



Honors American Studies Syllabus

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Course Information

What does it mean to be an American? Honors American Studies is an interdisciplinary, team-taught course that provides students with the opportunity to explore and analyze complex, contemporary issues through the study of American history and literature in order to better understand American society and their role in it. Students will engage with a wide variety of materials to broaden their understanding of what it means to be an American.

Course Site

Assignments will be posted and submitted via Google Classroom (links included above). Students must enroll in our Google Classrooms; if parents/guardians would like to receive Guardian Summaries, they can contact any one of their child's teachers to sign up.

Learning Objectives

Through historical, literary, and contemporary contexts, students will:

- Develop an understanding of the contradictions and complexities of American society in relation to its history, policies, and values.
- Explore the many voices in the story of America, including students' individual stories and how that contributes to the development of American identity.
- Examine the relationship between power, privilege, and opportunity.
- Recognize America's role in global affairs and explore the country's complex relationships with other nations and people.
- Understand how American democracy works, the role and rights of the individual in American society, and citizen action/agency in response to historical and current events.

Students will develop a variety of skills in order to confidently make the following claims:

- I can explain the complexities and connections between historical events and literature that have shaped the America we live in today.
- I can discern important aspects of any source (primary and secondary) and use that information to support arguable theses.
- I can effectively communicate my ideas verbally and in writing.
- I can evaluate an author's use of rhetorical strategies and identify bias in a variety of texts and media types.
- I can engage in class discussions by communicating my own ideas, actively listening to those of others, and developing expanded perspectives as a result of these conversations.

Course Texts

English:

Whole class texts by:

Frederick Douglass
F. Scott Fitzgerald
Zora Neale Hurston
Celeste Ng
Mark Twain

Additional texts (including but not limited to):

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	Nathaniel Hawthorne	Tommy Orange
Sherman Alexie	Ernest Hemingway	John Steinbeck
Ta-Nehisi Coates	Cristina Henríquez	Henry David Thoreau
Joshua Davis	Imbolo Imbue	J.D. Vance
Emily Dickinson	Gish Jen	Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
Paul Laurence Dunbar	Tracy Kidder	Walt Whitman
Ralph Waldo Emerson	Audre Lorde	Malcolm X
Louise Erdrich	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	Anzia Yezierska
America Ferrera	Amy Lowell	Zitkala-Sa
Margaret Fuller	Toni Morrison	

History:

Core Texts:

The Birth of the Republic, Edmund Morgan
The Way We Lived, Essays and Documents, I & II
The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People, Alan Brinkley
Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America, Barbara Ehrenreich

Other teacher selected primary and secondary resources

Unit Topics

Semester I

Unit 1: Birth of the U.S.: Regional Identities, Independence, and a New Republic
Unit 2: Whose Land is This?: Native American Sovereignty, Westward Expansion, and the Environment
Unit 3: A House Divided: Slavery, Resistance, Sectionalism, and Civil War

Semester II

Unit 1: A New American Identity: Immigration, Urbanization, Industry, Labor, and Progressivism
Unit 2: The American Dream: Economic Opportunity, Class, and Making the Modern Economy
Unit 3: Foreign Policy: On Becoming a World Power with Global Responsibilities
Unit 4: Reconstruction and Civil Rights: Privilege, Power, Intersectionality, and Continued Struggle

Student Expectations

Attendance and Engagement

- Please treat every person with courtesy and respect. Be thoughtful and sensitive when you listen and respond to each other's discussion, comments, and work.
- Unless they are ill, all students should be prepared for class and participate in all activities. If a student is unable to participate in these activities, they must make alternative arrangements with the teacher **before the due date** unless they are ill or experience an emergency.
- In the case of a pre-planned absence for personal or extracurricular reasons, students should contact their teacher **prior to their absence** to establish expectations for work completion.
- All students will be expected to have relevant materials and equipment when class begins. If you must print out work on campus, you should do so outside of class time in order to be prepared for the beginning of class.
- Students will be prompt and responsible regarding attendance and assignments. Missing assignments, absenteeism, and tardiness will impact the semester grade due to lost seat time in class and teacher feedback.

