

AP US History

"Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history." - Abraham Lincoln

Course Description

AP U.S. History is a college-level course which examines the nations' history from the Pre-Columbian Period (1490s) to the present. The course is divided into nine curriculum units that correspond to nine historical periods. In each, students study the significant events, people, and developments of the period and examine these events through thematic lenses that guide them to make connections and recognize trends over time. Throughout the course, students analyze primary sources, examine content and causation, make historical comparisons, and develop sound historical arguments. Students are required to read independently and adhere to deadlines in order to be prepared for classroom discourse, assessments, and the AP Exam. This course is directly aligned with the traits defined in the *Portrait of the Crusader*. Students observe the impacts of injustice and oppression versus justice and freedom, and they are encouraged to value and respect the rights and dignity of all people. The course syllabus is an abbreviated version of the document provided to the College Board and is a guide for students and teachers to discuss course requirements, student learning, and AP examination preparation.

Themes to Guide Analysis of Historical Periods

1. American & National Identity (NAT)
2. Migration & Settlement (MIG)
3. Politics & Power (POL)
4. Work, Exchange, and Technology (WXT)
5. American in the World (WOR)
6. Geography & the Environment (GEO)
7. Culture & Society (CUL)

Essential Questions for the Course

- How have definitions of national identity and values developed over time among diverse and changing populations? (NAT)
- How have the various peoples who moved to and within the nation adapted to their new environments? How have they transformed their new environments? (MIG)
- What ideas, events, and people influenced the structure of the government and the nation's political systems? (POL)
- What ideas, events, and people influenced the development of the nation's economic system? (WXT)
- How did interactions between nations impact the formation of the United States? How has America influenced world affairs over time? (WOR)
- How has geography - both natural and man-made- impacted the social, economic, and political development of the United States? (GEO)
- How and why do national, regional, and group cultures develop and change over time? How does culture shape government policy and the economy? (CUL)

Assessment Practices

The AP exam has four sections: (1) multiple choice (2) short answer (3) document-based question (4) long essay. This course offers students assessments that mirror each section of the AP Exam as well as other forms of formative and summative assessment:

- Multiple choice and short answer assessments to assess content knowledge.
- Document-based questions and responses.
- Essays that ask students to develop an argument supported by an analysis of historical evidence.
- A project that may include an oral presentation or performative component.
- Reader response journals or a creative connection assessment which asks students to put themselves into an historic situation and create a memoir, journal, or letters.
- Socratic Seminars and debates.

Course Curriculum

Unit 1 - Period 1: 1491-1607

Pacing: 8 classes

Topics: Native American societies; European exploration and colonization

Focus Questions:

- Why did the European nations explore and begin to colonize the New World?
- How were Native American societies structured? How did they interact with the environment?
- How did varied Europeans interact with indigenous peoples and with each other?
- What caused the Columbian exchange? How did the Exchange affect Europe and the Americas?
- How did the growth of the Spanish Empire in North America shape social and economic structures?
- What were the impacts of the transatlantic voyages from 1491 - 1607?

Concepts/Skills:

- Examine the historical context for European exploration and colonization and the encounters between settlers and native populations in the Americas from 1491 to 1607.
 - Explain how various native populations in the period before European contact interacted with the natural environment in North America.
 - Explain the Columbian Exchange and its effect on Europe and the Americas during the period after 1492. Describe the various goods and diseases that spread via the Columbian Exchange, and the impact of both on Europe and the Americas.
 - Explain how the growth of the Spanish Empire in North America shaped the development of social and economic structures over time. Describe the Encomienda system and the impact that it had on the developing social and political structures in North America.
 - Analyze how European and Native American perspectives of each other developed during this period.
 - Trace the value of new discoveries, trade routes, and imperial holdings on the world during the years 1491-1607.
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Unit 2 - Period 2: 1607-1754**Pacing: 14 classes****Topics: The colonies established by the Spanish, French, Dutch, and British**

Focus Questions:

- How did the European colonies develop from 1607-1754?
- How did European and Native American perspectives of each other change during this period?
- How did transatlantic trade grow?
- What were the reasons for and effects of slavery in the colonial regions?
- How did the movement of people and ideas across the Atlantic shape American culture?
- How did the goals and interests of the American colonists evolve during this period?
- How did colonial society develop in North America?

