

# American Studies (3030E & 3030 H) Course Overview Curriculum Document

## Course Description

American Studies is a two-credit course integrating American Literature and Composition with United States (U.S.) History. It examines both great events and important themes in American history and literature. The course cultivates an understanding of the connections between the economic, political, social, cultural, and intellectual development of the U.S. in the continuing creation of U.S. culture. The course engages students in becoming analytical readers of text written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and contexts, and in becoming skilled writers. This course will be taught in a two period block either by a teacher dual-certified in English and History or through team-teaching. If the latter, collaboration between the English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies teacher is an expectation.

Credits	Prerequisites
1	None
Board Approved	Revised
May, 2004	May, 2014; May 2023

## Required Assessments

District-wide, standards-based common summative assessments

## Textbooks/Resources

[Stanford History Education Group](#)  
[ELA Resources](#)

## Course Essential Understandings

- As a result of successfully completing this course, students will:
- Apply historical thinking skills and reasoning processes
  - Describe similarities and/or differences between different historical developments or processes.
  - Describe and explain causes and/or effects of a specific historical development or process.
  - Explain the difference between primary and secondary causes and between short- and long-term effects.
  - Explain how a relevant context influenced a specific historical development or process.
  - Describe and explain patterns of continuity and/or change over time.
  - Chronologically identify, explain and make connections between events, processes, and transformations

## Course Essential Questions

- How have events, movements, ideologies, and literature throughout American history shaped the country's identity, values, and beliefs?
- Who am I as a reader, writer, and historical thinker?
  - What does it mean to be an American?
  - How does conflict shape America's identity?
  - How does a culture of fear lead to tragedy?
  - How do Americans bring about change?
  - Is the American Dream attainable?

## Unit Overviews

Unit Name	Unit Description	Unit Essential Question	History Instructional Standards	ELA Instructional Standards	Assessed Standards
<b>Unit One: Who am I as a reader, writer, and historical thinker?</b>	Students will examine the purpose of reading, writing, and historical thinking skills in an academic setting. Students will work to determine their personal reading preferences and maintain independent reading over the course of the unit. Students will write reflectively and creatively in response to their independent reading choices. Ongoing reading and writing ventures will support students in developing their personal style and tone. Students will practice reading and writing like a historian as well as sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration skills. Students will examine the reliability, point of view, and bias of historical sources in order to determine the strengths and limitations of primary and secondary sources.	Who am I as a reader, writer, and historical thinker?	Stating a Claim (SS.Inq3.a.h.) Evaluating sources (SS.Inq2.b.h) Applying appropriate evidence (SS.Inq3.c.h) Communicating learning (SS.Inq4.a.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Cause & Effect, SS.Hist1.a & b.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Continuity & Change, SS.Hist2.a&b.h)	Writing - Ideas & Message: (W.11-12.9) Writing - Craft & Structure: (W.11-12.4) Reading - Ideas & Message: (R.11-12.6) Reading - Craft & Structure: (R.11-12.4) Speaking & Listening: (SL.11-12.1) Language Use & Conventions: (L.11-12.5 & 6)	<a href="#">American Studies Rubrics</a>
<b>Unit Two: What does it mean to be an American?</b>	Students will practice their contextualization and ability to evaluate change over time. They will improve their skills by examining the question "what does it mean to be an American?" would have been answered at different times, and by different people, in American history. Students will analyze different perspectives from primary and secondary sources to determine the cause/effect of a historical event and its overall impact. Students can identify the source including, point of view, the intended audience, and/or the purpose and impact of a source multiple times.	What does it mean to be an American?	Stating a Claim (SS.Inq3.a.h.) Evaluating sources (SS.Inq2.b.h) Applying appropriate evidence (SS.Inq3.c.h) Communicating learning (SS.Inq4.a.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Cause & Effect, SS.Hist1.a & b.h) Historical Thinking Skills:	Writing - Ideas & Message: (W.11-12.9) Writing - Craft & Structure: (W.11-12.4) Reading - Ideas & Message: (R.11-12.6) Reading - Craft & Structure: (R.11-12.4) Speaking & Listening: (SL.11-12.1)	<a href="#">American Studies Rubrics</a>

