AP U.S. History
Syllabus

Overview:
This course is a survey of American history emphasizing the development and changing nature of American society. It is designed to be the equivalent of a two semester college course covering U.S. history from early colonial settlement to the present day. The lion’s share of factual knowledge will be obtained through your own reading and review. Class time will be spent examining analytical and interpretive issues in American history – how and why the course of history went the way it did. Emphasis will be placed on critical thinking, analytical writing and interpretation of primary and secondary sources. Considerable time will be spent in the practice of making broad generalizations regarding change over time and using specific details to support those ideas.

Objectives:
Students will:

- master a broad understanding of historical knowledge and chronology
- understand its principal themes (including changes in political organization, long-term trends in diplomacy and economic policy, the interaction of various ideas, cultures, and social practices, and movements in American literary and cultural expression)
- learn to write clearly and effectively
- analyze and evaluate various primary sources
- interpret multiple perspectives in historical scholarship
- prepare and compose a short analytical research paper
- work effectively with others to debate issues in American history
- prepare for and successfully pass the AP exam in May

Textbook:

Selected readings will be taken from –


Organization:

Units of Study: This course approaches United States history chronologically and will be broken down into units of study. Each unit will focus on essential questions addressing the central themes of the course. Students will receive daily reading assignments along with discussion questions to be completed outside of class. These questions are designed to encourage students to investigate how specific events occurring within a specific time period fit into a broader trend or movement. Weekly quizzes are given to encourage students to keep up to date on the reading. Most units will include at least one Document Based Question and will culminate with a comprehensive test including multiple choice questions and free response essays. There will be additional readings and assignments incorporated into each unit.

Projects: Approximately once each grading period a group or individual project will be required. These may include analytical writing, research, presentations and/or additional products. During the second grading period students will research, develop and compose an analytical paper for submission to their senior portfolio.

Evaluation: Grades will be comprised of total points earned on a variety of assessments each grading period. Assessments include: homework, daily discussion questions, debates, quizzes, tests and projects. Students will also take a mid-term and a final exam that will be averaged into their final grade for the course. The AP U.S. History Exam will be administered during the second week of May. This exam will have no bearing on the final grade, but can potentially earn college credit depending upon the score and the specific college or university.
Course Outline:

Unit 1: Colonial Period (2 weeks)

**Readings:**  
*Bailey* - Chapters 1-4  
*Moran* - Mayflower Compact pg. 5-6  
*Spirit* - Slave narrative pg. 24-26; Salem Witch Trials pg. 81

**Topics:**  
Native Americans before Columbus  
Spanish conquistadors  
Role of geography  
Jamestown  
Settling of Virginia, Maryland, Carolinas and Georgia  
Puritans  
Development of New England  
Chesapeake tobacco  
Bacon’s Rebellion  
Spread of slavery  
Southern Society  
Salem Witch Trials  
Daily life in the colonies

**Essential Questions:**  
1) How did the geographic setting of North America—including its relation to Asia, Europe, and Africa—affect its subsequent history?  
2) What did England & English settlers really want from colonization and did they get what they wanted?  
3) How did the distinctly different outlooks of the various settlers affect the development of the colonies?  
4) Why did slavery grow to be such an important institution in colonial America and what were the effects of slavery on the Africans who were brought to the New World?

**Assignments/Activities/Assessments:**  
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – necessity of slavery  
- Assignment requiring students to assess the changing role of the individual in colonial America and evaluate the contributions to Puritanism, the Great Awakening, and the Enlightenment to the political development of the nation.
Unit 2: Revolution (2 weeks)

Readings:  
*Bailey* - Chapters 5-7  
*Spirit* - "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" pg. 92-93; The Proclamation of 1763 pg. 117-120; Benjamin Franklin's testimony against the Stamp Act pg. 129-131: "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" Patrick Henry pg. 141-142

Topics:  
- Immigration and population growth  
- The Great Awakening and role of religion  
- Atlantic economy  
- French & Indian War  
- Salutary Neglect  
- Proclamation of 1763  
- Mercantilism  
- Road to Revolution

