



## **Greenwich Public Schools Curriculum Overview American History**

Personalized learning is achieved through standards-based, rigorous and relevant curriculum that is aligned to digital tools and resources.

*Note: Teachers retain professional discretion in how the learning is presented based on the needs and interests of their students.*

### **Course Description**

As the core of our 9-12 program, Greenwich High School's American History course uses a chronological thematic approach to examine the events that shaped modern America from Reconstruction to the present. Using essential questions, students will investigate key themes that focus on how America has sought to establish freedom at home and abroad. The course will continue developing appropriate reading, writing, research, and analytical skills that will culminate with the student's development of their own research questions, and unique research paper. In all, our primary purpose in requiring successful completion of both semesters of this course is to provide for our students substantial opportunity to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions as citizens concerned with the public good in a culturally diverse, democratic society. The course provides for the study of how our national experience contributed to the creation of a unique people and culture by examining: the intersections between divergent cultural experiences and specific historical influences that contributed to the development of our political, social and economic system; the interaction of territorial expansion, economic growth and social progress and their collective impact upon the peoples and institutions of the nation; the evolution of constitutional government to meet the changing needs of a rapidly-growing nation and heterogeneous people with often-conflicting needs; the domestic and international basis for and implications of the United States' emergence as a major world power; the variety of interpretations and perspectives that rise from and, in turn, influence the academic study of history.

### **Unit Pacing Guide**

- Introductory Unit: The New Birth of Freedom & Its Backlash 1863-1877 (approx. two weeks)
- Unit One: Progressive Freedom at Home and Abroad 1877-1916 (approx. three weeks)
- Unit Two: Conflicting Interpretations of Freedom: America in the 1920s (approx. two-three weeks)
- Unit Three: Redefining Freedom: The New Deal 1933-1938 (approx. two-three weeks)
- Unit Four: Fighting for Freedom: America in World War II 1938-1945 (approx. three weeks)
- Unit Five: Reshaping Freedom in the Cold War 1945-1960 (approx. three weeks)

- Unit Six: Expanding Freedom Through the Civil Rights Movement 1945-1975 (approx. three weeks)
- Unit Seven: Conflicting Definitions of Freedom 1954-1975 (approx. three weeks)
- Unit Eight: Freedom and the New World Order 1975-1991 (approx. three weeks)
- Unit Nine: Defining Freedom in the 21st Century 1992-2015 (approx. three weeks)
- Course Requirement Sophomore Research Paper Unit - Completed during second semester (approx. three weeks)

### **Enduring Understanding for the course:**

- Since the end of the Civil War, individuals, groups, and institutions in the United States have both promoted and hindered people's struggle for freedom and rights.
- As America changes, the people seek to make the government more responsive to their needs (political systems, change, and innovation, economic systems, diplomacy).
- Unit One Desired Understanding:
  - In responding to the rapidly changing economic, social, and political conditions at the turn of the century, President Theodore Roosevelt reasserted the power of the federal government in making progressive reforms.
  - Economic, political, and ideological factors motivated the U.S. toward intervention abroad.
  - The Roosevelt Corollary set a new precedent for American involvement in world affairs.
- Unit Two Desired Understanding:
  - In the 1920s, America struggled to balance traditional values while entering the modern age.
  - America's involvement in World War I had political, economic, and social ramifications.
  - The 1920s marked a shift away from government intervention toward more laissez-faire economic policies.
  - Women, immigrants, and African Americans struggled to increase their freedom.
  - Nativism in the post-World War One world
  - America struggled to balance traditional values while entering a modern age.
  - The economic, social, political, and cultural changes that the post-World War One war world brings to America pose a challenge to traditional American values.
- Unit Three Desired Understanding:
  - There were many contributing causes of the Great Depression, including little government regulation, buying on credit, tariff policy, speculation, and the stock market crash.
  - Franklin Roosevelt's presidency ushered in an era of unprecedented government intervention.
  - Roosevelt was able to create a New Deal coalition of voters, who supported his policies, while others feared FDR was becoming a dictator.
- Unit Four Desired Understanding:
  - America's involvement in WWII solidified its role as a dominant world power.
  - Franklin Roosevelt's Lend-Lease policy shifted American neutrality prior to the start of WWII.
  - WWII played a transformative role in the women's movement and the civil rights

- movement.
  - Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms helped to define America's role on the world stage.
  - The Holocaust brought to light the atrocities of the Nazi regime.
- Unit Five Desired Understanding:
  - The Cold War resulted from political, economic, and ideological differences between the United States and the Soviet Union and it led to a nuclear arms race.
  - The U.S. and the Soviet Union engaged in a series of proxy wars in an attempt to assert their dominance on the world stage.
  - Dissent and fear of communism at home manifested themselves in McCarthyism.
  - America enjoyed a post-war economic boom that led to innovations in technology, suburbanization, and a baby boom.
- Unit Six Desired Understanding:
  - Television played a vital role in spreading awareness and gaining support for the Civil Rights Movement.
  - The African American community used a variety of methods to achieve their goals including non-violent resistance, militancy, and legislation.
  - Martin Luther King Jr. was the face of the movement and he inspired his followers to adopt a nonviolent approach to Civil Rights.
  - The federal government was responsive to the struggle to end legalized segregation.
  - America struggled to balance the needs of the people with its foreign policy
  - A variety of movements were sparked by the civil rights movement in the 1960s including the women's movement, the environmental movement, and the farmworkers movement.
- Unit Seven Desired Understanding:
  - President Johnson increased the power of the presidency to make war.
  - 1968 was a tumultuous year that led to a conservative backlash against liberal policies.
  - The Vietnam War divided Americans and failed to achieve its objectives.
- Unit Eight Desired Understanding:
  - The 1970s and 1980s marked a conservative era in American politics.
  - Beginning in the 1970s, the Middle East becomes one of the main fronts in the Cold War.
  - U.S. policy coupled with destabilization led to the collapse of the Soviet Union.
  - Reagan's policies ushered in a return to laissez-faire economic and social policies.
  - Technological innovations including personal computers and the use of satellites transformed daily lives.
- Unit Nine Desired Understanding:
  - Although the Cold War ended, America faced new challenges internationally in the form of peacekeeping missions and terrorism.
  - After an initial recession, the 1990s were characterized by economic prosperity and technological innovation.
  - President Barack Obama was elected in a historic election and his presidency led to significant social and economic reforms.

