

College Preparatory United States History Syllabus (2024)

Title: College Preparatory United States History (CPUSH)

Grade Level: 11

Subject Area: (A-G) Requirement; PHS Graduation Requirement

Length of Course: Year

Instructors: Mr. Brandon Gay (bgay@ggusd.net)

Class Outline: [link](#)

Electronic Signature

Why Study United States History?

How can we begin to know that events worldwide are real, especially when we do not see them ourselves? Is the video doctored? What is the motivation of the author? Is the person who wrote this a person? Thinking about how we determine to trust information is a question important in a world marked with misinformation and politicization of the facts. However, this problem is not new and plagues the study of events that occurred in the past and only gets worse the further back in time we look. What happened 100 years ago? 200? 2000? Is there any hope for understanding the present or the past? Yes, and the solution is strategies from history.

History is a skills-based discipline that focuses on studying the past. It holds that our past is a series of events that occurred, but our understanding of those events is limited by the natural process of time. Thankfully, these events have left pieces of evidence that we, as historians, can use to decipher the past. Sometimes, that evidence is physical remains of the event, like artifacts; sometimes, it is in documents, like books, pamphlets, or pictures. These pieces of evidence act as a skeleton of the event, and with careful historical investigation, we can come close to understanding the event itself and help us find answers to burning questions regarding our past. We apply historical thinking skills that analyze these pieces of evidence by investigating the evidence's context, biases, and how different sources agree or disagree with each other. Through this investigation we will construct evidence based arguments about events from our past.

Though we are focused on developing these skills as we investigate US History in this class, you can use the skills we develop to better engage with the world around you and be better citizens.

It won't be an easy journey, but it will be worthwhile! There is no time like the present to begin. Let us weigh anchor and get moving! The past and who we are today awaits!



U.S. History Course Outline:

US History is a year-long course following the [CA State Standards](#) for History/Social Science and the revised [11th Grade Framework for History/Social Science](#). Our focus is on the history of the U.S. in the 20th century, after a quick review of colonialism to 1900. We will explore the major events, controversies, moral dilemmas, and key individuals that relate to our topics, with particular attention to how the issues connect to today. Throughout the year, students are encouraged to have critical conversations with their readings, writings, and course assignments. This will build students' historical and civic literacy, improve their academic skills, and ultimately prepare them for participation in the messy world of citizenship.

Required Class Materials*

1. *United States History: the Twentieth Century* (Pearson, 2019)
2. Electronic Devices - we are creating and using digital portfolios using Google sites. (You can choose to use a three ring binder/folder. **Bring to class daily!!**)

3. Blue or black pens, pencils, highlighters.

*Please see Mr. Gay *privately* if you are unable to obtain any necessary materials. It is essential that you remain organized and bring ALL materials to class every day. The textbook is the only exception unless otherwise requested in advance. Completion of course assignments will be vital to your success in this class, therefore notebooks will be subject to checks at the end of each unit to ensure student progress.

Coursework, Grading, Homework and Exams:

Class Grading Standards:

This class is designed to develop historical thinking skills (identifying perspective, corroborating evidence, setting events into a cause and effect) through an exploration of United States history between 1890-the present. Students will develop and display their understanding of these skills through a variety of assessments. Not all grades are the same and broken up as follows.

- **Summative** Assessments (Unit exams, quarterly projects, semester final): 80%
- **Formative** Assessments (Classroom Quizzes, class activities): 20%

Skills:

- **Literacy:**
 - Students are able to interpret information from primary and secondary sources.
 - Some Examples: Diaries, Letters, Newspapers, Political Cartoons, Graphs, Maps, Websites, and Textbooks.
- **Historical Thinking Skills:**
 - Students are able to analyze how a source's context, and bias may impact the perspective and/or validity of the source.
- **Historical Interpretation:**
 - Synthesizing evidence from multiple sources into a clear explanation of the past.
 - Cause and Effect, Change and Continuity, Testing Hypotheses, Historical Argumentation.

Content:

- This course covers US History content standards as outlined in the [CA State Standards](#) (47-53)
- Course is broken down into Units, which you can review here: [Mr. Gay's Course Outline](#)

Grade Distribution:

Learning is a journey and to reflect that process I have weighted grades based on the unit it is in.