Essential Questions:  
1) What were important sources of influence on an ordinary colonist? What shaped their thought?  
2) Should the French & Indian War be considered one of the causes of the American Revolution?  
3) How and why did the Americans and the British differ in their views of taxation and of the relationship of colonies to the empire?  
4) What methods did the colonists use in their struggle with British authorities, and how did the British try to counteract them?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:  
- DBQ-French & Indian War  
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – merits of diplomacy over anarchy  
- Introductory Writing assignment evaluating the extent to which the American colonies had developed a distinct society by 1763  
- Create chart organizing British and colonial actions prior to Revolution

Unit 3: Establishing a New Nation (2 weeks)

Readings:  
*Bailey* - Chapters 8-9  
*Classics* - Abigail Adams' letter to John Adams pg. 3; Declaration of Independence pg. 4-7; Federalists Papers 10, 39, 51 pg. 29-33, 46-49, 244-249; Constitution pg. 8-29

Topics:  
- Declaration of Independence  
- Patriots and Loyalists  
- Articles of Confederation  
- Shay’s Rebellion  
- Ratifying the Constitution  
- Early republicanism
Essential Questions: 1) Why did Americans choose not only to break from Britain, but to adopt a republican form of government in 1776? What republican ideas did they share, and what did they disagree about? 2) What role did France play in winning America’s independence? 3) Was the U.S. in a crisis under the Articles of Confederation, or was the “crisis” exaggerated by the Federalists to justify their movement? Could the U.S. have survived if the Articles had stayed in effect? 4) What were the basic features of the new Constitution, and how did they differ from the government under the Articles of Confederation?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:
- DBQ – American identity on the eve of revolution
- In depth analysis of Constitution
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – Constitution’s significance to World history
- Create chart outlining components of Articles of Confederation and its effectiveness

Unit 4: New Republic (2 weeks)

Readings: Bailey - Chapters 10-12
Spirit - Jefferson/Madison debates pg. 190-194, 198-199; Washington's Farewell address pg. 206-208
Moran - Opinion in Marbury vs. Madison pg. 60-62

Topics: Washington sets the bar
Bill of Rights
Hamilton/Jefferson emergence of political parties
Adams’ foreign and domestic policy
Early tests to the Constitution
Revolution of 1800
Marshall and the Supreme Court
Louisiana Purchase
Treaty of Ghent
The American System
Missouri Compromise
The Monroe Doctrine

Essential Questions: 1) Why did Hamilton move so quickly to create large financial commitments by the federal government? 2) What were the philosophical and political disagreements between Hamilton and Jefferson that led to the first political parties?
3) What was the significance of the Jeffersonian “Revolution of 1800” in relation to the new republican experiment and the political battles of the 1790’s?
4) What were the long term ramifications of Marbury vs. Madison?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – emergence of political parties and long term benefit/consequence
- Assignment evaluating the Supreme Court under John Marshall and its application of Federalist principles
- Group project and presentation on emerging nationalism in the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century – emphasis on political, economic and cultural developments

Unit 5: Nationalism & Economic Expansion (2 weeks)

Readings: Bailey - Chapters 13-15
Spirit - Hayne/Webster Debate pg. 274-276; Declaration of Sentiments pg. 327-330

Topics: Election of 1824
Jacksonian Democracy
Nullification crisis
Westward movement
Immigration
Nativism
Women in the economy
Transportation
Reform

Essential Questions: 1) Why did Calhoun and the South see the Tariff of 1828 as such an “abomination” and raise threats of nullification over it?
2) How did the existence of a vast western frontier shape American’s values and society in the period 1790-1860?
3) How did the new transportation systems create a commercially linked national economy and a specialized division of labor?
4) How did the first American feminists propose altering the condition of women and what successes did they have?
5) How did Jacksonian Democracy affect the participation of everyday Americans in the political process?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – Seneca Falls convention as turning point in American history
- Create chart evaluating the differences between Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy
Unit 6: Sectionalism (2 weeks)

