

# HISTORY

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2025-2026  
**COURSE CATALOG**



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In today's dynamic global environment, a strong knowledge of history and the ability to think critically are an essential part of a 21st century education. SCH students study history in inquiry-driven classrooms that promote experiential learning and develop historical empathy. In 9th and 10th grades, students spend two years studying world history, beginning with the Neolithic Agricultural Revolution and ending in today's complex and rapidly changing world. Eleventh graders study American history from colonization onward. In 11th and 12th grades, students may choose from a diverse array of elective courses. Placement in Honors or AP sections is determined by the department.

## Required History Courses

### 9th Grade Foundations Of The Modern World

*Grade 9; full-year course; 1 credit*

**Prerequisite:** Departmental approval for Honors

This course examines the interactions among major societies that helped shape the modern world. The course begins in the Neolithic Revolution and continues to the Age of Exploration. Using a global perspective, students will explore the issues arising from interactions between humans and the environment, the development of social structures, the interaction of cultures, the creation and expansion of economic systems, and empire building. Research skills, creative analysis, and persuasive writing will be core components of the course.

### 10th Grade Modern World History

*Grade 10; full-year course; 1 credit*

**Prerequisite:** Departmental approval for Honors

This course examines the interactions and connections among major societies of the world from the Middle Ages to the present day. Students will explore new human and environmental connections, increasingly complex economic systems, innovative ideas arising from technological innovation, the rise of the nation-state, worldwide warfare, and the development of international systems. Research skills, creative analysis, and persuasive writing will be core components of the course.

### 11th Grade U.S. History

*Grade 11; Full-year course; 1 credit*

**Prerequisite:** Departmental approval for Honors

The course covers the history of the United States from colonial times to the present, focusing on political, economic, and social issues. Students will explore how the United States developed over time into a world power as well as contemporary foreign policy issues. The course will examine the turning points in American history, including the American Revolution, the origins of our Constitution, reform movements, Westward

Expansion, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Gilded Age, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War, and issues in the United States today. Research skills, creative analysis, and persuasive writing will be core components of the course.

## 11th Grade AP U.S. History

*Grade 11; Full-year course; 1 credit*

**Prerequisite:** Departmental approval for AP

AP U.S. History will cover content and chronology similar to that covered in 11th grade History. Due to the breadth of material and the depth of understanding that students will be expected to obtain in AP U.S. History, there will be a significant summer assignment and regular extensive reading assignments during the school year. Nightly reading may be as much as 10 pages or more. Students will use primary and secondary readings in addition to their text. Students will engage in regular class discussions, research, and regular assessments, primarily based on AP-type questions. Students will also spend time writing in a variety of styles, including AP Free Response, responding to document-based questions, expository essays, and research-based essays.

## HISTORY ELECTIVES

### Honors Anthropology: What it Means to Be Human

*Grades 11, 12; elective; fall semester, ½ credit*

**Prerequisite:** Departmental approval for Honors

This course is an introduction to the discipline of anthropology with a focus on the four major fields: archaeology, biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, and linguistics. Beginning with an historical and theoretical foundation, students examine how anthropologists make sense of the world and how they study the cultural and physical aspects of humanity. This course will complement the study of world history in 9th and 10th grade, as well as 11th grade U.S. history. The semester culminates in a research project in which students apply anthropological theory to analyze aspects of their own culture or daily lives.

The primary text will be Kenneth Guest's *Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age*. The course will also engage with excerpts from scholarly articles and long-form texts as well as various media (films, documentaries, interviews, talks, etc), all from researchers, scholars, and practitioners in the field of anthropology.

### Honors Global Slavery and Emancipation

*Grades 11, 12; fall semester; ½ credit*

**Prerequisite:** Departmental approval for Honors

This course will study slavery as a social and economic system over time, beginning with the slave societies of ancient Greece and Rome, through the rise of African slavery and the Atlantic slave trade under the Spanish and Portuguese empires, through the growth

and expansion of slavery in the U.S. South. The course will conclude by focusing on the global elimination of slavery in the second half of the nineteenth century and its tragic reemergence in recent decades, both in the United States and the world. The class will use David Brion Davis' *Inhuman Bondage* as a textbook, and pair it with a selection of primary sources and academic articles. In addition to regular assessments, students will conduct an in-depth research project.

### **Media and Society: Popular Culture in America**

*Grades 11, 12; elective; fall semester; ½ credit*

In this course students will take a critical approach to examining the evolution of American popular culture in various forms, including television, film, advertising, and theatre. Students will begin the semester by exploring definitions of pop culture and high culture before embarking on a study of how popular culture has developed and changed in the century between the 1880s and the 1980s. Special emphasis will be put on how pop culture has both shaped and reflected ideas of race, gender, and sexuality. Students will conduct an in-depth research project.

### **World War II in Europe and Beyond**

*Grades 11, 12; elective; fall semester; ½ credit*

Unlike broader survey courses, this course is intended to allow students to learn about one topic in considerable depth by spending the entire semester on a relatively short period of time and focusing on the theaters of WWII. Students will explore the origins of WWII in Europe and Asia, military strategies developed during the war, how the war affected those on the homefront, and the long-term consequences of the war. Sources include primary and secondary text sources as well as non-traditional sources, such as film, poetry, and music. Students will have the opportunity to conduct an in-depth research project.