Concepts/Skills:

- Analyze the context for the colonization from 1607 to 1754.
- Explain how and why various European colonies developed and expanded during this period.
- Evaluate the factors, including environmental, that shaped the development and expansion of the British colonies from 1607 to 1754.
- Trace the causes and effects of transatlantic trade during this time period.
- Examine the development of slavery in the British colonial regions. how enslaved peoples were treated and responded.
- Compare and contrast the development of colonial society in the various regions of North America.
- Analyze how the interactions between Native Americans and European nations changed from one of collaboration to one of conflict with increased European migration.
- Analyze the causes and consequences of Bacon's Rebellion.
- Analyze how the movement of people and ideas across the Atlantic influenced American culture.
- Determine how the long period of salutary neglect created a level of political and economic independence from Great Britain for the colonists and Great Britain.
- Explore the hardships/lifestyles of various settlers and slaves during this period.

Unit 3 - Period 3: 1754-1800**Pacing: 17 classes****Topics: Events preceding the American Revolution; formation of the United States; the early republic**

Focus Questions:

- How did the French and Indian war impact the American Revolution?
- How did colonial attitudes about government and individual rights change preceding the Revolution?
- How did British colonial policies lead to the Revolutionary War?
- What factors led to victory for the colonists?
- What were the ideological perspectives on the structure of the new American government?
- What aspects of the American Government changed after the ratification of the Constitution?
- How did political ideas, institutions, and party systems develop in the new republic?
- How did migration/ immigration to and within North America lead to competition and conflict?
- In what ways did attitudes about slavery change in the period from 1754-1800?

Concepts/Skills:

- Explain how the dispute over the Ohio River Valley created a power struggle between England and France and ended the period of salutary neglect for the colonies.
- Trace how colonial attitudes about government and the individual changed in the years preceding the Revolutionary War.
- Describe how the writings of Enlightenment Thinkers influenced the American colonists.
- Examine how British colonial policies led to the Revolutionary War, including how direct taxation with a lack of parliamentary representation alienated the American colonists.
- Analyze the factors that contributed to the American victory in the Revolution, including the British approach to warfare and a colonial sense of nationalism.
- Describe how the Revolution affected American society and the rest of the world.
- Analyze how different forms of government developed during the Revolutionary Period.
- Describe the evolution of the democratic system in the American republic including the debate over the relative powers of the states and federal government. Examine the differing ideological positions on the structure and function of the federal government.
- Analyze the continuities and changes in the structure and functions of the government with the ratification of the Constitution.
- Explain how the American colonists formed their own political, social and cultural identity during the period from 1754-1800.
- Examine how westward expansion created more economic opportunities for Americans but also led to more conflict with Native Americans.
- Analyze attitudinal changes towards slavery during this period.

Unit 4 - Period 4: 1800-1848

Pacing: 17 Classes

Topics: The political, cultural, and economic development of the young nation.

Focus Questions:

- How did the republic change from 1800-1848?
- What were the primary conflicts over the interpretation of the Constitution?
- How did regional concerns impact the debate about the role of the federal government?
- How did the United States expand its involvement in foreign affairs during the period?
- What were the significant innovations in technology, agriculture, and commerce?
- What changes were made to voting rights?
- What were the causes of the Second Great Awakening?
- How did the various reform movements develop and expand from 1800-1848?
- What were the continuities and changes that African Americans experienced during this period?
- How did geographic and environmental factors shape the development of the South?
- How did politics, economics, and foreign policy influence the development of the American identity?

Concepts/Skills:

- Explain the context in which the republic developed from 1800 to 1848, including how ideas about democracy, individualism, and free speech impacted cultural values and political institutions.
- Analyze the concept of states rights vs the supremacy of the federal government and how regional interests affected debates about the role of the federal government.
- Examine the debates over the interpretation of the Constitution and how these debates created political parties at opposite ends of the spectrum.
- Trace the expansion of participatory democracy from 1800 to 1848, including the removal of the land requirement for voting.
- Analyze how the agrarian economy of the south and the industrial economy of the north created a juxtaposition of economic beliefs.
- Explain how geographic factors shaped the agricultural South trace the integration of slavery into the way of life in the South.
- Describe the innovations in technology, agriculture, and commerce over this time period and analyze the impact on various segments of American society.
- Explore the effects of new immigration and the Second Great Awakening on the nation's culture.
- Explain how and why various reform movements developed and expanded from 1800 to 1848.
- Explain the continuities and changes in the experience of African Americans from 1800 to 1848.
- Describe how enslaved blacks and Free African Americans created communities and strategies to protect their dignity by joining political efforts to change their status.
- Explain how the United States began to develop a modern democracy that celebrated a new national culture and identity during this time period.
- Explain the extent to which politics, economics, and foreign policy promoted the development of American identity from 1800 to 1848.
- Explain how and why American foreign policy expanded over the time period.

