

U.S. History: Post-Bellum

What does it mean to be an American?

How much influence do we have over our lives and the world?

How has nature and physical geography influenced America's development?

These three questions will help guide our exploration as we learn about the history of the United States since the Civil War. The U.S. of 1865 was a fundamentally different than the country than the one we live in today. Our country has been and continues to be formed by residents (not always legal citizens) speaking out and acting up to ensure that their rights are respected and protected. Women have marched for the right to vote, to work, and to not be physically assaulted, Civil Rights struggles to end racial segregation were both non-violent and required protections through the 2nd Amendment. From groups of citizens in frontier experiences chartering towns, cities, and homesteads the United States is unique because of its aspirations for justice, equality, equity, and freedom. In this class we will examine this evolution.

Our second question looks at how much control we have over our lives and the world. We study history because how we interpret the past (and the meaning we choose to give certain events and people) often says a lot about who we are today and what our society has as shared goals. History is made everyday by people like you, and it is important to explore how we are all Jay Gatsbys, Fiorello LaGuardias, and Ella Bakers.

Parts of this course will be organized chronologically while other topics will be studied across a few decades. An important component of this course will look at the role nature has played on shaping history of the United States. How has our physical environment shaped our growth, trade, and history? We will approach many of our units by focusing not just on the people and places but on the soil, water, and environmental systems that impacted and shaped those events. The Great Depression wasn't just a time with high unemployment and a crashed stock market, it's also the time when the Midwest nearly became a Sahara Desert of North America. American Indians were subdued on the plains not only by direct military engagement but through a systematic extermination of the Plains Indians' food source, the bison. The railroads altered farming in Brooklyn, NY as they did ranching in Texas. By exploring environmental crises from the past, we will gain a better context for solving environmental problems in our future. Will future wars be over water instead of oil? Can the air we breath be privatized and sold? How will we feed ourselves in the future? These are the questions which we will seek to answer this year.

Course Format

This course will combine readings, film, lecture with discussions, group projects, and art projects. Class lectures will generally build upon and not simply restate course materials. This course will also have field trips to explore regional history topics.

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Course Alignment with Standards

This course is designed to develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions which global citizenship requires. Students completing this course will learn and practice skills that will be applicable in their present and future lives and careers. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to merge political theory and practice as they discuss, reflect upon, and act on their civic concerns. This US History course is aligned with several of the Oregon State Social Study Standards.

Classroom Rights

This list, co-created by students and Mr. Sixta, lists some of your rights as students in this classroom.

1. You have the right to an education.
2. You have the right to property and privacy.
3. You have the right to health and safety.
4. You have the right to give input and be heard regarding your educational environment.
5. You have the right to be treated with respect from your peers, teachers and others in this classroom.

Mr. Sixta's commitment to ensuring student rights

1. Every student in my class has the opportunity to receive an equitable education that is relevant, engaging, interesting, and useful for their life.
2. This classroom is a safe environment for all students. Hateful speech and violent actions will not be tolerated.
3. Students and their families receive the respect of person, property, and privacy that they deserve and are entitled to as students, citizens, and residents of the Butte Falls High School Community.

Texts

Steinberg, Ted. *Down to Earth*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Book

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003.

In addition to the texts listed above we will also use materials from *The Choices Program* from Brown University, PBS, and other fiction and non-fiction materials.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Prepare for every class by completing assigned readings and written work
- Actively participate in all learning experiences in every class discussion
- Support the learning of their peers

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Course Outline

This is a tentative outline of the topics and dates that will be covered over the course of the year. The schedule may change as relevant opportunities arise.

<u>FIRST SEMESTER</u>	
Date	Unit
Week 1-7	American Industrialization
Week 6-11	Water Wars "Whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting"
Week 10-15	The Unforgiving West
Week 16-17	National History Day Projects
Week 18	Finals
<u>SECOND SEMESTER</u>	
Week 1-2	National History Day Projects
Week 3-4	Isolation & the Roaring '20s
Week 5-9	The Great Depression
Week 10-13	The African American Experience
Week 13-15	The Cold War
Week 16-17	Contemporary America
Week 18	Final

Evaluations

There will be multiple types of evaluation over the course of this semester. I am a firm advocate that consistent qualitative and quantitative feedback will help you get more out of your studies. In addition to receiving traditional grades for this course, I will regularly write comments on papers, tests, projects, and other assignments for this course. During class, I will make time to talk with you about the projects you are working on and expect that you will hold me accountable for providing feedback on your work or clarifying assignments. Other forms of communicating evaluation will be done by:

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1. **Quarterly conferences** conducted between student and instructor to discuss classroom learning, social skill development, and portfolio projects.
2. **Proficiency:** School Districts in the State of Oregon are moving to a proficiency-based approach of measuring student achievement. As a result, we will have at least one proficiency report card showing which Oregon State Social Study Standards you have mastered and which still need to be completed. As we progress this year, I will communicate with you and your caregiver more about the goals and meaning of this proficiency report card.

3. **Formal Course Grades**

The grades for the course will be based on the following elements.

- a. **Units (60%):** Over the course of the semesters we will spend a few weeks looking in depth at a particular topic. Each unit will be structured differently and composed of different assignments and projects. Grading for the unit will be an aggregate of the individual skills learned and demonstrated during that unit. Each unit will have a culminating activity to demonstrate knowledge.
- b. **Writing Skills- Four Areas of Focus (10%):** Each semester we will focus on improving four specific areas of formal written communication. You will have writing assignments that build off the previous skill as the year progresses. The four areas of focus are:

1st Semester	2nd Semester
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maps & Works Cited ● Quotations & Internal Citations ● Summaries & Paraphrases ● Graphics & Charts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Historical Research ● Diversity of Source Material ● Outlines ● Drafting

- a. **Final (10%):** At the end of first semester there will be a culminating final covering the material from first semester. At the end of the year there will be a culminating project that will include a paper, presentation, and discussion.
- b. **Notes (10%):** As you explore the context for our current country world, we will also spend time reading, watching, and discussing current events. You will regularly summarize current events and maintain a class notebook with your notes, readings, field notes, and assignments to be turned in every quarter. You will also be assigned a series of reading and writing work samples, which we will conduct during class. You will also need to maintain a class binder with sections for notes, maps, resources, essays, and coursework.
- c. **National History Day Project (10%):** During both semesters we will be working on a National History Day Project.

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Honors Option

This class has an honors option that can be taken either or both semesters. Requirements for the honors option will be explained in the third week of each semester and can be provided upon request.

Policy On Electronic Devices

Though we will use cell phones and laptops in class many times to reference information and to support one another's learning, to enhance individual and collective focus all phones need to be silenced during class sessions. In addition, please refrain from texting and other forms of electronic "chatting" and "surfing" the web during class activities and discussions. Use of Facebook, Snapchat, and other social media that doesn't relate to class material are not allowed during the class period. If you need to communicate electronically or check the Internet, please do so before or after class. Electronic devices cannot only distract the user but they can also be disruptive to your peers' ability to concentrate, focus, and learn. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Academic Integrity

There will be no tolerance for plagiarism or any other academic dishonesty. In particular, papers with plagiarized ideas or languages will be graded "NC" and must be rewritten with proper citations and references if the student intends to pass the course for credit. The consequences for plagiarism are that a student will receive the grade of "NC" for any unit that contains plagiarised or other academic dishonesty and the work will need to be redone and resubmitted.