- Unit 1: 5%
- Unit 2: 10%
- Unit 3: 20%
- Unit 4: 30%
- Unit 5: 30%
- Scholarly Habits 5%

Formative Assessments:

Coursework:

In order for students to be successful in the class they need to practice historical thinking skills regularly. Lessons are designed for students to practice one or more skills in order for them to have success in class and after they graduate. The lessons are designed to be completed during class time (1-3 class periods), with enough time for students to diligently complete the assignment. However, I recognize that students might not complete all of the class work during class time. To ensure students are completing classwork in a timely

manner I will check coursework assignments regularly, this will contribute to the 'scholarly habits' grade. **If students are not completing the assignments, it means they are not practicing their skills and putting their success in the course in jeopardy. Therefore, parents of students who are missing assignments will be notified.**

Quizzes:

Learning is a journey, and therefore the course is designed to be rigorous and with the necessary support for student success. In the age of AI and other programs it is difficult to rely on classwork or homework to indicate student progress in the course. Therefore, I rely on quizzes to provide checkpoints for understanding that inform students and myself of their learning progress. Each Unit in this course will include a minimum of 2 quizzes. Quizzes, as formative assessments, are there to help students identify areas of weakness before the summative assessments. Therefore, students can retake the quiz after the formative assessment has been provided up until 2 days before the exam.

Makeup Work/Absences:

Since each lesson is designed to help a student practice a skill with the necessary support. If students miss a day it is difficult to 'catch up' and therefore their attendance is vital to student success. However, there will be moments when students cannot make it to class. Students will have to make up any and all work that is missed. Extensions for assignments will apply based on the number of days you missed. (For example, if you are absent three days, then the assignment due date will be extended by three days upon return.) **When students are absent they can check Google Classroom to find the assignments that are missed, as all assignments will be posted there.**

Scholarly Habits: Homework and Classroom Participation (5% of the grade):

This grading category was created in response to student feedback in prior years. Students discussed how their participation in class went unrecognized by me, and this grading category is for me to reward scholarly habits such as completing Homework and participation in classroom discussions.

To help students get regular feedback, I am going to implement "Classroom Dojo" to record student participation in the class. As an application it allows me to provide hidden comments with associated points to help students recognize when and how I noticed a scholarly behavior during the class time.

Homework Philosophy:

Homework will be posted in Google Classroom and communicated to students in class. Homework is designed to help students learn the content, and prepare for in class quizzes and apply their understanding of history and skills to assessing modern events. Therefore the assignments are expected to be completed by the due date. Please see the below paragraph on "Late Work" for details.

I recognize that my students' educational, personal, and work lives are very busy with demands on their precious time. Homework assignments are assigned to help students to practice a skill and expand understanding of a concept. **Homework** is assessed and given a complete/not complete grade. If the student is struggling with the assignment, please contact me before the due date to discuss ways to help you succeed.



Homework Late policy:

Since the assignments were designed to support student success, I accepted coursework and homework until two school days before the Unit Exam.

Summative Assessments:

Exams:

The exam is a high risk final assessment that often has a multiple choice and written component for students to display their understanding of the skills and content of the Unit. The exam is known as a 'skill based exam' where students apply their content knowledge to engage and interpret multiple forms of information. These skills are developed during classwork and homework assignments. The exam is the summative evidence of their progress in their course and their prior quiz grades will be replaced based on their exam performance.

Exam Retakes:

If students perform poorly on the assessment they will be assigned a retake opportunity with a targeted project. Completion of this assignment will show me they have improved and their grade will increase accordingly (approximately 1 letter grade).

However, if students show comprehension of the preceding content, their exam score will supersede their quiz score. At the end of each quarter there is a benchmark assessment. This benchmark assessment is used to improve one exam score from the preceding quarter.

Essay:

The act of writing is a reflection of thought. While as a student a professor told me "You know things in three levels. First you hear it. Second, you can verbalize it. Third, you can write about it." When you are writing it requires the author to be so familiar with the content that they can explain it without knowing who their audience is. This important skill is useful in multiple domains of academic and career futures. As with any skill it requires regular practice. Essays are going to be summative applications where students synthesize information and will be graded by a rubric given to them at the beginning of the assignment. If there is any confusion on the assignment or how a student is graded, please let me know immediately so I can provide the necessary support.