Unit 5 - Period 5: 1844-1877

Pacing: 17 Classes

Topics: Immigration, national expansion; the secession of Southern states; the Civil War.

Focus Questions:

- How and why did sectional conflict increase in the United States from 1844-1877?
- How did immigration impact America during this time period?
- What were the causes and effects of westward migration during this same period?
- What caused the Mexican-American War?
- How did regional attitudes about federal policy change after the Mexican-American War?
- How did regional differences regarding slavery lead to the Civil War?
- What were the political causes of the Civil War?
- How did Lincoln's leadership during the Civil War impact American ideals?
- What factors led to the Union victory in the Civil War?
- What impact did the Civil War and Reconstruction have on American values and national identity?

Concepts/Skills:

- Explain the context in which sectional conflict emerged from 1844 to 1877.
- Analyze the impact of immigration on American culture and how influx intensified regional divisions.
- Explain the causes and effects of westward expansion, including the process of acquiring new land/territories and the legislation that encouraged expansion.
- Examine the impact of westward expansion on Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Chinese immigrants. Determine how conflicts and legislation impacted self-sufficiency and cultural integrity.
- Discuss why increases in the number of migrants caused a strong anti-Catholic nativist movement.
- Explain the causes and effects of the Mexican–American War. Analyze how the Mexican Cession led to controversies over slavery and explain the attempts made by courts to resolve these issues.
- Explain how regional attitudes affected federal policy after the Mexican–American War and how sectional parties emerged after attempts by the courts to resolve slavery in the territories.
- Examine why the North’s expanding manufacturing economy and reliance on free labor and the South’s dependence on slave labor increased tensions leading up to the Civil War.
- Analyze the political causes of the Civil War. Describe the effects of Lincoln’s election and how Lincoln’s free-soil platform caused debates about secession.
- Describe how Lincoln’s leadership impacted American ideals over the course of the war.
- Examine how Union and Confederacy leaders mobilized their economies and societies to wage war while facing considerable home-front opposition.
- Explain the various factors that contributed to the Union victory in the Civil War.
- Analyze how Lincoln sought to reunify the nation and the impact of his assassination Reconstruction.
- Examine the effects of government policy during Reconstruction on society from 1865 to 1877.
- Explain how and why Reconstruction changed perspectives of what it meant to be American.
- Explain how reconstruction altered relationships between the states and the federal government and led to debates over definitions of citizenship, particularly regarding the rights of African Americans, women, and other minorities.
- Discuss how segregation, violence, Supreme Court decisions, and local political tactics progressively stripped away African American rights.
- Examine the purpose and impact of the 14th and 15th amendments.

Unit 6 - Period 6: 1865-1898

Pacing: 18 Classes

Topics: The nation’s economic and demographic shifts and their impact on culture and politics

Focus Questions:

- What factors led to the rise of industrial capitalism in the United States during this period?
- What were the effects of increased economic opportunity?
- What did Mark Twain mean by the phrase Gilded Age?
- What factors affected migration patterns in the nation and in specific regions?
- What were the causes and effects of Western settlement from 1877-1898?
- What factors led to change in the “New South”?
- How did reform movements respond to the rise of industrial capitalism and the Gilded Age?
- How did the role of the government change with regard to the economy?
- What were the differences between political parties during the Gilded Age?