## **Standards**

### **Connecticut Core Standards**

Adopted in 2010 | English Language Arts Standards, History/Social Studies, Grade 11-12 at <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/>

### **Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks**

Adopted in February 2015 | Pages 101 through 110 at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Social-Studies/ssframeworks.pdf>

#### **DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRY**

- INQ 9–12.1 Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.
- INQ 9–12.2 Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.
- INQ 9–12.3 Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a supporting question.
- INQ 9–12.4 Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge. INQ 9–12.5 Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

#### **DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY CONCEPTS AND TOOLS**

(See below, beginning with “Civic and Political Institutions”)

#### **DIMENSION 3: EVALUATING SOURCES AND USING EVIDENCE**

- INQ 9–12.6 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- INQ 9–12.7 Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the sources.
- INQ 9–12.8 Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantially from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.
- INQ 9–12.9 Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.

#### **DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS AND TAKING INFORMED ACTION**

- INQ 9–12.10 Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.

- INQ 9–12.11 Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical)
- INQ 9–12.12 Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- INQ 9–12.13 Critique the use of claims and evidence in arguments for credibility.
- INQ 9–12.14 Critique the use of the reasoning, sequencing, and supporting details of explanations.
- INQ 9–12.15 Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.
- INQ 9–12.16 Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.
- INQ 9–12.17 Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms, schools, and out-of-school civic contexts.

### **Assessments / Resources**

- Course Close Reads:
  - Gettysburg Address
  - Chapter 14 from Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*
  - Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine
  - FDR's "Four Freedoms" speech
  - Eisenhower's Farewell Address
  - JFK's 1960 Democratic Convention speech
  - MLK's "I Have a Dream Speech"
  - George W. Bush "Axis of Evil" speech
- Textbooks
  - *The Americans* by Gerald Danzer
  - *The American Pageant* by David M. Kennedy and Lizabeth Cohen
- Required Assured Experiences:
  - **Unit Two Assured Research Experience (Essay):** The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with an opportunity to learn about a topic from the 1920s that interests them and to practice the skills they will need to complete the sophomore research paper in the second semester. Students can select their own topic.

- **Second Semester Sophomore Research Paper:** The Sophomore Research Project is an assured experience at Greenwich High School. All students must complete this research assignment in order to graduate. Teachers are consistent in expectations and delivery of research lessons.
- Course Essential Questions assessed in summative and formative assessments:
  - To what extent was the United States successful in promoting freedom and security at home and abroad?
  - To what extent does government intervention increase or decrease the rights of private citizens?
  - To what extent did the conflict between traditional and modern values lead to an expansion or contraction of freedom and rights?

### **Greenwich Public Schools Vision of the Graduate**

- Pose and pursue substantive questions
  - Students will develop and explore their own research questions during a variety of research assignments
- Critically interpret, evaluate, and synthesize information
  - Students will critically interpret, evaluate and synthesize information by analyzing a variety of primary and secondary sources and by conducting research. This source evaluation and research will allow students to gain a variety of perspectives.
- Explore, define, and solve complex problems
  - Students will apply historical knowledge to critically analyze current problems and issues.
- Communicate effectively for a given purpose
  - Students will be evaluated on their ability to communicate effectively through a variety of methods. Through persuasive writing assignments, class discussions and presentations, students will continue to develop and improve their communication skills.
- Advocate for ideas, causes and actions
  - Students will evaluate past advocacy successes and failures and determine when others have chosen to fight for causes and taken action.
- Generate innovative, creative ideas and products
  - Students will demonstrate their mastery of curriculum objectives with innovative projects. Students will explore answers to essential questions through creative and varied assignments with research structured by the use of GPS research process.
- Collaborate with others to produce a unified work and/or heightened understanding
  - Students will learn to collaborate with one another while working in structured groups in a variety of cooperative learning activities in order to create a final product.
- Contribute to community through dialogue, service, and/or leadership

- Through the study of community outreach, students gain the skills they need to become active citizens. The community service project will give students the opportunity to contribute to the community.
- Conduct themselves in an ethical and responsible manner
  - Current and historical situations will be analyzed so students gain perspective and information in order to conduct themselves in a responsible manner.
- Recognize and respect other cultural contexts and points of view
  - Through teaching about others' political ideologies, students will recognize and respect other cultural contexts and points of view. By developing an understanding of and empathy for others, students will appreciate differences and similarities between themselves and others.
- Pursue their unique interests, passions and curiosities
  - Students will have choice in many assignments and will be able to pursue their interests, specifically through the Capstone Community Service Project.
- Respond to failures and successes with reflection and resilience
  - Students will reflect on their writing and group work, in order to analyze what they did well and where they can improve. Frequent and constructive feedback by teachers will be used to ensure continuous reflection and refinement.
- Be responsible for their own mental and physical health
  - Social studies classes will help students develop study skills, and reduce stress through organization and planning.