Readings: Bailey - Chapters 16-18
Spirit - Douglass on Slavery pg. 352-354; the "blessings" of the Slave pg. 364-366; excerpt from Hinton Helper's banned book pg. 376-377; John Calhoun debates Compromise of 1850 pg. 403-404

Topics: Southern social structure
Abolitionists
Manifest Destiny
War with Mexico
Popular Sovereignty
Compromise of 1850
Kansas-Nebraska

Essential Questions: 1) What role did plantation owners, small slaveholders, independent white farmers and free blacks each have in Southern social order?
2) Why was Polk willing to go to war against Mexico over Texas but not against Britain over Oregon?
3) What were the benefits and costs of the Mexican War both immediately and in the longer run of American History?
4) Did the north, south, or west benefit most for the Compromise of 1850?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:
- DBQ – Sectionalism
- Class project addressing compromises and conflicts that led to the Civil War. Groups will be preparing a lesson for the class covering different themes.

Unit 7: Civil War (3 weeks)

Readings: Bailey - Chapters 19-21
Spirit - Opposing viewpoints on the Dred Scott decision pg. 435-438; Clement Vanlandingham's speech opposing suspension of the writ of habeas corpus pg. 459-461; Gettysburg Address pg. 463; Lincoln's second inaugural address pg. 463-465; A "Colored Man's" reflections on the War pg. 472-473

Topics: Harriet Beecher Stowe
Dredd Scott
Abraham Lincoln
Secession
Border States
European intervention
Lincoln and civil liberties
Economic impact
Emancipation Proclamation
Legacy of war

Essential Questions: 1) What were the implications of the Dredd Scott decision for – the status of free blacks in the U.S. - the concept of popular sovereignty - the future of slavery in America? 2) When confronted with Southern secession in 1861, why didn’t Lincoln simply allow the South to separate in peace? 3) Why did the South confidently anticipate European intervention on their behalf and why didn’t it materialize? 4) Did the Civil War slow the U.S. Industrial Revolution or did it help usher in modern America?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:
- Historical Analysis – short research paper analyzing the influence a particular individual has had on American history (this will be submitted as a possible selection for Senior Portfolios). This will be long term assignment that will be completed over the course of several units.
- Presentations on research- students will conduct primary research in preparation for their analytical paper and present their findings to the class

Unit 8: Reconstruction & Gilded Age (2 weeks)

Readings: Bailey - Chapters 22-23
Spirit vol.2 - excerpts from the Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction pg. 512-513; Andrew Johnson's veto of the Reconstruction Act pg. 513-514; Opinion in Plessy v. Ferguson pg. 58-60

Topics: Reconstruction debates
Black Codes
Impeachment of Johnson
Legacy of Reconstruction
Corruption in government
Compromise of 1877
Jim Crow
Populism
Mark Twain

Essential Questions: 1) How truly “radical” was “radical reconstruction”?
2) What caused the end of Reconstruction and what did each side gain from the Compromise of 1877?
3) How did Southern and Northern racial attitudes shape Reconstruction and what effect did Reconstruction have on race relations?
4) Is “gilded” a correct description of the time period?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – better solutions to Reconstruction
- Short writing task requiring students to research a particular plan for Reconstruction and analyze its effectiveness
- Practice in analytical writing culminating in the completion of the rough draft of their analytical portfolio piece

Unit 9: Industrialization & Urbanization (2 weeks)

Readings:  
- Bailey - Chapters 24-26
- Spirit vol. 2 – Gospel of Wealth pg. 73-75; Life in a Southern Mill pg. 80-82; excerpt from The Promised Land pg. 105; oath of the American Protective Association pg. 106; a pioneer woman describes the overland trail pg. 148-150

Topics:  
- The Gospel of Wealth
- Industry in the South
- Railroads
- "New immigrants"
- Booker T. Washington
- W.E.B. Du Bois
- Urban America
- Women's changing role
- Frontier

