

United States History

Ridgeview Classical Schools

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Required texts: *America: A Narrative History*, Brief Fifth Ninth Edition, by George Tindall & David Shi, W.W. Norton, N.Y., 2000; supplemental text, *Great Issues in American History, Vol. I – From Settlement to Revolution, 1584 to 1776*, and Vol. II, *From the Revolution to the Civil War, 1765-1865*, both edited by Richard Hofstadter and Clarence L. Ver Steeg; additional materials will be provided as needed during the course.

Description

The junior level United States History course presents the story of this nation concentrating on the major events of the past three hundred and fifth years. Among these will be: the European discovery and settlement of the New World; the development of a new culture in North America; the war for independence from Great Britain; the growth and development of the early republic and our constitutional system; the Age of Jackson; Manifest Destiny and war with Mexico; sectional tensions and the issue of slavery; the Civil War and Reconstruction; the roots of modern America in the last third of the nineteenth century; the rise of the United States as a global power up through the First World War; the 1920s and the Great Depression; the Second World War; the Cold war and the challenge of Soviet expansion, including the Korean and Vietnam Wars; the Civil Rights movement; the development of a technological-consumer society in the last half of the twentieth century; and the victory of the United States and the West in the Cold War and the nation's emergence as the world's sole superpower at the century's end. Religious, political, economic, military, cultural and artistic aspects of these topics will be covered in a roughly chronological order. This course runs for an entire academic year.

Objectives

One principal focus of the class is on developing, practicing, and strengthening the skills historians use in the discipline of history, skills that also are needed for active, intelligent citizenship. This includes the critical assessment of sources, the recognition of various interpretations of events from the past, and the ability to think and write with an informed imagination about the past. In brief, it is to actively recapture and engage history in a dialogue. Ideally, at the successful completion of this class, a student will possess a clearer understanding of the origins and development of some of our most important human institutions, belief systems, and cultural values, along with an understanding of how they have survived and been altered over time. Additionally, they will be able to more accurately and clearly express themselves in any dialogue requiring historical understanding.

Grading / Evaluation

In keeping with the standard RCS evaluation norms, student grades will correspond to the following numerical equivalents:

100 – 90 = A , 89 – 80 = B , 79 – 70 = C , 69 – 60 = D , 59 -0 = F

The final course grade will be based upon the following:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Chapter Tests | 35% |
| In-class quizzes | 20% |
| Out of class written work | 20% |
| Participation | <u>25%</u> |
| | 100% |

Tests / Quizzes / Written Work

Chapter tests (and sometimes topical tests combining material from more than one chapter) will occur with some regularity during each quarter, and will always be announced at *least* one week in advance. They *may* consist of objective questions, short answers, map work, and an essay. Students are *always* given a choice of essay topic from among two or three possible topics. The in-class quizzes generally take place at the beginning of a class meeting, and will require you to write brief but complete identifications of a small number of terms from the current topic of reading and discussion. Additionally, there will be scheduled map quizzes. Occasionally you will need to write an essay outside of class. There is also a book review which consists of a brief (5-7 page typed) critical assessment of a book on a historical topic covered in United States History. The book choice is up to the student, with the teacher's permission. A separate handout on the critical review will be provided later.

Attendance and Participation

Material for the tests and quizzes is drawn from both the textbook and the in-class discussions. You should also note that 25% of your final course grade depends upon your loyal presence in the classroom. Your active participation is a positive assistance not only to yourself but to others in the class. Beyond this, in a very real sense, your teacher is another "textbook." Material not in the Tindall/Shi text or other readings, as well as interpretations of primary sources and events, is explored during these discussions and may well appear on tests and quizzes. In light of these facts, it almost goes without saying that active participation in the class is a good practice to cultivate.

Term Sheets and Course Calendar

To facilitate the readings and discussions, term sheets will be provided for each of the major units covered. These follow the structure of the textbook and lecture materials and indicate the terms and concepts of importance. In-class quiz identifications will be taken almost exclusively from these term sheets. They will be provided in advance of the chapters to be read and should be retained for use in reviewing material, especially before tests.

History involves the reading and digestion of materials before meaningful questioning and dialogue is even possible. The text readings given in the [separately provided] course calendar should be completed before that day's meeting. Thus, if pages 89 – 101 are listed for Wednesday of a given week, they are to be read **before** that day's class.

Other Important Points: Academic Honesty

All work presented in this class for evaluation for your grade must be your own. Never take credit for another person's efforts or scholarship. Plagiarism is the single greatest sin in the academic world, and is nothing less than the theft of another person's labors.

However, it is a very good idea to team-up with another person in the class to review lecture/discussion notes, converse about the texts, and to prepare for tests, quizzes, or the next day's discussion. A "teammate" often points out any gaps in knowledge. Do remember though, *on the tests, quizzes, or any other work evaluated for a grade, the work must be your own. The Ridgeview Classical Schools do not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty.*

Finally, if at any time something is not clear, **ask questions!** The whole purpose of the class is to raise questions and seek answers and understanding.