Concepts/Skills:

- Explain the historical context for the rise of industrial capitalism in the United States.
- Analyze how technological advances, greater access to natural resources, production methods, and the opening of new markets encouraged the rise of industrial capitalism.
- Explain how cultural and economic factors affected immigration and migration patterns.
- Explain the causes and effects of the settlement of the West from 1877 to 1898, including technological advances, railroads, and the discovery of mineral resources.
- Analyze the impact of westward migration on Native American populations and the environment.
- Describe the factors that contributed to both continuity and change in the “New South.”
- Describe how agricultural activity worked in the “New South.”
- Explain the impact of *Plessy v. Ferguson* on racial attitudes in the “New South”
- Explain the effects of increased economic opportunity on society. Analyze the impact that the price of goods, workers’ wages, and child labor had on the standard of living of most Americans.
- Describe the role that migration played in the demographics of workforces and cities.
- Analyze the difficulties that immigrants faced in regards to assimilation and Americanization.
- Describe the kinds of social services utilized by immigrants and the poor.
- Explain how reform movements responded to the rise of industrial capitalism in the Gilded Age.
- Analyze the growth of the middle class.
- Describe how women sought greater equality with men.
- Summarize the view of those that opposed government intervention during economic downturns.
- Explain the creation and views of “People’s (Populist) Party.”
- Analyze the complaints about the government levied by political parties and reformers.
- Describe how political and social perspectives on labor and the economy changed during the financial downturns of the period.
- Explain continuities and changes in the role of the government in the U.S. economy.
- Describe the new intellectual movements, public reform efforts, and political debates over economic and social policies that were created during the Gilded Age.
- Compare and contrast the ideologies of political parties during the Gilded Age.

Unit 7 - Period 7: 1890-1945

Pacing: 21 Classes

Topics: America’s changing society and culture; the causes and effects of the global wars; economic meltdown of this period

Focus Questions:

- What were the causes and long-term effects of the Spanish-American War?
- Who were the Progressives and what did they hope to accomplish?
- What was the attitude toward the use of natural resources from 1890-1945?
- How and why did the U.S. become involved in WW I ? What were the effects of this involvement?
- How did immigration and migration patterns change during this time?
- How did innovations in communication and technology impact the nation?
- How did the Great Depression and the New Deal impact all aspects of American life?
- How and why did the United States become involved in WWII?

- How did U.S. participation in World War II transform American society?
- Why did the Allied forces win the war? What were the long term impacts of this victory?
- What were the consequences of America's involvement in World War II on the homefront? On America's role as a superpower?
- How did the wars, the Great Depression and the New Deal shape American identity?

Concepts/Skills:

- Explain the context in which America grew into its role as a world power.
- Describe the effects of the American victory in the Spanish-American war.
- Contrast the perspectives of the imperialists and anti-imperialists of this period.
- Analyze the cause and effects of the Progressive reform movement.
- Compare attitudes toward the use of natural resources from 1890 to 1945.
- Explain the causes and consequences of U.S. involvement in World War I.
- Analyze the impact of the war on the labor market, the national economy and the homefront.
- Describe how official restrictions on freedom of speech grew during World War I.
- Analyze migration patterns, including how and why immigration was limited during World War I.
- Describe Wilson's involvement in postwar negotiations.
- Explain why the Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles or join the League of Nations.
- Analyze the impact of mass media on the development of a national identity and regional cultures.
- Explain the "Great Migration" and why African Americans were moving to the North and West.
- Analyze the movement to urban centers in the 1920s and the effects of rapid urbanization.
- Describe the factors that led to calls for a stronger financial regulatory system.
- Explain the causes and effects of the Great Depression. Analyze policymakers' response to mass unemployment and social upheavals of the Great Depression.
- Explain how radical, union, and populist movements pushed Roosevelt to change the economic system. Explain Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" and its legacy.
- Examine how the Great Depression and the New Deal impacted American political, economic, and social structures.
- Describe how the mass mobilization of American society helped to end the Great Depression.
- Explain how the U.S. pursued a unilateral foreign policy that promoted a vision of international order while maintaining isolationism.
- Describe how the rise of fascism and totalitarianism in other countries affected the U.S.
- Analyze why the U.S. entered WWII and how U.S. participation transformed American society.
- Explain how the U.S. and its allies achieved military victory, including how America's strong industrial base played a pivotal role in winning the war.
- Analyze the ways in which the U.S. emerged as the most powerful nation on Earth.
- Compare the relative significance of the major events of the first half of the 20th century in shaping American identity.

Unit 8 - Period 8: 1945-1980

Pacing: 20 Classes

Topics: The rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States; Civil Rights movements; the economic, cultural, and political transformations of this period

Focus Questions:

- How did the Cold War policies evolve during this period?
- What were the causes and effects of the Red Scare?
- How did the U.S. economy grow in the years after World War II?
- How did the culture of America change after World War II?
- How did the civil rights movement develop and expand from 1945 to 1960?
- What were the prominent debates regarding the role of the federal government?
- What were the changes to environmental policies from 1968 to 1980?
- What were the most significant military and diplomatic events during this period?
- What were the significant societal changes that took place between 1945 and 1980? How did these changes reshape the national identity?