			(Continuity & Change, SS.Hist2.a&b.h)	Language Use & Conventions: (L.11-12.5 & 6)	
<b>Unit 3: How does conflict shape America's identity?</b>	Students will be learning about conflicts in American History and how they have impacted everyday citizens and often overlooked populations within the military. We will be learning about interviewing skills and how to ask effective questions so that we can interview local veterans in a round table discussion. Students will take inspiration from their stories to investigate a current issue within the military and trace its history and roots.	How does conflict shape America's identity?	Stating a Claim (SS.Inq3.a.h.) Evaluating sources (SS.Inq2.b.h) Applying appropriate evidence (SS.Inq3.c.h) Communicating learning (SS.Inq4.a.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Cause & Effect, SS.Hist1.a & b.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Continuity & Change, SS.Hist2.a&b.h)	Writing - Ideas & Message: (W.11-12.9) Writing - Craft & Structure: (W.11-12.4) Reading - Ideas & Message: (R.11-12.6) Reading - Craft & Structure: (R.11-12.4) Speaking & Listening: (SL.11-12.1) Language Use & Conventions: (L.11-12.5 & 6)	<a href="#">American Studies Rubrics</a>
<b>Unit 4: How does a culture of fear lead to tragedy?</b>	Through literature and primary source documents, students will articulate what happens when fear controls the actions of individuals and the community. Students analyze how the context of a time period impacts witch hunts and episodes of mass hysteria. Possible course topics include the Salem Witch Trials, McCarthyism and Arthur Miller's The Crucible.	Unit 4: How does a culture of fear lead to tragedy?	Stating a Claim (SS.Inq3.a.h.) Evaluating sources (SS.Inq2.b.h) Applying appropriate evidence (SS.Inq3.c.h) Communicating learning (SS.Inq4.a.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Cause & Effect, SS.Hist1.a & b.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Continuity & Change, SS.Hist2.a&b.h)	Writing - Ideas & Message: (W.11-12.9) Writing - Craft & Structure: (W.11-12.4) Reading - Ideas & Message: (R.11-12.6) Reading - Craft & Structure: (R.11-12.4) Speaking & Listening: (SL.11-12.1) Language Use & Conventions: (L.11-12.5 & 6)	<a href="#">American Studies Rubrics</a>
<b>Unit 5: How do Americans bring about change?</b>	Students will research a social movement and articulate how leaders and change-makers have made positive impacts on various social groups and communities in American history. Students will also read, analyze, and discuss how contemporary American authors capture the stories and experiences of historically overlooked populations.	Unit 5: How do Americans bring about change?	Stating a Claim (SS.Inq3.a.h.) Evaluating sources (SS.Inq2.b.h) Applying appropriate evidence (SS.Inq3.c.h) Communicating learning (SS.Inq4.a.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Cause & Effect, SS.Hist1.a & b.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Continuity & Change, SS.Hist2.a&b.h)	Writing - Ideas & Message: (W.11-12.9) Writing - Craft & Structure: (W.11-12.4) Reading - Ideas & Message: (R.11-12.6) Reading - Craft & Structure: (R.11-12.4) Speaking & Listening: (SL.11-12.1) Language Use & Conventions: (L.11-12.5 & 6)	<a href="#">American Studies Rubrics</a>
<b>Unit 6: Is the American Dream attainable?</b>	Students will examine the significance and changing interpretation of the American Dream as it appears in historical documents, time periods, and American literature. Possible topics could include the Jazz Age, Harlem Renaissance writers, and F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby.	Unit 6: Is the American Dream attainable?	Stating a Claim (SS.Inq3.a.h.) Evaluating sources (SS.Inq2.b.h) Applying appropriate evidence (SS.Inq3.c.h) Communicating learning (SS.Inq4.a.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Cause & Effect, SS.Hist1.a & b.h) Historical Thinking Skills: (Continuity & Change, SS.Hist2.a&b.h)	Writing - Ideas & Message: (W.11-12.9) Writing - Craft & Structure: (W.11-12.4) Reading - Ideas & Message: (R.11-12.6) Reading - Craft & Structure: (R.11-12.4) Speaking & Listening: (SL.11-12.1) Language Use & Conventions: (L.11-12.5 & 6)	<a href="#">American Studies Rubrics</a>