

# American History & Civics: 1300-1860 CE

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to American History & Civics at Oneness-Family High School! Over the course of the year, we will deepen our understanding of America's origins and the political systems that exist within the country. We will pay special attention to influential persons, movements, and events that provide some explanation for how we have arrived at the present. In tandem with history, we will be uncovering the origins of our political system, learning about the modern political landscape, and puzzling through how we can impact the world around us.

Along the journey, we will investigate some of the most pernicious myths about the founding and establishment of America, but also illuminate some of the overlooked figures whose voices have been silenced, giving them a voice to speak to and teach about where we find ourselves today. At every step, we will also learn and practice the necessary skills of a historian and actively engaged citizen that will empower you to take your newfound voice into the world.

The success of this course will depend entirely on your ability to prepare yourself for each class meeting. At its very worst, history class can be a teacher standing up in front of you, yammering about stuff that happened a while ago, and then telling you to write about it. Please do not let me do that. Nobody wants that, least of all me.

This course centers on you, the student, the ideas you come up with and want to discuss, and the lessons we can all learn from the past. To have this kind of course, we must agree to put in that small effort before each class, to prepare ourselves for what that day has to offer, and be ready to engage with our classmates. In short: when you come to class prepared, school is about what you can do. When you do not come to class prepared, school is about what I can do. If I have to do history for you, I promise that it will be boring. If we can all investigate the past together and engage with the tremendous wealth of knowledge it contains, I promise that you will find something interesting in it.

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is broken up into **eight units**, four each semester. Each unit consists of **three weeks**, in which a certain time period and accompanying theme(s) are studied. Generally, one week will be spent on civics and two will be spent on history, but this varies between units. Within each unit, a certain skill will be emphasized and built upon, such as sentence structure, logical construction of a paragraph, and analysis of historical perspective within primary documents.

<b>Semester 1: Until 1776</b>	<b>Semester 2: 1776 - 1860</b>
<p><b>Unit 1 - Foundations</b></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modern structure and function of the US government</li> <li>- Background history of indigenous peoples in North America before 1490s</li> <li>- Background history of European peoples before 1490s</li> <li>- Characteristics of indigenous and European cultures, including land management techniques, mercantilism, and social structure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unit 5 - Revolution and a New Republic</b></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Origins of federalism and compromises made to establish the American system of government, including the Articles of Confederations, representation, and the Federalist/Anti-Federalist debate</li> <li>- The American Revolution</li> <li>- Analysis of how and why our system of government was decided upon, including significant figures</li> <li>- Disenfranchisement and omission of peoples from the process of nation-building</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit 2 - Collision of Cultures</b></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Philosophical roots and political backgrounds of both indigenous and European peoples</li> <li>- European arrival, first settlements, and the relationship between Europeans and indigenous peoples</li> <li>- Impact of colonization and conflict on different groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unit 6 - Jefferson and Nationalism</b></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Bill of Rights and the process of judicial review</li> <li>- Analysis of “nationalism” as a movement, both historical and modern</li> <li>- Effects and major events of Thomas Jefferson’s presidency, including the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, and the progressively genocidal approach to the continent’s indigenous peoples</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit 3 - Building on the Backs of Others</b></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Growth and development of politics within colonies</li> <li>- Connections between colonial charters and modern American constitutionalism</li> <li>- Analysis of wide range in colonial lifestyles and cultures, including prominence of slavery and industry</li> <li>- Philosophical movements of the day, including the Enlightenment and Great Awakening</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unit 7 - Jacksonian America, Slavery, and Expansion</b></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rights and responsibilities of citizenship, including how “citizenship” is thought of today</li> <li>- Analysis of the “State’s Rights” debate, then and now</li> <li>- Effects and major events of Andrew Jackson’s presidency, including treatment of indigenous peoples and his war on national institutions</li> <li>- Analysis of the appeal of “mass politics,” comparing Jackson with modern leaders and movements</li> <li>- Centrality of slavery to the southern way of life</li> </ul>

<p><b>Unit 4 - Empire and Independence</b></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Origins of “empire” and its effect on the peoples of the world, including modern American empire</li> <li>- Independence movements and resistance in colonial America and modern America, focusing on how citizens “resist” today</li> <li>- Roots and escalation of tension between Britain and the colonies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unit 8 - Division, Crisis, and the Antebellum Economy</b></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constitutional inconsistencies before the Civil War and in modern times</li> <li>- Relationship between the southern economy, slavery, and state’s rights</li> <li>- Immigration and the how the origin of immigrants affects national discussions of American identity</li> <li>- Rise of industry in the northern states and economic differences between different colonies</li> </ul>
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Each week will roughly follow the logic behind Montessori’s “three period” lesson, where information is presented, engaged with as a group, and finally produced by the student themselves. All information, readings, and resources will be shared on Google Drive and through our Google Classroom, along with clearly given deadlines and expectations for completion. Each unit will have its own “unit overview” sheet which will help organize information and track our progress through each week.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

Although we will be learning similar information and studying the same themes as a class, the depth of knowledge, rigor of the coursework, and pace of workload will be appropriate to each student’s age and ambition. Students in either **9th or 10th grade** will be automatically entered into the “**Introductory Level**” course, while students in either **11th or 12th grade** will be in the “**Upper Level**” course. In general, the upper level course will be held to a higher standard in terms of workload, production quality, and classroom participation.