Essential Questions:  
1) What was the impact of the transcontinental rail system on the American economy and society in the late 19th century?
2) What was the effect of the new industrial revolution on American laborers, and how did various labor organizations attempt to respond to the new condition?
3) How did the “New Immigration” differ from the “Old Immigration” and how did Americans respond to it?
4) Why was the “passing of the frontier” in 1890 a disturbing development for many Americans and was the frontier more important as a particular place or an idea?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:  
- DBQ – Organized labor
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – “passing of the frontier” as cause of imperialism
• Document and political cartoon analysis to assess the methods and motives of the industrialists. Students will analyze the sources and formulate an opinion to create the basic framework of a journal article

Unit 10: Progressivism (2 weeks)

Readings:  
Bailey - Chapters 27-29
Spirit vol. 2 – Roosevelt Corollary pg. 185-186; excerpt from Shame of the Cities pg. 194-196; speech by Woodrow Wilson pg. 224-226

Topics:  
Spanish American War
Theodore Roosevelt
Big Stick Policy
United States on a World stage
Muckrakers
Progressivism
Dollar Diplomacy
New Freedom
Wilson and the Triple Wall of Privilege
Isolationism

Essential Questions:  
1) How was U.S. overseas imperialism in 1898 similar to and different from earlier American continental expansion, or “Manifest Destiny”?  
2) What did the Progressive Movement accomplish at the local, state and national levels?  
3) What were the essential principles of Theodore Roosevelt’s foreign policy, and how did he apply them to specific situations?  
4) What were the results of Wilson’s great reform assault on the “triple wall of privilege” – the tariff, the banks, and the trusts?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:  
• Graded Fishbowl discussion – How has role of media evolved from Progressive muckrakers to present day?  
• Identification of the various foreign policies of the era and discussion of various interpretations of each  
• Individual presentations of the contributions and legacies of the various Progressive reformers  
• Discussion of The Jungle as social and political propaganda(summer reading assignment)
Unit 11: World War I & Roaring Twenties (3 weeks)

Readings:  
*Bailey* - Chapters 30-32  
*Spirit vol. 2* - Article X and Wilson's testimony pg. 258-260; testimony before a House committee pg. 293-295  
*Moran* - "Rugged Individualism" pg. 185-186

Topics:  
World War I  
Fourteen Points  
Home front  
Treaty of Versailles  
Red Scare  
Prohibition  
Liberal/Conservative clash  
Immigration restrictions  
Mass consumption  
Economic boom  
Cultural Revolution  
Warren G. Harding  
Isolationism  
Herbert Hoover  
The stock market crash

Essential Questions:  
1) What caused American entry into World War I, and how did Wilson turn the war into an ideological crusade?  
2) How was Wilson forced to compromise during the peace negotiations, and why did America in the end refuse to ratify the treaty and join the League of Nations?  
3) How did some of the events of the 1920’s reflect national conflicts over social, cultural, and religious values?  
4) What weaknesses existed beneath the surface of the general 1920’s prosperity, and how did these weaknesses help cause the Great Depression?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:  
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – could World War II been avoided if U.S. had joined the League of Nations  
- Assignment reviewing the road to women’s suffrage  
- Primary and secondary research in groups to prepare for roundtable discussion on the crucial significance of the Twenties

Unit 12: Great Depression & World War II (3 weeks)

Readings:  
*Bailey* - Chapters 33-35  
*Spirit vol. 2* - Eleanor Roosevelt and Frances Perkins on FDR pg. 312-313; Huey P. Long speech pg. 315-317; political cartoons on isolationism
Roosevelt speech to Congress pg. 343-344; reactions to the bombing pg. 384-388

**Topics:**
- Franklin D. Roosevelt
- The Hundred Days Congress
- New Deal agencies
- Roosevelt's foreign policy
- Isolation and Appeasement
- Attack on Pearl Harbor
- Internment of Japanese Americans
- Women during WW II
- Economic impact of war
- Atomic Bomb
- Legacy of war

**Essential Questions:**
1) How did the early New Deal legislation attempt to achieve the three goals of relief, recovery and reform?
2) Was the New Deal essentially a conservative attempt to save American capitalism from collapse, a radical change in traditional American anti-government beliefs, or a moderate liberal response to a unique crisis?
3) How did Roosevelt manage to move the United States toward providing effective aid to Britain while slowly undercutting isolationist opposition?
4) What effects did World War II have on the American economy? What role did American industry and agriculture play in the war?
5) What was the significance of the dropping of the atomic bomb then and now?

