US History Course Overview

Course at a Glance

Overview

U.S. History is a year-long class that is required by the State of Illinois for graduation. The course includes twelve units over the course of a school year that covers the theory of studying history up to present day. Students are required to read, write, present, create, and reflect in a variety of assignments and methods.

Units:

Unit 1: Colonization (1491–1754)
Unit 2: Developing a New Nation (1754–1800)
Unit 3: An Emerging Nation (1800–1848)
Unit 4: Union in Peril (1848–1877)
Unit 5: The West and The Gilded Age (1865–1898)
Unit 6: Domestic Progress and International Expansion (1890–1945)
Unit 7: Post-War America (1945–1980)

Historical Thinking Skills:

Argumentation
Comparison
Causation
Continuity and Change Over Time
Claims and Evidence in Sources
Contextualization
Audience
Purpose
Point of View

Unit 1: Colonization (1491–1754)

1. Different native societies adapted to and transformed their environments through innovations in agriculture, resource use, and social structure.
   a. How did native societies innovate their agriculture, resource use, or social structure?

2. European expansion into the Western Hemisphere generated intense social, religious, political, and economic competition and changes within European societies.
   a. How did European expansion into the western hemisphere create competition and change European society?

3. The Columbian Exchange and development of the Spanish Empire in the Western Hemisphere resulted in extensive demographic, economic, and social changes.
   a. How did the Columbian exchange result in demographic, economic, and social change?

4. In their interactions, Europeans and Native Americans asserted divergent worldviews regarding issues such as religion, gender roles, family, land use, and power.
   a. In what ways did Europeans and Native Americans possess differing worldviews regarding religion, gender, family, land, and power?

5. Spanish, French, Dutch, and British colonizers had different economic and imperial goals involving land and labor that shaped the social and political development of their colonies as well as their relationships with native populations.
   a. How did European colonizers have different goals and relationships with native populations?

6. In the 17th century, early British colonies developed along the Atlantic coast, with regional differences that reflected various environmental, economic, cultural, and demographic factors.
   a. What were the different environmental, economic, cultural, and demographic factors among British colonies in North America?

7. Competition over resources between European rivals and American Indians encouraged industry and trade and led to conflict in the Americas.
   a. How did competition over resources encourage trade and lead to conflict in the Americas?

8. Transatlantic commercial, religious, philosophical, and political exchanges led residents of the British colonies to evolve in their political and cultural attitudes as they became increasingly tied to Britain and one another.
   a. How did residents of the British colonies become increasingly tied to Britain and one another?

9. Like other European empires in the Americas that participated in the Atlantic slave trade, the English colonies developed a system of slavery that reflected the specific economic, demographic, and geographic characteristics of those colonies.
   a. How did a system of slavery develop in the British colonies in the Americas?

Unit 2: Developing a New Nation (1754–1800)

1. How did the British come to dominate most of the land of North America before the American Revolution and what were the consequences of this victory?

2. Why did many colonists begin to assert ideals of self-government?

3. How did our nation's Declaration of Independence and new Constitution reflect Enlightenment-era beliefs about politics, religion, and society?

4. How did our nation's new Constitution describe the roles of the state and federal governments?

5. How did our nation's new Constitution protect liberty and limit centralized power and popular influence?

6. Why did new political ideas and beliefs develop and how did these ideas differ from each other?

7. After the American Revolution, how much did society really change? Was it a "Revolution?"

8. How did the first American presidents interact with European powers?

Unit 3: An Emerging Nation (1800–1848)

1. How did participation in American democracy change democracy and the role of political parties?

2. How did various groups develop unique and distinctive political cultures?

3. How did Americans use new religious and intellectual ideals to change society?

4. How did new forms of transportation change our economy from 1800-1848?

5. How did the Market Revolution change American life?

6. How did our economic changes both unify and divide our country?

7. How did America's goal to become a global power cause expansion throughout North America?

8. How did American territorial expansion cause sectional conflict over slavery?

Unit 4: The Union in Peril (1848-1877)

1. Why did Americans migrate westward?

2. How did Americans respond to new groups in the United States?

3. How did the North and South each respond to differences in opinion over slavery?

4. How did debates over slavery dominate American politics?

5. Why did the south secede and how did they work to achieve their goals?

6. Why was the Union victorious in the Civil War?

7. How successful was Reconstruction in attempting to bring the country back together?

8. After the Civil War, how "free" were former slaves?

Unit 5: The West and the Gilded Age (1865-1898)

1. Why did settlers continue to move west after the Civil War?

2. How did settlers in the West utilize new technologies and practices after the Civil War?

3. Why did various groups come into conflict in the West?

4. Why did America's economy grow during the Gilded Age?

5. How did new ideas change American society and values after the Civil War?

6. How did the relationship between government and business change during the Gilded Age?

7. How did immigration and migration change American culture after the Civil War?

8. How did labor and management come into conflict during the Gilded Age?

9. How did different groups view the economic changes of the Gilded Age?

Unit 6: Domestic Progress and International Expansion (1890-1945)

1. How did American imperialism lead to increased American international expansion and consequences in Asia, the Pacific, and Caribbean?

2. How did Progressives seek to resolve major problems in American society in the early 20th century?

3. How did the United States' shift from neutrality to engagement in World War 1 impact ethnic and racial minority groups in American society during and immediately after World War 1?

4. How did technical, migratory, and cultural changes in the 1920s change American society in the 1920s?

5. Why did the Great Depression happen and how did the U.S. Government respond to the Great Depression?

6. Why did the United States remain isolationist during the 1930s?

7. How did the United States' mobilization in response to the expansion of World War 2 lead to Allied victory?

8. How did World War 1 and World War 2 change American society?

9. How did the United States take actions against minorities during World War 1 and World War 2?

Unit 7: Post-War America (1945-1980)

1. Describe how the United States created and maintained a position of global leadership in the post-World War 2 world?

2. Explain how rapid social and economic changes in post-war/Cold War changed American culture and led to conflict.

3. Explain the legal and political strategies civil rights activists and political leaders from 1945-1980 used to end segregation and pursue racial equality.

4. Describe how the United States sought to limit the spread of Communism during the Cold War at home and abroad.

5. Describe how diverse social movements expanded the definition of Civil Rights in the 1960s and 1970s.