Concepts/Skills:

- Describe the U.S. position in the Cold War and how Cold War policies evolved from 1945-1980.
- Evaluate the causes and effects of the Red Scare, including the policies used to expose suspected Communists in the U.S.
- Analyze how the burgeoning private sector, federal spending, the baby boom, and technological developments helped spur economic growth and how they impacted the political landscape.
- Explain changes in immigration and migration patterns over this time period.
- Explain how and why the civil rights movements developed and expanded from 1945 to 1960.
- Describe how the federal government responded to the calls for the expansion of civil rights, including desegregation of the armed services and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).
- Analyze how civil rights activists, most notably Martin Luther King Jr., rallied against racial discrimination, including legal challenges, direct action, and nonviolent tactics.
- Explain the Great Society program and evaluate its efficacy in addressing social issues.
- Describe the ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation movements that motivated further expansion of the Civil Rights Movement.
- Explain the nation's significant military and diplomatic responses to international developments over time. Describe how the United States sought to contain communism through military action/proxy wars while seeking allies among new nations.
- Analyze how the United States became involved in Vietnam and the impacts on the nation, the soldiers, and their families. Evaluate the Vietnam anti-war protests, their impact on the political landscape and their role in bringing an end to the war.
- Explain how the Middle East oil crisis caused the United States to develop a national energy policy.
- Explain how and why policies related to the environment changed from 1968 to 1980.
- Examine public opinion about the government's competence in the 1970s.
- Evaluate the most impactful military and diplomatic events during this period and the most impactful significant societal changes. Discuss how these changes reshaped the national identity.

- Explain the impacts of varied religious movements over the course of the 20th century.
 - Examine how significant events of the period reshaped national identity.
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Unit 9 - Period 9: 1980-Present

Pacing: 8 Classes

Topics: Political conservatism; developments in science and technology; demographic shifts

Focus Questions:

- Why did the conservative movement take hold in American politics?
- Why did the Cold War end? What were the short and long-term impacts?
- What are the most significant international and domestic challenges faced by the U.S. from 1980 to the current day?
- How did advances in technology impact globalization, international trade, and the national economy during the 1990s and beyond?
- How did advances in technology impact daily life, the workplace, and national security?
- How has domestic and international migration impacted the United States from 1980 onward?
- What are the continuing policy debates about the role of the federal government?
- How has the American national identity evolved over the past forty years?

Concepts/Skills:

- Explain the context in which the U.S. faced international and domestic challenges after 1980.
- Explain the conservative position regarding social values and a reduced role for the federal government; analyze how the movement became a force in U.S. politics after 1980.
- Describe the significant policy debates over free-trade agreements, the scope of the government social safety net, and calls to reform the U.S. financial system that occurred after 1980.
- Explain how and why the Cold War ended. Analyze how this ending led to new diplomatic relationships but also to new U.S. military and peacekeeping interventions.
- Analyze how improvements in digital communications have increased American participation in worldwide economic opportunities.
- Explore how technological innovations in security, computing, digital technology, and the internet are transforming daily life and national security.
- Explain why international migration from Latin America and Asia has increased dramatically since 1980. Analyze how this new immigration has affected culture and the U.S. economy.
- Examine how the United States continues to maintain its position as the world's leading superpower despite economic, domestic, and foreign policy challenges, including terrorism and conflicts in the Middle East.
- Analyze the continued debates over the role of the federal government and the appropriate use of American military power in the world.
- Evaluate if the United States has clear national identity here and/or abroad.

Resources

- Textbook – *By The People: A History of the United States*. James W. Fraser. NY: Pearson, 2019. Second Edition An E-book is available for the text and is typically used.
- Primary source documents are read in full or as excerpts as applicable for each unit of study.
- Varied websites and video documentaries are used throughout the course.

Grading

The grading policy is:

- 50% - Mastery: Summative assessments that test knowledge of content and topic questions.
- 20% - Formative: Assignments that help develop knowledge and understanding between summative assessments.
- 15% - Student Preparation: Assignments typically include work completed to prepare for class.
- 15% - Participation: Participation in class and participation in assignments and group projects

Please refer to the Absence Make Up Policy in the student handbook