

American History

Fall 2025



Contact Information:

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Course Overview:

This course examines the formation of the United States of America and the American political system, U.S. territorial growth and social reform, the American Civil War and Reconstruction, and the political, economic, social and cultural development of the United States from the late 1800s to the present. It traces the changing ethnic composition of American society; the movement toward greater civil equality for minorities; and the emergence of the US as a major world power.

The course covers five time periods organized into 12 units. An introductory module, [Colonial America, c. 1492-1754](#), is available for self-study, but we begin with [Early America, c. 1754-1848](#), and continue to the present.



Mr. Phillips, Spring 2025

1. **EARLY AMERICA, c. 1754-1848**

- **Constitution** explores the causes and course of the War of Independence from Great Britain and examines the creation of the new federal government of the United States of America, and the new nation's early years from Washington's Administration through the War of 1812.
- **Expansion** explores the growth of American nationalism, economic and industrial development, and expansion of political participation. It also surveys social and religious reform movements, westward expansion through the Mexican-American War, and the impact of American slavery.

2. **RECONSTRUCTING AMERICA, c. 1848-1898**

- **The Civil War** investigates the issues that led to secession crisis and conflict between the United States and the Confederate States during the American Civil War. It also examines the struggles to rebuild the nation during Reconstruction.
- **The Gilded Age** surveys conflicts between settlers, ranchers, miners, Native Americans, and others during the heyday of the Western Frontier. It also examines the rapid economic and urban development and widespread corruption in the years following the Civil War.

3. **MODERN AMERICA, c. 1898-1945**

- **The American Empire** examines the rise of the United States as a new global power, and surveys widespread social, economic, and political reform at the turn of the 20th century.
- **The Great Depression** investigates the prosperity and social changes of the Roaring '20s followed by a catastrophic economic collapse and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal.
- **The Second World War** examines the United States' role in the fight against Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan.

4. **COLD WAR AMERICA, c. 1945-1991**

- **The Early Cold War** follows the United States' global struggle against communist forces in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, and Korea. The U.S. also experienced tremendous economic growth as the suburbs sprang up.
- **The Great Society** investigates the turbulent social transformation and political unrest during the Civil Rights Era, and the challenge to mainstream America arose in a powerful counterculture during the Vietnam War.
- **The Late Cold War** explores domestic and foreign challenges the United States faced during the 1970s and 1980s.

5. **CONTEMPORARY AMERICA, c. 1991-Today**

- **The Culture Wars** epitomize the political and social polarization between left-wing liberal Democrats and right-wing conservative Republicans.
- **The War on Terror** explores the U.S. response to 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and domestic terrorism from the Oklahoma City bombing to the U.S. Capitol Insurrection.

Rules and Expectations

1. **Be kind. Act interested. Follow directions.**
2. **Polite, civil behavior** is expected!
 - Public education is open to all members of the public, and everyone is welcome. **Use respectful language.** Profanity, racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, nativist, or other offensive comments will not be tolerated.
 - **Use formal academic English language** when writing, including **proper capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.**
 - **Truth and Justice are American values.** Use Snopes, PolitiFact, or other reliable websites to fact-check and form opinions based on reality.
3. Sit only in your assigned seat.
4. Food and drinks are not permitted.
5. Only one individual may use the restroom at a time.
 - You must sign-out and take the bathroom pass.
 - You may only visit the restroom in the 3300 hallway. Breaks should last *five minutes or less*. Wandering campus is skipping and will result in a discipline referral.
 - You must sign-in on your return.
6. Electronics are to be used **for academic purposes only.**
 - **Cell phones and smart watches are not permitted.** They must be silenced and stored in the phone pockets at the front of the classroom at the start of each period.
 - **A WCPSS Chromebooks or personal laptop is permitted for learning purposes.** Playing games, watching videos unrelated to our course of study, or using a device for any non-academic purpose is not allowed. If you use your device inappropriately, I will assign alternate assignments on paper using a print textbook.
 - **Earbuds and headphones are not permitted unless you have express permission to use them to watch a video for an assignment.**
 - **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software is cheating and is strictly prohibited!**
7. **Your participation is essential to success!** This means:
 - Read for retention of information! This means reading thoroughly for detail, and actively working to remember names, key terms, and other important information.
 - Adhere to the semester schedule without falling behind or working ahead. Keep up with readings and assignments, study vocabulary, and watch assigned videos.
 - Log into Canvas daily. Complete posted assignments by their deadlines. Submit work only to Canvas. Assignments that are emailed, shared only on Google Drive, or sent through another app will not be accepted.
 - Check WCPSS email daily. Answer messages within 24 hours or less.