Grade Notes: I will be using a 4 point grading scale on all assignments and tests. This will impact how I will report grades and how grades will be calculated in the class:

Assignment Score	Meaning	Report Grade	Final Grade Percent
4	Advanced in rigor and complexity	A	87.5-100%
3	Met standard	B	62.5-87.49%
2	Almost Met Standard	C	37.5-62.49%
1	Not good enough, needs immediate academic support	D	12.5-37.49%

0	Missing Evidence or did not try	F	0-12.49%
---	---------------------------------	---	----------

Teacher and Student Expectations

I have one guiding rule in my classroom: **Respect**. This can be broken down into four main categories:

Respect yourself. Students in the classroom are developing adults and intellectuals. Their future may lead them towards a variety of outcomes based on their needs. Students will respect themselves, their accomplishments and their improvement. Students will hold themselves accountable for their academic success in US history and ensure they are behaving in a way conducive to their success.

Respect classmates. Students will enter the classroom with different skills, prior knowledge, and world views. It is important to respect these differences and appreciate the perspectives provided by your classmates. Students will ensure that they are acting in a way that is conducive to the success of their classmates, including supporting and collaborating with their peers in group discussions. Ensuring that students are remaining on task and being respectful of each other during course work.

Respect the Teacher. My goal is to help students succeed in my class. I expect students to listen, to the best of their ability, to my instructions. Ask questions that relate to the material and the course. As a teacher, I make decisions with the goal of helping students succeed. I will ask students to move seats or change the mode of their activity according to if they are not meeting the rule of respect in my classroom. I expect students to respect this decision at the moment, and if they feel like they are being disrespected, voice their opinion and listen to my explanation.

Respect the Space. My classroom is a shared space that is used by all of my students. Therefore, it is all of our responsibility to maintain the space and ensure that it is usable to the following class. Students must return anything used in the classroom to their proper spot after use. For example, returning markers to their spot, plugging in borrowed laptops, and cleaning up trash in the room.

You can expect me to help you:

- ease into the adult world of responsibilities
- tolerate others and work effectively in groups
- develop scholarly behavior
- learn the essentials of US history
- develop citizenship dispositions
- refine your decision-making process

I expect from you:

- respect, cooperation and courtesy
- honesty and integrity
- good attendance and participation
- quality work completed on-time
- follow **all** PHS rules- especially cell phones and tardies

Classroom Expectations

Google Classroom & Internet Use:

This class is making the move to digital assignments, and will require the daily use of technology. We will use the tools in Google Classroom to organize and participate in the class. I will post regular reminders, slide decks, materials and assignments on Google Classroom for students to easily find and navigate the course material. Students will use Google Classroom to check rubrics, submit assignments, access their digital notebook, complete projects, and schedule the work load of this class. Please see the school website for

Pacifica High School CPUSH Syllabus 2024-2025

school policy on devices. If a student does not have access to the Internet at home, it is his/her responsibility to discuss options with Mr. Gay as soon as possible. All school devices and Internet rules will be enforced.

If students are not using their devices towards the goals of this class, then they will lose device privileges for the day. A paper assignment will be provided and a picture of the completed work will be uploaded to their google drive with an appropriate file name. Repeat offenders will lose device privileges for multiple days and receive a phone call home to better accommodate their needs.

Tardies: Class begins when the bell rings. **You are expected to be in your seat and ready to learn by the time the bell goes off.** The school tardy policy will be strictly enforced and excessive tardies will not only affect your grade, but may result in further consequences.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices: Cell phones are one of the greatest technological devices of our day, but they are also a major distraction that can get in the way of class. There will be a pocket organizer with outlets for students to charge their phones during class time. If students are found on their phone during class time, without permission, then they will place their cell phone in the charging station at the beginning of class. Students will collect their phone when they are excused at the end of the class. Repeat offenders will be asked to place their phones in the charging station during class time. Airpods are not allowed in the ear at all during instruction, unless permission is granted by the instructor.

If students knowingly keep their cell phones:

- First offense, students will be given a warning,
- Second offense will be at the teacher's discretion.
- Third + offense you will be given a referral to your assistant principal.

If there is a family emergency that requires the student to maintain contact with the family, notify me before class and students can hold on to their phone.

If students have any concerns, please talk to me and we can figure out a solution.

Calling Home and Parent Square: I know that the best way to support a student to succeed is to work with parents/guardians. Therefore, I reserve the right to call home to inform the parent/guardian of students' progress and behavior.

