

Advanced Placement United States History

College Board Course Description

Course Themes

American Diversity: The diversity of the American people and the relationships among different groups. The roles of race, class, ethnicity, and gender in the history of the United States. Recognizing regional differences within the context of what it means to be an American.

Culture: Diverse individual and collective expressions through literature, art, philosophy, music, theater, and film throughout U.S. history. Popular culture and the dimensions of cultural conflict within American society.

Demographic Changes: Changes in birth, marriage, and death rates; life expectancy and family patterns; population size and density. The economic, social, and political effects of immigration, internal migration, and migration networks.

Economic Transformations: Changes in trade, commerce, and technology across time. The effects of capitalist development, labor and unions, and consumerism.

Environment: Ideas about the consumption and conservation of natural resources. The impact of population growth, industrialization, pollution, and urban and suburban expansion.

Globalization: Engagement with the rest of the world from the fifteenth century to the present: colonialism, mercantilism, global hegemony, development of markets, imperialism, cultural exchange.

Politics and Citizenship: Colonial and revolutionary legacies, American political traditions, growth of democracy, and the development of the modern state. Defining citizenship; struggles for civil rights.

Reform: Diverse movements focusing on a broad range of issues, including anti-slavery, education, labor, temperance, women's rights, civil rights, gay rights, war public health, and government.

Religion: The variety of religious beliefs and practices in America from prehistory to the twenty-first century; influence of religion on politics, economics, and society.

Slavery and Its Legacies in North America Systems of slave labor and other forms of unfree labor (e.g., indentured servitude, contract labor) in Native American societies, the Atlantic World, and the American South and West. The economics of slavery and its racial dimensions. Patterns of resistance and the long-term economic, political, and social effects of slavery.

War and Diplomacy: Armed conflict from precolonial period to the twenty-first century; impact of war on American foreign policy and on politics, economy, and society.

Course Outline

1. Pre-Columbian Societies

- Early inhabitants of the Americas
- American Indian empires of Mesoamerica, the Southwest, and the Mississippi Valley
- American Indian cultures of North America at the time of European contact

2. Transatlantic Encounters and Colonial Beginnings, 1492-1690

- First European contacts with Native Americans
- Spain's empire in North America
- French colonization of Canada
- English settlement of New England, the Mid-Atlantic region, and the South
- From servitude to slavery in the Chesapeake region
- Religious diversity in the American colonies
- Resistance to colonial authority: Bacon's Rebellion, the Glorious Revolution, and the Pueblo Revolt

3. Colonial North America, 1690-1754

- Population growth and immigration
- Transatlantic trade and the growth of seaports
- The eighteenth-century back country
- Growth of plantation economies and slave societies
- The Enlightenment and the Great Awakening
- Colonial governments and imperial policy in British North America

4. The American Revolutionary Era, 1754-1789

- The French and Indian War
- The Imperial Crisis and resistance to Britain
- The War for Independence
- State constitutions and the Articles of Confederation
- The federal Constitution

5. The Early Republic, 1789-1815

- Washington, Hamilton and shaping of the national government
- Emergence of political parties: Federalists and Republicans
- Republican Motherhood and education for women
- Beginnings of the Second Great Awakening
- Significance of Jefferson's presidency
- Expansion into the trans-Appalachian West; American Indian resistance
- Growth of slavery and free Black communities
- The War of 1812 and its consequences

6. Transformation of the Economy and Society in Antebellum America

- The transportation revolution and creation of a national market economy
- Beginnings of industrialization and changes in social and class structures
- Immigration and nativist reaction
- Planters, yeoman farmers, and slaves in the cotton South

7. The Transformation of Politics in Antebellum America

- Emergence of the second party system
- Federal authority and its opponents: judicial federalism, the Bank War, tariff controversy, and states' rights debates
- Jacksonian democracy and its successes and limitations

8. Religion, Reform, and Renaissance in Antebellum America

- Evangelical Protestant revivalism
- Social reforms
- Ideals of domesticity
- Transcendentalism and utopian communities
- American Renaissance: literary and artistic expressions

9. Territorial Expansion and Manifest Destiny

- Forced removal of American Indians to the trans-Mississippi West
- Western migration and cultural interactions
- Territorial acquisitions
- Early U.S. imperialism: the Mexican War

10. The Crisis of the Union

- Pro- and antislavery arguments and conflicts
- Compromise of 1850 and popular sovereignty
- The Kansas-Nebraska Act and the emergence of the Republican Party
- Abraham Lincoln, the election of 1860, and secession

