10 Classes

Focus Questions:

- What is the difference between de jure segregation and de facto segregation?
- How did segregation during this time affect the education system?
- What actions did individuals take to demonstrate the need for equality?
- Why was legislation's approach to end voter suppression and discriminatory employment a step forward for equality?
- What lasting change was achieved by the Civil Rights Movement?
- Why did Watergate ultimately get Nixon impeached?

Content and Skills:

- Explain de facto segregation in all areas of the nation.
- Evaluate the progress of the Civil Rights movement during the 1950s, including *Brown vs. Bd of Ed* and the conflict between federal and state power regarding education/desegregation in Little Rock.

- Trace the growth of the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s, including the impact of Martin Luther King (MLK).
- Examine the impact of the Warren Court.
- Explain the purpose of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the 24th Amendment, Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.
- Examine the impact of the assassination of MLK, John F. Kennedy, and Robert Kennedy in America.
- Describe the primary goal of affirmative action and how it accomplishes that goal.
- Trace the growth and setbacks of the Women’s Rights Movement during this time period.
- Describe the goals and achievements of second wave feminism.
- Explain why Nixon issued a war on drugs.
- Analyze why the Watergate scandal led to Nixon’s impeachment and ultimate resignation.

Unit 9: The 80s and 90s (Topic 19)

Pacing: 5 - 10 Classes

Focus Questions:

- How did Regan usher in a new conservatism to American politics?
- What major challenges did the Reagan presidency face?
- How did George Bush Sr.’s policies change the way that the US. interacted with the world?
- Why did Bill Clinton defeat George Bush Sr. in 1992?
- Why did the economy see historical growth under the Clinton presidency?
- Was impeaching Clinton the right thing to do?
- How did digital technology change American lives and the American workplace?

Concepts and Skills:

- Explain the theory of “supply side economics.”
- Analyze the pros and cons of deregulation.
- Explain how the federal budget deficit interacts with the national debt.
- Describe the impact of the Savings and Loan Crisis on America.
- Examine the impact of the drug trade and drug use on America.
- Describe the challenges that the AIDS virus presented.
- Analyze the role that the United States played in the Middle East during these decades.
- Explain the Iran-Contra Affair.
- Describe why and how Operation Desert Storm was fought.
- Describe how President Bush Sr. went from soaring popularity at the end of Desert Storm to very low popularity when he ran against Clinton.
- Describe the pros and cons of NAFTA.
- Analyze the efficacy of Clinton’s domestic policies and the economic growth of the country during this period.
- Describe the case against President Clinton regarding impeachment.
- Trace the rise of personal computers during these decades and the growth of the internet.
- Describe the pros and cons pertaining to the research and use of biotechnology.

Unit 10: Modern Day Presidencies (Topic 20)

Pacing: 5 - 10 Classes

Focus Questions:

- What foreign and domestic policies were implemented by the early G.W. Bush presidency?
- How did 9/11 impact America? What was the global war on terror?
- What are the pros and cons of the Patriot Act?
- What were the causes and effects of the Financial Crisis of 2008?
- How did the Obama administration address inherited problems both domestically and abroad?
- What were the causes and effects of the BLM movement?
- What was President Trump's national agenda?
- How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact life around the world?
- What was the controversy surrounding the 2020 election? How did this controversy impact politics and the public perception of elections?

Content and Skills:

- Explain the controversy surrounding the 2000 election.
- Analyze the actions of Al Qaeda and the American response.
- Analyze the pros and cons of the Patriot Act.
- Describe how American involvement in the Middle East was a part of the War on Terror, the invasion of Afghanistan, and the Iraq war.
- Describe how the War in Iraq and the government's slow response to Hurricane Katrina impacted Bush's second term as president.
- Analyze the impact that new technology had on America.
- Describe the important facets of "The Great Recession" of 2008
- Define what "Too Big to Fail" means.
- Describe what the "ACA" is, and what the Obama administration's intentions were with it.
- Compare and contrast Obama's actions in the Middle East with those of presidents that came before him.
- Describe the actions that the Obama administration took to address climate change.
- Define what Trump meant by the slogan, "Make America Great Again".
- Analyze how the Supreme Court changed from the Bush presidency, to the Obama presidency, to the Trump presidency.
- Describe what trade protectionism is and how it relates to the Trump presidency's "America First" policy.
- Describe the impact that the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor had on Americans and what actions were taken in response.
- Analyze the impact that Covid-19 and Trump's claims of election fraud had on the 2020 election.
- Describe what happened on January 6th, 2021, and why it happened.

Resources

- Textbook – Pearson US History (New Edition). An e-book is available and typically used.
- Additional resources will be selected to supplement the textbook and address current events

Grading

The grading policy is:

- 50% - Mastery: Summative assessments that test knowledge of content and topic questions.
- 20% - Formative: Assignments that help develop knowledge and understanding between summative assessments.
- 15% - Student Preparation: Assignments typically include work completed to prepare for class.
- 15% - Participation: Participation in class and participation in assignments and group projects

Please refer to the Absence Make Up Policy in the student handbook