



RADNOR TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
Course Overview



American Studies- Academic
Course # 234

General Information

Credits: 1

Weighted: N/A

Prerequisite: N/A

Length: Full Year

Format: Meets Daily

Grade: 11th

Course Description

U.S. History II is part two of a survey of United States History that students began at the Middle School. This course aims to engage students in the study of history by encouraging them to become active participants in the construction of ideas and understandings about what the United States is as a nation and the beliefs and principles that bind a diverse group of together as American citizens. The words of Carl Becker, a well-known historian in the early twentieth century, capture the idea of the course best: "history enables us to control, not society but ourselves - a much more important thing it prepares us to live more humanely in the present and to meet rather than foretell the future." Students who complete U.S. History II will be better equipped to live "humanely" today, and better positioned to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Careful study and analysis of the major historical events will include industrialization and the rise of big business, large scale immigration, the progressive movement, imperialism, World War I, the Twenties, the Great Depression, World War II, post-war prosperity, the Cold War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, the 1960s, the Reagan era, the Clinton years, 9/11 and the War on Terror.

Course Objectives:

Enduring Understandings

1. Understanding history can help individuals participate more effectively in the world.
2. Understanding history can provide an appreciation for the struggles, failures, and triumphs of our predecessors.
3. Understanding history can broaden our understanding of what it means to be a human being.
4. History is the on-going process of interpreting and evaluating sources in order to construct meaning about the past and its importance to today.
5. Knowledge of the past informs the present and can better prepare people for the future.
6. Significant historical events involve complex sets of interrelated causes and effects.
7. Individuals can influence history, but are more often influenced by history.
8. Enlightened individuals can make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good.
9. Individuals can participate actively in society and exercise influence over groups and institutions.
10. Individuals have important rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democracy.
11. History is not one story set in stone, but a collection of voices, each containing its own interpretation of the past.

Essential Questions

1. How can studying the past help us understand the present world and make better decisions for the future?
2. When do we work within a system to change it and when do we go outside the system?
3. Is change better coming from the top down or the bottom up, or some combination of the two?
4. What is the American dream and how does it drive us?
5. Does government reflect or shape society?
6. How does an ordinary individual really make a difference in society?
7. Is the American dream a world dream?
8. What justifies reaching outside our borders?
9. Has the United States been a good model of democracy, justice and fairness to other nations of the world?
10. What causes significant historical change?
11. To what extent do the American people like and trust their leaders?
12. Is the government or are individuals more effective at solving problems?
13. How does a just society reconcile the tension between the individual's desire to be free and the community's need for security and order?
14. Has the United States, as a nation, been able to change over time in order to right the wrongs in its past?

Skills

Students will be able to:

- work with a variety of sources of information.
- recognize the advantages and limitations of various sources.
- be able to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information.
- differentiate fact from opinion.
- speak and write in ways that effectively communicates ideas and positions regarding differing issues.
- use media and various visuals for presenting information and ideas to their peers.
- formulate arguments in the form of thesis statements and support those arguments through the use of relevant factual information gathered from a variety of sources .
- use different forms of writing: formal expository essays, informal journals, quick reflections, investigative journalism, creative, interpretive, and argumentative.

Common Assessments:

Common Assessment 1- Industrial Society DBQ

Common Assessment 2- Great Depression/New Deal Research and Presentation

Common Assessment 3- Historical Context of a Current Issue

Common Assessment 4- Twentieth Century FRQ

Major Units of Study:

Unit 1 – The Roots of a Modern Nation 1877-1920

- Industry Comes of Age: the rise of big business, government regulation, and unions;
- Development of the West: Western expansion, the Native American saga, and populist protest;
- The Rise of the American City: mass immigration and reaction, new cultural and economic opportunities, and new social problems;
- Political corruption;
- A new generation of reformers;
- Progressive agendas and ideas;
- President Theodore Roosevelt and the advent of the modern presidency;
- President Woodrow Wilson and New Freedom;
- Limits to Progressivism;
- American expansion and becoming a world power;
- World War I: From neutrality to intervention and President Woodrow Wilson's idealist approach to foreign policy.

Unit 2 - The Era of the Twenties

- Postwar turmoil and the Republican influence;
- Prosperity and American Business;
- The changing nature of work;
- The Culture of Modernism and the clash with tradition.

UNIT 3 The Great Depression and New Deal 1920-1939

- The Great Crash of 1929: causes and consequences;
- The American dream on hold and life during the depression;
- The Causes of the Depression;
- President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal;
- Criticism of the New Deal and Reformulation;
- The legacy of the New Deal .

Unit 4 – World War II & the Transformation of the United States 1933-1945

- The Road to War in Asia and Europe;
- The war begins and the United States at war;
- Mobilizing the home-front;
- Impact of War on Americans: The home-front and the transformation of American society;
- The war and Civil Rights.;

Unit 5 - The Post War World and the Cold War 1945-1960

- The Uneasy Peace post World War II;
- Origins of the Cold War;
- Truman and the Truman Doctrine;
- The Cold War Deepens;

- The Cold War in the Atomic Age;
- The Cold War in Asia: the outbreak of hostilities in Korea and U.S. involvement;.
- Postwar economy and prosperity;
- Growth of the middle class and suburbia;
- Poverty and Plenty;
- Retreat from the New Deal;
- The Cold War at Home;
- The Eisenhower Years.

Unit 6 - Toward Equality and Social Reform 1954-1976

- The Civil Rights Struggle: hope vs. disappointment;
- President John F. Kennedy and the New Frontier;
- President Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society;
- The Supreme Court and civil liberties cases;
- Social protest movements: women, Hispanics, and Native Americans.

Unit 7 - The Troubled Years 1960-1980

- The war in Vietnam: ideals vs. reality;
- 1968: a year of crises;
- The impact of the war in Vietnam at home;
- The end of the war;
- President Richard Nixon;
- The Watergate scandal;
- Presidents Ford and Carter.

Unit 8 – New Challenges 1980-2000

- The rise of President Reagan and the Reagan revolution;
- The end of Communism;
- President George H.W. Bush;
- The election of President Clinton and the Clinton agenda;
- The search for a new balance;
- A new millenium and the presidential election of 2000.

Unit 9 - Topics in the first decade of the 21st Century

- The terrorist attacks on 9/11/2001;
- the war on Terror in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq;
- The presidency of George W. Bush;

Materials & Texts

Text Book - *American Odyssey: The United States in the 20th Century*. (Publisher: Glencoe McGraw-Hill

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History Alive! Pursuing American Ideals In Social Studies Book Closet

Reading Like a Historian - <http://sheg.stanford.edu/?q=node/45>

Gilder-Lehrman Institute - <https://www.gilderlehrman.org>

Viewpoints: USA (1967) by Bernard Feder. A Great Document Reader through Vietnam and Civil Rights Choices – Brown University (In Social Studies Office)

Taking Sides – Clashing Views in United States History Volume 2

The Story of US - America The Story of US (History Channel)

The Century with Peter Jennings (Videocassettes in the library)

Summer Assignment

Students in American Studies- Academic will have no summer assignment.