- Common support reasons:
 - Missing Summative Assignments (Rough Draft of Essay)
 - Low Test Scores.
 - Repeated Absences/Truancy.
 - Low Classroom Grades.
- Common Celebrations:
 - Strong test performance
 - Strong classroom participation

PHS Department and School Policy on Academic Integrity:

There is ZERO TOLERANCE for plagiarism (cheating) of any kind.

You are accountable for all your decisions and your behaviors and are expected to do all of your own work!

According to the Pacifica Discipline Code,

Pacifica High School CPUSH Syllabus 2024-2025

- **Cheating** is defined as, but not limited to, “using or giving any form of aid(s) in completing the assigned work and/or tests for a class.”
- **Plagiarism** is defined as, but not limited to, “taking the ideas/work/writings from another source and offering them as your own.”

Any student found committing any type of the above academic dishonesty will

- be given a zero on whatever assignment/assessment was compromised,
- have their parents notified, and
- be reported to administration for further disciplinary action.

Please note that using Generative AI programs (like ChatGPT) is Plagiarism!

All major projects will be uploaded to turnitin.com as a means of verifying the originality of student work.

Group Work and Cheating policy : In CPUSH you will regularly work in groups to complete assignments. When working collaboratively, students will freely share and use each other's work to complete assignments. In this context, it is assumed that all students are participating and all the work is a product of their collaboration.

- Two Takeaways:
 - For Cheating Purposes, the group is treated as above, you cannot take others (outside of your group) ideas and treat them as your own.
 - If you are not collaborating with your group on the project, then you do not get credit for that assignment.

Contacting the Teacher: As you develop into adulthood it is important to practice professional communication skills in the classroom and through email. Mr. Gay can only help you if the email is clear and follows the below outline: _____

SUBJECT: [2-5 words summarizing your email. For example CPUSH HW Extension.]

Body:

Hello Mr. Gay:

I hope you are well.

[Use the rest of the body to write your email. Please follow correct punctuation, and clear writing to help convey your message. If it is unclear, Mr. Gay may not be able to understand your email. Emails should be brief, 1-2 paragraphs.

- Period you are in.
- Clear information on the request or question.]

Sincerely,

[NAME, Student ID #]

Office Hours

Students are encouraged to visit Mr. Gay during tutorial and through appointment.

Citizenship:

Citizenship Marks



Pacifica High School CPUSH Syllabus 2024-25

Citizenship is part of what you will learn in the History/Social Science department! *This includes being a good citizen in our classroom, school, and civic communities as you interact with the course topics and with each other.* The criteria for earning citizenship values are as follows:

- **The student follows all school and class rules and takes responsibility for their actions.**
- **The student shows respect for the ideas, opinions, property and diversity of others and contributes to a positive school culture.**

O-Outstanding

- Is a positive role model, who leads quietly or outwardly
- Is always respectful of teachers and fellow students
- Works to improve the classroom atmosphere
- Takes an active part in class discussions, groups, etc.
- Is a self-starter and seeks to assist others
- Completes all work to the best of their ability
- Demonstrates personal and academic integrity
- Arrives on time and prepared - there and ready

S-Satisfactory:

- Contributes positively to class
- Shows respect for others
- Comes to class prepared and on time
- Demonstrates personal and academic integrity
- Listens and talks when appropriate
- Does what is expected
- Willing to assist others

N-Needs Improvement:

- Needs frequent reminders by the teacher to stay on task and/or behave appropriately
- Needs improvement in showing respect to classmates/teacher
- Sometimes comes to class unprepared and/or work isn't finished
- Distracts other students' learning
- Occasionally displays a negative or uncooperative attitude

U-Unsatisfactory:

- Is a negative/disruptive influence on the class

About the Teacher:

Mr. Gay was born in Cleveland, Ohio, but spent most of his childhood and adult life in southern California. Mr. Gay has had a long college career starting with his Associates in Social Science from Long Beach City College, then his Bachelors in Anthropology at California State University Dominguez Hills, Masters in Anthropology at University of California San Diego, and finally a teaching credential at California State University Long Beach. One of the most influential moments in his life occurred right after high school, when at the age of 19 he backpacked the Appalachian Trail (AT). This event catalyzed his future interest in the intersection of humanity and nature which developed into a long fascination with social and environmental justice, and our place in the world. Mr. Gay has worked as an apprentice auto technician and helped college

students succeed as a Teaching Assistant, college mentor, and laboratory aide. Mr. Gay lives in Long Beach with his wife, six cats, three reptiles, and a dog. He enjoys reading, video games, board games, painting miniatures, and watching movies. Mr. Gay is very excited to work with you all, and have a fun and triumphant school semester.

