

American Studies
AP US History and AP Language and Composition
Plano West Senior High

Course Description:

American Studies is a daily two-hour examination of the American identity with a focus on the cultural accomplishments as manifested in art, architecture, literature, film, music, and other disciplines of the humanities. Students will explore the history of the United States with special emphasis placed on the study of rhetorical styles and structures of important historical documents, contemporary readings, and the genres of American literature as a method of enhancing the depiction of historical time periods. An emphasis on the development of student autonomy and voice is expected through products such as class discussions, creative responses, individual writings and evaluations. At the culmination of the class, student transcripts will reflect both AP US History and AP English Language, and students will have the option to take both AP exams in the hope of earning college credit.

Student Expectations:

It is vital for students and parents to understand that while students will be well prepared for the AP Exams, American Studies is NOT an AP “Prep” course. AP skills and content are embedded within daily classroom humanities activities in each unit.

- G/T Identification with Humanities or AP World History STRONGLY recommended
- Self-motivated
- Frequent collaboration with peers
- Critical thinker/critical reader
- Interest in the humanities/arts/American culture
- Ability to articulate ideas at high levels both verbally and in writing
- Not appropriate for a first AP course

American Studies is a challenging course designed to address the needs of the gifted learner. The level of material covered, the design of the course, and its presentation, are carefully constructed to cultivate a sense of student responsibility and provide students with the ability to develop collegiate responsibility. The assessments are challenging but fair and cover all materials assigned. In class activities and outside reading materials supplement each other rather than duplicating exposure. In other words, **rote memorization will not suffice to be successful in this course.** Students are expected to be actively engaged in the learning process and to take ownership of the course. We encourage students to take up concerns individually with teachers before initiating parental involvement.

The workload for each unit is considerable, and assignments will vary in length. The amount of time required for homework for this class will vary. **Please remember this class is a double credit – therefore American Studies homework should be considered as homework for TWO Advanced Placement classes.** We encourage students to plan ahead for long assignments, supplemental readings, etc. Time management and personal responsibility are essential skills for this class. If a student begins to feel overwhelmed, it is important to seek assistance from teachers. Please communicate with your teacher in advance if you need to come in for assistance. A student who does not pass American Studies will be responsible for credit recovery for two courses (US History and English III) in order to be eligible for graduation.

An online class website through Google Classroom is maintained by the teachers. **Students are responsible for assignments and content posted to the class website by 6 pm.** Outside readings, homework assignments, and other important communications will be conveyed through this site. Parents are able to access Google Classroom through their student’s login and guardian summaries.

AP Exams:

It is recommended that all students take both the **APUSH Exam on May 8th** and the **APLANG Exam on May 13th**. Students will register and pay through Total Registration. Any questions regarding the AP exams will be directed to the campus testing coordinator.

Required Supplies:

Students should bring the required materials to class every day.

- Multi-subject notebook
- Binder or Folder
- Blue or black ink pens
- Loose-leaf paper
- Pencils
- 3 different colors of highlighters
- Chromebook
- AMSTUD Reader (will receive at the beginning of the 9 weeks)

History Resources:

Due to the nature of the course, information will be provided through multiple sources including videos, primary and secondary documents, etc. Content will be available through the following sources that are accessible for free online:

Foner, Eric. *Give Me Liberty!* 7th ed., WW Norton, 2019. (accessible through Webdesk)

Newman, John J. and Schmalbach, John M. *AMSCO Advanced Placement United States History*. 4th edition. Amsco Publication Inc, 2020 (accessible via Google Classroom)

Various AP Period Content Videos and additional readings (accessible on Google Classroom)

Novels:

1st Semester:

- *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros
- *12 Angry Men* by Reginald Rose
- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass

Optional Outside Novels:

- *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead

2nd Semester:

- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien
- *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger

Optional Outside Novels:

- *Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu
- *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy

Students are highly encouraged to purchase their own hard copies (not digital) of novels read in class in order to complete active reading notes on their own as well as for annotation of text during class discussions. A limited number of the assigned novels are available to check out from teachers if a student is unable to purchase their own copy, but the students

WILL NOT be able to write in these school copies. Titles are also available at school and public libraries. Any student requesting an alternate title will need to submit a request in writing within 3 school days of the novel having been introduced in class. Final deadlines for reading will not be adjusted.

Units of Study:

1st 9 Weeks (August-September):

Unit 1: Origins 1491-1775

Enduring Understanding: Community development is influenced by environmental factors (such as social, political, economic, religious, geographic, intellectual)

1st 9 Weeks (September-October):

Unit 2: American Beliefs 1776-1848

Enduring Understanding: A free society requires a balance between the individual and the group.

2nd 9 Weeks (October-December):

Unit 3: Agency 1844-1898

Enduring Understanding: Increasing growth requires an examination of social, economic and political systems in a free society.

3rd 9 Weeks (January-March):

Unit 4: “The American Century” 1890-2001

Enduring Understanding: The changing understanding of place and community has a profound effect on society and culture both locally and globally.

4th 9 Weeks (March-May)

Unit 5: Generations 1950-Present

Enduring Understanding: “Defining moments” have lasting effects.

College Board [APUSH Course and Exam Description](#)

College Board [APLANG Course and Exam Description](#)

Grading Policies and Evaluations:

Major Evaluations 60%

(Each 9 weeks: creative project, in-class written essay, multiple choice/short answer test)

Minor Evaluations 40%

(Each 9 week individual creative responses, in class assignments, various written responses, etc)

Semester Exams 20% of semester grade

The course receives a single grade, which is entered for both History and English credit. Both portions of this class are college level credits. In order to effectively participate, the student must keep up with the reading and remain responsible for information transmitted in class. Students will have very few grades, meaning each assessment is important to the overall average.

Course content is truly integrated, so most assignments will incorporate aspects of both History and English. Essay writing will focus on college preparedness and the development of long-term writing skills. Grading of essays and projects is rubric based, holistic, and subjective. In addition, because the course is aimed at the Gifted and Talented population, few guidelines are given for projects to allow students maximum freedom and creativity. If a student has questions about what is expected for a project or activity, it is the student’s responsibility to speak with his or her teachers in a reasonable timeframe. Late work is unacceptable. Should you be absent, YOU are responsible for making arrangements for the information missed. Students need to make arrangements with the teachers to make-up in-class assessments within a week of the absence.

Electronic Device Policy:

American Studies recognizes the benefits of technology, and we strive to teach students to be respectful and responsible technology users. Students should bring their Chromebook every day. **Personal electronic devices such as phones, laptops, tablets, and airpods are to be turned off and kept in backpacks according to PISD policy and state law.**

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Cheating, plagiarism, and use of AI will not be tolerated. At teacher discretion, cheating and/or plagiarism will result in consequences up to and including no credit (a zero) for the assignment with no possibility for resubmission of the assignment and/or referral to student services for disciplinary action.

Tutorials:

Tutorials are not solely for students who may be struggling with the content, but for all students that would like additional support. Students should complete the Tutorial Form located on Google Classroom preferably 24 hours prior to attending tutorials. Students are welcome to meet with any of the AMSTUD teachers.

Keahey/Linkletter

Wednesday and Thursday morning from 8:15-8:45 am

Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from 4:30- 5:00 pm

Sands/Bower

Tuesday and Wednesday during A and B lunch

Tuesday during 7th period/after school by appointment

We look forward to this school year and working with you!

Aaron Sands - Team Lead

Aaron.Sands@pisd.edu

Graham Bower

Graham.Bower@pisd.edu

Robert Keahey

Robert.Keahey@pisd.edu

Rebecca Linkletter

Rebecca.Linkletter@pisd.edu