

United States History ACP

Course Expectations

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Course Description

Welcome to Junior Year & U.S History! You will begin this school year by studying the foundations of American history with an examination of the U.S Constitution. In order to understand much of American history, it is extremely important to have a deep knowledge of the infrastructure of the American government so you can more easily navigate the remaining units of the school year. After that unit, the course will examine US history from the founding period to the present. However, this class will be taught thematically instead of chronologically. That means we will examine a particular part of history of the U.S from 1776 to the present and then start over with a new theme. You will learn each decade of US history from 1865 five times.

Course Outline

The themes we will examine are:

Democracy-----Authority

This unit examines the tension between the increasing power of the federal government and the rights of the people in the United States. The power of the federal government fluctuates at various times depending on circumstances, including the cultural and political climate. The growth of the federal government and the ability of the people to retain rights will be taught through the three threads relating a type of right or particular circumstance, such as war, or due to federalism.

Equality-----Hierarchy

This unit explores how different groups throughout history have experienced movement on the spectrum of full equality and being part of a rigid social/political/economic structure. This unit will be covered twice - once from the perspective of African-Americans and once from the perspective of either women, immigrants or Native Americans.

Individualism-----Collectivism

This unit examines the shift in the U.S. from a structure of loosely connected individuals to a society with greater interdependence. These connections provided mutual benefits to individuals, groups or the nation but at the expense of rights and power of individuals, groups or states. We will determine how these connections emerged politically, economically and socially, as well as the impact of their development.

American Foreign Policy – A Juggling Act

This unit examines the motives and methods of United States involvement in foreign affairs. The three threads of U.S. involvement are unilateralism (the U.S as a lone wolf), ideological expansionism and practical interests.

Essential Questions:

1. Considering that the Constitution limits the power of the government to make change, why and through what mechanisms has there been change in people's lives?
2. How and why have foreign policy and domestic policy aligned throughout U.S. history?
3. Has the United States become a more inclusive nation over time regarding people's ability to gain the privilege of American citizenship regardless of personal characteristics?

Behavior Ground Rules/Class Expectations

Each term you will be filling out a Class Citizenship self-evaluation. I will go over that evaluation and agree/disagree when needed. A copy of that sheet is attached to this course outline. Also, you will be expected to follow the following guidelines for creating a supportive and safe learning environment:

- Respect confidentiality
- Be willing to "try stuff on"
- Okay to disagree
- No blame/shame/attack
- Use "I" statements
- Share the "air time"
- Practice active listening
- Use And instead of But to practice Both/ And thinking
- Say ouch when something is said or done that is hurtful
- Remember Intent vs Impact

Grading

Homework:

3 points - if simply checked and discussed in class.

- I will look for key words from the homework, sentences/phrases that demonstrate comprehension and a thorough work ethic.

5-20 points - if collected and more thoroughly graded/checked.

Tests/other assessments: 50-100 points.

- You will have at least 2-4 assessments, either papers/projects that will be worth 25-100 points each term.

Term grades will be calculated in the following fashion,

Terms 1 & 4

<i>Assessments (tests, in-class essays, quizzes, large projects)</i>	65%
<i>Term Assignments (homework, in-class group work, small projects)</i>	25 %
<i>Class Citizenship (see attached for breakdown)</i>	10 %

Terms 2 & 3

<i>Assessments (tests, in-class essays, quizzes, large projects)</i>	50%
<i>Junior Thesis</i>	30%
<i>Term Assignments (homework, in-class group work, small projects)</i>	15 %
<i>Class Citizenship (see attached for breakdown)</i>	5 %

Homework, ongoing projects, papers, etc will go down a grade a day for each day late. For example, if you would have received a B +, but were a day late – you would therefore receive a B. Keep your assignment notebook updated and keep track of our wikispace (listed at the top of this course outline). I will NOT chase you down to hand in work. If you are absent, take the initiative and email me or stop by if missed the day before a drop day, etc. If you are going away for an extended period of time (family trips, etc), please see me ahead of time and often I can get the work to you.

Junior Thesis Project

The Junior Thesis is a research and writing project that brings together the various skills you have learned throughout your social studies career. This year you will be completing a Junior Thesis Project in which you will be responsible for researching a topic and presenting an argument in a paper and through a dialogue.

Materials Needed

You are expected to have writing utensils (pen or pencils), a 3-ring binder or notebook and folders for our handouts. You will be getting a reader for each unit and therefore need to bring that reader with you to class as well. Extras of handouts can be found in the correctly labeled bin on the counter.