

U.S. Studies

Syllabus and Course Outline
1.0 Social Studies Credit, PTHS

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Course Overview

U.S. Studies examines the modern American experience (20th and 21st centuries), with the understanding that the present always has its roots in the past. This will be a student-centered class, and together we will question assumptions and consider issues deeply. Two main elements of the class that you should know about:

- **IT IS THEMATIC.** This means that the class is organized around themes that have resonated throughout United States history and that still affect people today, rather than around a strict chronological approach. This allows us to see patterns, examine how history is shaped over time, question and consider the relationship between the past and present, and think critically about ideas such as liberty, justice, and democracy in the context of U.S. history.
- **IT IS A COMMUNITY.** Everyone is expected to take an active part in class and to respect the class community by always being prepared to participate. This also means that we will do activities, projects and assignments that require you to work with other people.

Class Expectations

CLASS PARTICIPATION

We are a learning community. Daily attendance is crucial, and everyone is expected to contribute to each class. Participation means coming to class prepared and with all materials. It means contributing thoughtful written and oral responses and questions to class discussion and actively contributing to group work.

MAJOR ASSESSMENTS.

At the end of many of our large projects, you will exhibit your work. This could be a group presentation, debate, Socratic Seminar, etc. Because these involve the entire classroom community, they cannot be duplicated. Therefore, **your attendance is REQUIRED for all major assessments.** Contact me immediately if you have a conflict. Even if you're sick, send an email. **No make-ups will be allowed without prior notification except in the case of an emergency. In addition, to receive full credit, all work associated with major assessments must be turned in on the due date, even with an excused absence. Work should be submitted electronically or sent to school with a friend, relative, etc.**

DAILY WORK.

Keeping up with readings and assignments is crucial for you to participate fully in the class. Completing daily assignments will help you succeed on all major assessments and projects. Sometimes daily work will be done in class, sometimes it will be assigned to complete at home. We do not do busywork - if it's assigned it's important!

Materials and resources

Everyday you must bring the following things with you to class:

1. 3-ring binder to organize class readings and handouts (we will build our own textbook)
2. Lined paper for notes and writing responses
3. Writing utensil

Assessment & Grades

For major assessments, you will not receive traditional, single letter grades. Instead you will be assessed in three [academic skill](#) areas:

Critical Thinking (CT): Here you will be assessed on how well you support arguments with evidence, make connections, understand and draw conclusions from new information, and ask and try to answer important questions.

Communication (CM): Here you are assessed on how clearly you express yourself and communicate with others. This means working on grammar and writing skills and making sure that you get your point across, in both your writing and speaking. It also means being a good listener.

Product & Process (PR): This is where following directions, creating a high quality product, turning things in on time, being prepared, participating in class and working with others count. You will take responsibility for your own learning and for enhancing the overall learning environment in the classroom.

Your final grade will be figured like this:

Critical Thinking:	25%
Communication:	25%
Product & Process:	25%
Daily Work :	25%

Late Work & Make-up Work

LATE WORK: Because this class is made up of a community of learners, your work also affects your team and your classmates. For that reason

Late daily work will receive *no credit* unless it is the result of an excused absence. (FREEBIE: I understand. Stuff happens. Once a semester you can turn in a late piece of Daily Work with the word FREEBIE written across the top and still earn full credit.)

Late major assessments will receive *reduced credit*. In addition, major assessments can be redone for higher grades up until 2 weeks before the end of the semester.

MAKE-UP WORK: If you are absent from class or miss a significant portion of class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed for that day. You can find information about assignments by visiting my teacher page at https://highschool.ptschools.org/staff_directory/teacher_websites/dow__juliann

ACADEMIC HONESTY: You are here to learn and show your learning. This means doing your own work with honesty and integrity. Work that doesn't meet this standard (cheating, plagiarized, copied) will earn a zero.

Units of Study

Over the course of the year, this class will push you to ask *essential questions* about U.S. history around five themes. Each unit will include past and current events. We will explore the patterns and connections that exist through fundamental aspects of the American experience. While the course outline is subject to change, the units we explore should look something like this:

IDENTITY & FOUNDATIONS

Essential Questions	Focus Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to be American? • What do democracy and freedom mean in the American context? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “founding” of America • Relations with Native Americans • Foundations of U.S. government

BOUNDARIES

Essential Questions	Focus Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to be American? • What factors drive U.S. expansion and foreign relations? • When does a country have the right to get involved in the affairs of another? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manifest Destiny and the Mexican-American War • Coming to America? – Immigration to the U.S. • Spanish-American War • U.S. foreign policy in the early 20th century

DIVISIONS

Essential Questions	Focus Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do economic structures affect people’s lives? • Who gets what and who decides? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Great Depression and The New Deal • Rise of the labor movement • Deregulation, The Great Recession • Globalization and the role of the U.S.

CONFLICT

Essential Questions	Focus Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What causes war? • Who is the “enemy”? • What are the costs of war and who pays? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World War II • Cold War • War on Terror

ACTION & CHANGE

Essential Questions	Focus Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does resistance look like? • When is it time to resist and how do you know? • What is the best way to bring about change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Rights Movements of the 20th century

What Common Core State Standards will U.S. Studies address?

9-12 Social Studies Standards can be found [here](#) (p.85-108). We will address all of them in US History. In addition, we will also address the following ELA standards:

-Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1](#)

-Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2](#)

-Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3](#)

-Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4](#)

-Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.5](#)

-Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6](#)

-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.
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7](#)

-Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8](#)

-Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9](#)

-Read and comprehend complex history/social studies texts independently and proficiently.
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.10](#)