

PETERS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

COURSE SYLLABUS: ACADEMIC AMERICAN HISTORY

Course Overview and Essential Skills

This course in modern American History will use a chronological cause and effect approach to the political, economic, and social history of the United States from the 1940's to the present day. The course focuses on the decisions, events, and people that shaped our nation's history in the mid to late 20th century. Areas of concentration include US diplomacy and involvement in foreign wars, the increasing role of government in American life, the changing status of women and minorities, and areas of significant social and economic change. As a compliment to the content an area of skills based focus will be the analysis of primary source documents

Course Textbook and Required Materials

- Title: The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21st century (2012) & ISBN#: 9780547491172
- Online textbook: my.hrw.com Passwords are assigned on an individual basis
- A notebook and/or binder and writing utensil are required for class

Course Outline of Material Covered:

Unit or Topic	Concepts, Skills, Resources	Timeframe
Unit 1: Modern America Emerges	Describe the causes and the effects of the Spanish-American War and its impact on U.S. Imperialism; Give examples of progressive reform at the urban, state and federal levels; Describe the long campaign and great effort required to achieve women's suffrage; Identify World War I as a conflict of global origins and dimensions; Describe how the sudden fall in stock prices in late October, 1929, brought on a stock market crash; Give examples of the lasting effects of the Great Depression Resources: Cinderella Man (clips), ABC Documentary The Century (clips)	Three weeks
Unit 2: World War II	Identify the aggressive nations of Europe and Asia and their leaders; Identify Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor as the aggressive action that propelled the U.S. into war; Define the Nazi Holocaust and describe its terrors; Identify the Manhattan Project and the atomic bomb; Describe the changes in the American economy as it converted to wartime production; Explain how the U.S. paid for the cost of the war; Explain the mood of the American home front during war; Describe how many Japanese Americans were forced into internment camps during the war Resources: Saving Private Ryan (first 10 minutes), ABC Documentary The Century (clips)	Four weeks
Unit 3: Cold War	Identify the main goals of the superpowers in the postwar period and explain why these goals were in conflict; Describe the goals of the U.S. policy of containment; Explain why the U.S. became involved in the affairs of Korea and Vietnam; Explain Senator Joseph McCarthy's role in the anti-Communist crusade ; Describe how the nation's economy grew after WWII; Describe the value assigned to comfort and security by middle-class Americans in the 1950's; Describe the changes in American society that led African Americans to demand more equality between the races Resources: Pleasantville, The Right Stuff, ABC Documentary The Century	Four weeks
Unit 4: Kennedy & Johnson Administrations	Identify John F. Kennedy and describe his popular image; Describe Kennedy's proposed domestic program, including a tax cut, the space program, and direct aid to the poor; Describe the qualities that allowed Lyndon Johnson to move his programs through congress; Explain how	Three weeks

	<p>Kennedy's commitment to the Cold War and inexperience in foreign affairs affected his handling of foreign policy</p> <p>Resources: Thirteen Days, ABC Documentary The Century, American Experience: LBJ (PBS)</p>	
Unit 5: Civil Rights	<p>Describe the variety of opinions and goals within the civil rights movement; Identify Martin Luther King Jr., and explain his role in the civil rights movement; Identify the key civil rights accomplishments of Lyndon B. Johnson; Identify the figures who expressed the rage that many African Americans felt during the 1960's</p> <p>Resources: ABC Documentary The Century</p>	Three weeks
Unit 6: Era of Social Change	<p>Explain how women learned legal and political techniques to fight discrimination from the civil rights movement; Describe how Latino Americans used tactics from the civil rights movement to overcome discrimination; Describe the types of discrimination faced by Asian Americans during WWII and the Cold War; Explain why Native Americans faced unique problems of poverty and discrimination</p> <p>Resources: ABC Documentary The Century</p>	One week
Unit 7: Vietnam	<p>Describe how President Kennedy increased American involvement in Vietnam in the early 1960's; Describe how President Johnson used the Gulf of Tonkin incident to intensify the war; Identify the Vietnam War as the focus of the protest movement in the 1960's; Explain the ways in which many young people in the 1960's sought to promote freedom and creativity in a counter culture that rejected the conventional lifestyles of older Americans; Explain how growing opposition to the war persuaded Lyndon Johnson not to run for re-election and helped Richard Nixon become president in 1968; Explain Nixon's "vietnamization" of the war and also the initiation of bombing assaults in 1970</p> <p>Resources: Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam</p>	Four weeks
Unit 8: Nixon	<p>Explain how Nixon sought to take a more conservative stance with regard to economic policies and crime; Describe how Nixon reversed American policy toward the People's Republic of China; Describe Nixon's efforts to cover up his involvement in the Watergate break-in</p> <p>Resources: ABC Documentary The Century, American Experience: Nixon (PBS)</p>	Three weeks
Unit 9: Ford & Carter Administrations	<p>Describe the economic troubles of the mid-1970's; Describe Gerald Ford's term in office; Describe how Carter's peacemaking efforts brought some stability to the Middle East; Describe the Iran hostage crisis and explain how it damaged the Carter presidency; Summarize how Americans strengthened their efforts to address the nation's environmental problems</p> <p>Resources: Argo, ABC Documentary The Century</p>	Two weeks
Unit 10: 1980s	<p>Describe the roots of the New Conservative Movement; Describe the goals of Reagan's economic plan; Explain how the collapse of the Soviet Union ended the Cold War ; Explain why President Bush organized military action against Iraq in 1991; Resources: ABC Documentary The Century, American Experience: Reagan (PBS)</p>	Three weeks
Unit 11: Two Termers	<p>Examine Clinton's election and domestic and foreign policies while in office; Describe the 2000 and 2004 elections and George W. Bush's presidency; Analyze key agenda items in the presidency of Barack Obama; Summarize new challenges workers faced finding economic security in the new US economy; Identify new opportunities and challenges that arise from technological developments in many industries, especially computers and communications; Identify demographic changes in the United States and their implications for American society at the outset of the 21st century</p> <p>Resources: American Experience: Clinton (PBS video)</p>	Three weeks

Unit 12: End of Year Project/Review	Detail, explain, analyze, and synthesize history highlights from the curriculum; Design and present a project; Demonstrate knowledge of the American History Curriculum; Celebrate your successes! Resources: Forrest Gump	Three weeks
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****Depending on the needs of the class or changes in the school year, the course outline is subject to change.***