11. Civil War

- Two societies at war: Mobilization, resources, and internal dissent
- Military strategies and foreign diplomacy
- Emancipation and the role of African Americans in the war
- Social, political, and economic effects of war in the North, South, and West

12. Reconstruction

- Presidential and Radical Reconstruction
- Southern state governments: aspirations, achievements, failures
- Role of African Americans in politics, education, and the economy
- Compromise of 1877
- Impact of Reconstruction

13. The Origins of the New South

- Reconfiguration of southern agriculture: sharecropping and crop lien system
- Expansion of manufacturing and industrialization
- The politics of segregation: Jim Crow and disenfranchisement

14. Development of the West in the Late Nineteenth Century

- Expansion and development of western railroads
- Competitors for the West: miners, ranchers, homesteaders, and American Indians
- Government policy toward American Indians
- Gender, race, and ethnicity in the far West
- Environmental impacts of western settlement

15. Industrial America in the Late Nineteenth Century

- Corporate consolidation of industry
- Effects of technological development on the worker and workplace
- Labor and unions
- National politics and influence of corporate power
- Migration and immigration: the changing face of the nation
- Proponents and opponents of the new order, e.g., Social Darwinism and Social Gospel

16. Urban Society in the Late Nineteenth Century

- Urbanization and the lure of the city
- City problems and machine politics
- Intellectual and cultural movements and popular entertainment

17. Populism and Progressivism

- Agrarian discontent and political issues of the late nineteenth century
- Origins of Progressive reform: municipal, state, and national
- Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson as Progressive presidents
- Women's roles: family, workplace, education, politics, and reform
- Black America: urban migration and civil rights initiatives

18. The Emergence of America as a World Power

- American imperialism: political and economic expansion
- War in Europe and American neutrality
- The First World War at home and abroad
- Treaty of Versailles
- Society and economy in the postwar years

19. The New Era: 1920s

- The business of America and the consumer economy
- Republican politics: Harding, Coolidge, Hoover
- The culture of Modernism: science, the arts, and entertainment
- Responses to Modernism: religious fundamentalism, nativism, and Prohibition
- The ongoing struggle for equality: African Americans and women

20. The Great Depression and the New Deal

- Causes of the Great Depression
- The Hoover administration's response
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal
- Labor and union recognition
- The New Deal coalition and its critics from the Right and Left
- Surviving hard times: American society during the Great Depression

21. The Second World War

- The rise of fascism and militarism in Japan, Italy, and Germany
- Prelude to war: policy of neutrality
- The attack on Pearl Harbor and United States declaration of war
- Fighting a multifront war
- Diplomacy, war aims, and wartime conferences
- The United States as a global power in the Atomic Age

22. The Home Front During the War

- Wartime mobilization of the economy
- Urban migration and demographic changes
- Women, work, and family during wartime
- Civil liberties and civil rights during wartime
- War and regional development
- Expansion of governmental power

23. The United States and the Early Cold War

- Origins of the Cold War
- Truman and containment
- The Cold War in Asia: China, Korea, Vietnam, Japan
- Diplomatic strategies and policies of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations
- The Red Scare and McCarthyism
- Impact of the Cold War on American society

24. The 1950s

- Emergence of the modern civil rights movement
- The affluent society and “the other America”
- Consensus and conformity: suburbia and middle-class America
- Social critics, nonconformists, and cultural rebels
- Impact of changes in science, technology, and medicine

25. The Turbulent 1960s

- From the New Frontier to the Great Society
- Expanding movements for civil rights
- Cold War confrontations: Asia, Latin America, and Europe
- Beginning of Détente
- The antiwar movement and the counterculture

26. Politics and Economics at the End of the Twentieth Century

- The election of 1968 and the “Silent Majority”
- Nixon’s challenges: Vietnam, China, Watergate
- Changes in the American economy: the energy crisis, deindustrialization, and the service economy
- The New Right and the Reagan revolution
- End of the Cold War

27. Society and Culture at the End of the Twentieth Century

- Demographic changes: surge of immigration after 1965, Sunbelt migration, and the graying of America
- Revolutions in biotechnology, mass communication, and computers
- Politics in a multicultural society

28. The United States in the Post-Cold War World

- Globalization and the American economy
- Unilateralism vs. multilateralism in foreign policy
- Domestic and foreign terrorism
- Environmental issues in a global context