My Teaching Philosophy

“When will I need to know History in my life?”

This question was asked by a student when I was a Teaching Assistant, and it has echoed throughout my life. When I was younger, I often thought the same way, and it was not until I stood in front of a classroom faced with this question that I began to understand the importance of history in our daily lives.

So often history is reduced to a series of dates and events. These facts are important, but often forgotten after a class has ended. And besides, we can use Google to find the answer when we need to remember it! Yet, so often a discussion of these facts often leads to a debate. Why?

We realize that these facts from our history get organized and portrayed into a historical narrative. For example, some may find the role of the atomic bomb a gift that ended the war. Another, may find that the atomic bomb was an atrocity that should never have happened. Each narrative, even the one in your textbook, is an argument that uses these facts to interpret the past and make sense of the world. A historical narrative may instill a unique appreciation of the world around us, but that one narrative is only a single way to interpret our past.

It was not until college that I understood that at its core, history is a skill set that people can use to ask questions, assess claims, and seek answers about the world around them. With these historical thinking skills, we can begin to use evidence to think about everything from political movements, news, tweets, policy, government, and even art. We can then share our thoughts and ideas through carefully crafted fact-based writing!

In other words, my answer to my student’s question, “when will I need to know history in my life,” is simple: History is thinking critically about the world! You will use these skills every day of your life!

I will work with you to develop these important thinking skills. I recognize and value your diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and funds of knowledge as assets to our classroom. I will push you to develop these historical thinking skills by working with your peers to use evidence to answer complex questions and to engage with primary and secondary sources critically. I believe that the skills you grow in this class will help you disentangle complex problems and work with a diverse group of people. Let’s get started!

Pacifica High School CPUSH Syllabus 2024-2025

This summary is meant to highlight some of the key points from the syllabus about the course --

IT IS NOT MEANT TO HELP YOU AVOID READING THE DOCUMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY!!!

- U.S. History is a *student*-driven course. Therefore, full participation is expected. Students not feeling well should request to see the nurse or discuss needs with the instructors.
- It is the STUDENT'S responsibility to make-up any missed tests or quizzes. The STUDENT should initiate the request. No credit will be given to missing assignments!
- Google Classroom is the best source of information about the course and should be checked daily.
- It is the STUDENT'S responsibility to check Google Classroom, with classmates, or with the teacher for missed work due to an absence. It is highly recommended to have a classroom buddy who you can text, call, or email about missed work.
- Students are expected to complete assignments when absent. They have until two days before the Unit Exam to turn in missing assignments. If additional issues arise, notify me and we can discuss alternatives. For example, If you are sick for two days, you have two days to make up the test or assignment.
- Truant students are **not** eligible for ANY make-ups (including classwork, tests, projects, etc.)
- Students must email me at bgay@ggusd.net to request an extension before a due date. The email's subject must be "Period # extension on ____." You must request an extension before the assignment is due for the request to be eligible.
- Office Hours are BY APPOINTMENT and during tutorial.
- Any students who commit academic dishonesty will receive a **zero** on the assignment, a phone call home, and a referral to the assistant principal where the Discipline Matrix will be applied.
- Cell phone use is not permitted in the classroom. A charging station will be available for students at the front of the class. If students are using their cellphone during instructional time they will have to place their phone in the charging station till the end of the period.
- **The best way to get in touch with your instructor is through email, and we can schedule a zoom call or in-person meeting.**

PHS Statement on self-advocacy: Our society values independence. By the time students reach their post-secondary goals, they are expected to have a certain level of self-advocacy (speak up for yourself) and self-efficacy (be effective) which has been fostered throughout their years of schooling. The end goal is student independence and empowerment.

Ownership and responsibility are two areas of the effort necessary to build this independence in students. In order to take ownership and responsibility, students must learn to communicate effectively with their teachers. If there is a situation that arises or complications occur that interfere with the success of your learning, please arrange a time to speak with your teacher. Express your concerns and a solution may be met to help alleviate any of your issues.