Grading Policies

Grading scale:

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

Honors category percentages:

- Test/Project - 50%
- Quiz - 25%
- Classwork - 25%

Academic category percentages:

- Test/Project - 40%
- Quiz - 30%
- Classwork -30%

Assignments

1. All assignments are due by 11:59 PM on the due date. Submissions are time-stamped digitally, and work turned in past midnight is late.

Academic students:

- Late assignments are accepted for a **maximum of 70%** of the grade they would have received if turned in on time.
- Missing assignments final deadlines for **Academic students:**
Work due **08/25/25-09/19/25** will only be accepted for late credit until **September 19, 2025**.
Work due **09/22/25-10/24/25** will only be accepted for late credit until **October 24, 2025**.
Work due **10/27/25-11/28/25** will only be accepted for late credit until **November 28, 2025**.
Work due **12/1/25-01/09/26** will only be accepted for late credit until **January 9, 2026**.

Honors students:

- Late assignments are accepted for a **maximum of 60%** of the grade they would have received if turned in on time.
 - Missing assignments will only be accepted until **two (2) days after each unit assessment**.
2. All assignments are labelled on both the course schedules and the classroom whiteboard as Academic Classwork or Honors Classwork.
 - While some assignments are for both Academic and Honors students, other assignments are only for Academic students or only for Honors students. Read the schedule and/or whiteboard carefully to make sure you are completing the correct work and are meeting deadlines.
 3. Students with a score of 79% or below on a unit quiz or major test may retest one time for a **maximum test score of 80%**.
 4. Extra credit will not be offered.

WCPSS Honor Code Policy

Student success depends greatly on authentic engagement with learning. Habits of academic dishonesty limit a students' ability to engage and learn successfully. The WCPSS Honor Code Policy (Board Policy 4130) states: "Academic honesty is essential to excellence in education and is directly related to the Board's educational objectives for students to promote integrity and self-discipline in students. As all schoolwork is a measure of student performance, academic honesty facilitates an accurate measurement of student learning.

Each student, parent, family and staff member has a responsibility to promote a culture that respects and fosters integrity and honesty. Academic integrity and honesty requires that all stakeholders share responsibility in the fulfillment of this policy.

In fulfilling these responsibilities:

- students will collaborate with their peers to foster a culture of academic integrity; refrain from participating, either directly or indirectly, in any form of cheating or plagiarism; and adhere to the honor code;
- parents and family will actively support the honor code by encouraging their child(ren) to foster and uphold a culture of academic integrity;
- staff will establish and annually teach expectations regarding academic integrity and honesty; and promote the honor code.

Prohibited Behaviors

- **Cheating:** Cheating is an academic deception where a student intends in some way to receive or attempt to receive credit for work not originated by the student, to give or receive unauthorized assistance, or to give or receive an unfair advantage on any form of academic work.
- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is using passages, materials, words, ideas, and/or thoughts of someone or something else and representing them as one's own original work without properly crediting the source.
- **Falsification or Deceit:** Intentional acts of falsification or serious deceitful misconduct that threaten the health, safety, or welfare of others, or that cause a substantial detrimental impact on school operations or other individuals are prohibited.

Violations

- A student may receive full, partial, or no grading credit for the assignment. Depending on the seriousness of the violation, an alternative assignment may be accepted for partial credit.
- Violations may impact eligibility for athletic participation, honor societies, or awards. School organizations may impose their own additional consequences.