### **America Today: 21st Century American Challenges**

*Grade 11 and 12 combined; elective, fall semester, ½ credit*

When the Cold War ended at the end of the 20th century, America entered a world of intense global and digital change. Threats of terrorism and climate change became part of everyday life, American industry and economic systems were globalized, immigration caused demographic shifts and controversy, and racial and economic disparities remained. Twenty-first century Americans became deeply divided politically, leading to intense debate over policy choices to address these issues. This course will explore contemporary American issues and policy choices using the tools of debate, student-led discussion, civil discourse, presentation, and simulations. Student choice and current events will help shape the curriculum. There will be a culminating in-depth research project.

### **Rock and Soul: The Soundtrack of America**

*Grades 11, 12 combined; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

This course seeks to integrate the history of America with the history and progression of Rock and Roll. Students taking this class will be able to trace the history of Rock and Roll and understand the influences it had on major historical events within the United States. The class will cover issues of race, gender, age, and other issues and how Rock and Roll helped to spur rebellion in those areas in an attempt to create equality. The course covers United States History from the mid-1950s through a study of the Blues' progression from its origins to its growth to Rock and Roll and related genres. The course is inclusive of African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanas/os and Latinas/os, and Native Americans, and their experiences and contributions through music to the history of Rock and Roll. Students will conduct an in-depth research project

### **Sports and Society in The U.S. and the World**

*Grade 11 and 12 combined ; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

Athletics are often seen as an escape from the real world, but they are also a reflection of that world. Athletics often intersects with controversies over race, class, and gender, and frequently connects to issues of social power and global economics. This class explores the history of sports, focusing on moments in time that speak to profound societal changes in the United States and the world. Topics include the fight for equal pay for the U.S. women's soccer team, the controversy surrounding Colin Kaepernick and kneeling during the National Anthem, geopolitical sports rivalries like India versus Pakistan in cricket and the U.S. versus the USSR in the Olympics, and the Supreme Court's recent decision against the "amateur" status of the NCAA. Particular attention will be paid to the history of sports in Philadelphia. Students will conduct an in-depth research project.

### **International Issues: Global Challenges in the Modern World**

*Grade 11 and 12 combined ; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

Learn about the role of the UN and other world agencies in addressing complex issues like energy and resource depletion, food and population, war and terrorism, nuclear arms, human rights, environmental issues, and international inequality. Student interest and current events will help shape the curriculum. This course will complement the study of world history in 9th and 10th grade, as well as 11th-grade U.S. history. This course will focus on building the skills of advocacy, debate, student-led discussion, and civil discourse and will culminate with an individual in-depth project.

Possible texts include Brown University Choices literature, major news articles, Council on Foreign Relations resources, Close Up resources, and articles from experts in International Affairs.

### **Honors Ancient Rome**

*Grade 11 and 12 combined ; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

"How often do you think about Rome?" is a popular question in the 21st century. To learn more, survey the culture, history, literature, and thought of ancient Rome and the Roman Empire. Learn about Rome from the development of Rome's identity and empire to its

domination of the Mediterranean world to its eventual transformation into a Christian and Medieval world. This framework will also incorporate social attitudes, daily life and entertainment, and readings from eminent historians of Rome, e.g. Mary Beard. This course will complement the study of world history in 9th and 10th grade, as well as 11th-grade U.S. history. An independent research project will be the culminating experience of the course.

Possible texts include Thomas Martin's *Ancient Rome: From Romulus to Justinian*, excerpts from Mary Beard's *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome*, and numerous primary sources.

### **History Goes to the Movies: The Reel World v. Reality**

*Grade 11 and 12 combined ; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

Many Americans learn history largely through the lens of Hollywood, but how accurate are these depictions of history? This engaging course delves into the captivating world of film, exploring the fascinating relationship between Hollywood's portrayal of the past and the actual events and people that inspired them. Students will critically analyze iconic films, examining their historical accuracy, artistic liberties, and the impact of cinematic storytelling on public perception. Through in-depth discussions, film screenings, and historical research among other course activities, students will develop a keen understanding of how Hollywood shapes our understanding of the past and present and the importance of discerning fact from fiction. This course will complement the study of world history in 9th and 10th grade, as well as 11th grade U.S. history.

Possible texts include Kim Nelson's *Making History Move: Five Principles of the Historical Film*, and Robert Toplin's *Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood* as well as various scholarly movie reviews and analytical journal articles. We will also engage in screenings of several films, both contemporary and historic.

### **AP United States Government**

*Grade 12; elective; full-year course; 1 credit*

**Prerequisite:** Departmental approval

This yearlong class will provide a conceptual framework and an understanding of the United States government and politics that will enable the student to think critically about the political processes at work in American society. This is a political science course that studies the interconnectedness of the different parts of the American political system and the behaviors and attitudes that shape and are a byproduct of this system. Though this course is designed to help prepare students for the Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics exam, its ultimate goal is to provide students with knowledge and skills to understand and actively participate in American politics and society. This course will focus on cultivating the skills of research, analysis, argumentation, and written and verbal communication. All students will engage in a civic action project of their choice. Students will differentiate between political and constitutional issues, as well as engage in nonpartisan and multi-partisan examination of content. Topics to be explored include: the Constitution & foundations of American

representative democracy, roles of the state and federal governments, political ideologies and beliefs, the political roles played by public opinion, the media, private interest groups, political parties, and social movements, elections and voting, interactions between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government, civil liberties, and civil rights. Special attention will be paid to the 2024 election and the results.