Once placed in the appropriate course, students will have the opportunity to choose between either a “**Standard**” or “**Advanced**” track for their particular course. The advanced track option is for students who welcome the challenge, and subsequent reward, of learning about “interpretive frameworks,” how they enrich our knowledge of history, and how they can be used to more fully understand the problems our society faces today. For each unit, advanced track students will pick between race, class, or gender for an interpretive framework. In addition to normal coursework, they will use additional resources to interpret and analyze that unit’s time period and/or theme through the lens of their chosen framework. By following an advanced track, students will further develop their writing technique and voice, reading and notetaking skills, and work more closely with me to hone a necessary technique for those who wish to study history going forward.

## GRADING

Your grade will be composed of four different parts: in-class productions, independent productions, participation, and exit reviews. Each week will have 30 possible points to be earned, 10 for in-class productions, 10 for independent productions, and 10 for participation. In addition, each three-week unit will end with an "exit review" worth 10 points. In total, this means there will be **400 points** per semester to be earned for standard track students. For advanced track students, each unit will also have a small, three-week project worth 20 points, along with 5 additional points on each unit exit review. For advanced track students, this will total **500 points** per semester.

### Standard Track:

1. Classroom Preparation, Engagement, and Participation	<b>10 pts/wk</b>	(120 total)
2. In-class Productions	<b>10 pts/wk</b>	(120 total)
3. Independent Productions	<b>10 pts/wk</b>	(120 total)
4. Unit Exit Reviews	<b>10 pts/unit</b>	(40 total)
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<b><u>400 pts/semester</u></b>		

### Advanced Track:

1. Classroom Preparation, Engagement, and Participation	<b>10 pts/wk</b>	(120 total)
2. In-class Productions	<b>10 pts/wk</b>	(120 total)
3. Independent Productions	<b>10 pts/wk</b>	(120 total)
4. Unit Interpretive Framework Project	<b>20 pts/unit</b>	(80 total)
5. Unit Exit Reviews	<b>15 pts/unit</b>	(60 total)
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<b><u>500 pts/semester</u></b>		

### Grading Scale:

- A: 90% - 100%
- B: 80% - 89%
- C: 70% - 79%
- D: 60% - 69%
- F: 0% - 59%

## LATE POLICY

Unless permission has been granted because of special circumstances, productions and projects handed in late will receive the following credit:

- 1 day late:** 80% of total
- 2 days late:** 60% of total
- 3 days late:** 40% of total
- 4 days late:** 20% of total
- 5 or more days late:** 0%

*Note:* An assignment is considered late if not submitted **both** before the requested time and in the requested format

## MAKE-UP POLICY

If a student is absent and the absence is excused, they may hand in their work late by as many days as they were absent (to a maximum of five) without penalty. After this grace period, normal late policy applies. In the case of unexcused absences, students will be held accountable for all work due during absences and any readings/assignments for the day(s) following their absence.

## PLAGIARISM POLICY

Plagiarizing is taking and using ideas from a source without citing that source. By not citing your sources, you claim that what you have written down or made is of your own creation.

If you plagiarise without making an effort to cite the source of the information, you will receive no credit for that piece of work. If your plagiarism is unintentional and resulting from poor citation form, the production or project will be returned to you and not accepted until the errors are corrected. Additionally, cheating of any kind, copying classmates' work, or exhibiting dishonesty in a production, project, or exam will result in receiving no credit for that work.

*Note:* This policy will **only** apply to assignments indicated by the instructor

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Being present is super important! This class would not be possible without you, and its success depends on your participation.

Any assignments, productions, projects, or exams are the responsibility of the student to complete and hand in on time. If a student misses class for an excused absence, all work due during that period must be made up per the Make-up Policy detailed above. If a student leaves for ANY excused absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact me and receive all work due during that period of absence PRIOR to leaving. If the student does not adhere to this expectation, any work submitted will be subject to the Late Policy detailed above. In order for me to appropriately prepare you for any prolonged excused absence, please give me at least one full week notice to gather your materials and explain the expectations. If a student is at school but will miss class for an excused absence, it is the responsibility of the student to hand in any assignments before leaving school.

Finally, if a student misses class and they are not excused, they will not only be held responsible for readings, sources, and productions for the following day, but their work will also be subject to the Late Policy detailed above.

## CLASSROOM CONDUCT & FINAL NOTE

One of the greatest skills you can learn in life is how to respectfully disagree and then engage with another person in meaningful conversation. This also happens to be one of the most challenging skills to learn as a student, and we are all at different points on this path to becoming more precise, effective, and respectful members of the school. This course will likely challenge, and in turn teach you how to defend, closely-held personal beliefs in a logical and respectful way. In order to achieve this, I expect the following of you every time you step into the classroom:

Foster an atmosphere of respect within the classroom. Without the comfort of knowing that we can express our opinions openly, meaningful discussion cannot take place in the classroom. Your beliefs have value, and when expressed appropriately, they will help all of us engage with the material (and your perspective on it) more clearly.

Follow the guidelines from your student/family handbook as they relate to our class. Be responsible for your work and take pride in what you achieve as a student of history. Believe it or not, I cannot help you unless I know something is wrong. Please reach out to me if you have any questions, concerns, or just want to talk. As your teacher, I am your resource to use.