**Assignments/Activities/Assessments:**
- DBQ – Roosevelt and the New Deal
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – costs/benefits of dropping the bomb immediately and in the long term
- Create a time line of events(as causes) of the Great Depression and then rank causes of Great Depression and create thesis showing how top causes are related. Write short essay identifying and defending points at which the Great Depression might have been halted or altered with specific intervention
- Create chart of alphabet agencies and their intended purpose

**Unit 13: Eisenhower Era & Cold War (2 weeks)**

**Readings:**  
*Bailey* - Chapters 36-38  
*Spirit vol.2* – Truman’s appeal to Congress pg. 405-406; Soviet view of American Foreign Policy pg. 408-410; Eisenhower speech concerning the Little Rock incident pg. 441-442; Newton Minow Criticizes Television pg. 455-457; President Johnson calls for a War on Poverty pg. 471-473;
memoirs of civil rights activists pg. 474-483; King’s letter from a Birmingham jail pg. 483-486

Topics:  
Post war prosperity  
Sunbelt  
Baby Boom  
Truman Doctrine  
Origins of Cold War  
Communism and containment  
Korean War  
Consumerism in 1950s  
Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Brown vs. Board of Education  
Civil Rights  
Space Race  
Modern Republicanism  
Election of John F. Kennedy  
Television culture  
Kennedy and the Cold War  
New Frontier  
Great Society  
Vietnam  
Counter culture

Essential Questions:  
1) What were the immediate conflicts and deeper causes that led the United States and the Soviet Union to go from being allies to bitter Cold War rivals?  
2) How did television and other innovations of the “consumer age” affect American politics and culture in the 1950’s?  
3) Did the presidential styles of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson clash or compliment one another?  
4) How was the cultural upheaval of the 1960s related to the political and social changes of the decade? Was it a response to immediate events or a consequence of long term forces?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:  
- DBQ – Society in the 1950s  
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – role of television and media in social and political developments in 1950s and 1960s  
- Create chart of post World War II events relative to the Cold War, the action taken by U.S. and the action called for according to the Truman Doctrine  
- Group research on various Civil Rights leaders in preparation for a roundtable discussion of the best direction for the movement to take  
- Assignment comparing the New Frontier and the Great Society
Unit 14: Recent Decades (2 weeks)

Readings:  
*Bailey* - Chapters 39-41  
*Spirit vol. 2* – Nixon’s address to the nation pg. 520-521; transcript of recorded meeting in the oval office concerning Watergate pg. 532-535; case for the Equal Rights Amendment pg. 540-541; four views on the end of the cold war pg. 567-573; James T. Patterson on Ronald Reagan pg. 580-582; majority and minority opinion on election of 2000 pg. 601-604

Topics:  
- Nixon's foreign policy  
- Watergate  
- Feminism  
- Energy Crisis  
- Iran hostage crisis  
- Reagan and the Cold War  
- Conservatism  
- Reagan's economic legacy  
- The First Gulf War  
- Post Cold War economics

Essential Questions:  
1) How did Nixon fall from the political heights of 1972 to his forced resignation in 1974? What were the political consequences of Watergate?  
2) To what extent was the election of Reagan an endorsement of his conservative ideology, and to what extent was it a repudiation of the perceived failures of government policies of the stalemated 1970s?  
3) What was the real cause of the end of the Cold War? Did America win or did the Soviets lose? Is there a difference?

Assignments/Activities/Assessments:  
- Graded Fishbowl discussion – implications of Watergate on subsequent presidential administrations  
- Assignment identifying the charges faced by Nixon as a result of Watergate  
- Conduct research to define conservatism and find evidence of its return during the 1980s. Create thesis and outline for position paper arguing for or against proof of the return of conservatism in recent decades  
- “Presidential Bracketology” – individual project requiring students to complete a tournament bracket of the presidents to determine the “champion” or best president. A short writing assignment will accompany to allow students to give a rationale for their decisions.