Academic Honesty

Honesty is a compelling principle by which we operate all aspects of student and school life. Academic honesty is highly valued at BHS. Students should not cheat or plagiarize, nor should they tolerate such among fellow students. Students do not receive credit for work that is not their own. Cheating is defined as an attempt to earn credit or receive a grade for coursework in a manner other than defined as acceptable by the teacher. Plagiarism is the taking of language, ideas or thoughts from another person or resource without acknowledging the source. Students who use plagiarized papers or projects or are involved in any other form of cheating will be subject to reduction in grades and/or disciplinary action for a first offense. Because of the serious nature of academic honesty, violations of this code may result in loss of credit for the assignment with a recorded failing grade. It may also entail loss of credit for the course with a recorded failing grade, removal from the course with a failing grade, and/ or additional appropriate disciplinary action. (BISD Student Handbook)

Honors American Studies AI Statement

- Representing AI-generated work as your own is considered cheating. Using Chat GPT or other AI composition software is not permitted when your own original work is called for.
- If you are unsure or have questions about whether a use of AI is permitted, you must contact your teacher before using it.
- If you use AI on an assignment, you must acknowledge that you did and explain how you used it, including the prompts you used, and cite it as appropriate.
- Students should understand that while generative AI is a powerful tool, it has important limitations. It may generate information that sounds good, but is inaccurate, biased or made up. It is the student's responsibility to cross-reference any information generated by AI with reliable sources.

Communications and Self-Advocacy

Good communication is essential to building good relationships with other students and with instructors. We promise to reach out to you to learn more about who you are and how you learn, and we hope that you will reach out to us to share your interests, ideas, and concerns.

In order to accomplish the "nuts-and-bolts" communication of the class, we maintain informative websites and online grade records, and we reply to emails during working hours (8:00a.m. - 4:00p.m.). However, we highly value face-to-face interactions and believe it is the best way to communicate. If you have an issue or concern that is especially troubling to you, we suggest you make an appointment with us to talk about it in person.

Finally, Honors American Studies is a challenging course that demands full participation. For those students who need assistance, Mr. Chaisson and Ms. Dorny will be available outside of class time and we encourage students to make appointments to see us. We are looking forward to this year in Honors American Studies, and we are pleased that all of you are with us.

Policies & Procedures

Attendance

Refer to BHS attendance policies.

Grading

While Honors American Studies is a combined and team-taught course, you will receive separate grades for the English and history portions of the course.

Bainbridge High School reports grades at the end of each semester; progress reports are available for at the end of Term 1 and 3. Letter grades are calculated using the following grading scale:

A	93-100%	C+	78-79%
A-	90-92%	C	73-77%
B+	87-89%	C-	70-72%
B	83-86%	D+	68-69%
B-	80-82%	D	60-67%
		F	0-59%

Gradebook Categories and Weights

English:

Oral Final	15%
Assessments	75%
Classwork/Homework	10%

History:

Oral Final	15%
Assessments	55%
Classwork/Homework	30%

Assessments

Honors American Studies includes a variety of assessments for students to demonstrate their knowledge. These include unit exams, quizzes, written assessments, oral discussions and/or presentations, individual and group projects and a comprehensive oral semester exam.

We value differing opinions and ideas in discussion and in writing. Therefore, we will grade assessments on how well you articulate your position and support it with evidence from the texts, not whether it is "right or wrong."

Sensitive Materials

There are times in the course of Social Studies classes where sensitive materials will be shown to students. One of the goals of this course is to expose students to a variety of realities, perspectives and modes of expression. To the extent possible, students will be notified ahead of time about the content of such materials. These materials may include nudity (indigenous people, famous works of art, war), violence (war, social strife, protests, etc), extreme poverty, and controversial ideas, including profanity, or emotionally challenging subjects (including mental illness and domestic violence) . We encourage students to discuss individually with their teacher about what they find concerning; in extreme cases, alternative texts may be assigned.

Submitting Assignments

- **Turning in work:** Turn in assignments on or before the due date posted on Google Classroom. Unless otherwise notified, all assignments will be due at **8:30 AM**. When templates are provided, please complete your work on that document. **Do NOT wait until grades are updated in Skyward to begin or complete missing work.**
- **Late Work:** Late homework is not accepted for full credit in Honors American Studies unless approved by one of the teachers *before* the due date.
 - Late homework and classwork will receive up to 80% as long as it is turned in before the end of unit assessment in hard copy. Minor assignments will not be accepted after the unit to prevent "snowballing" missing work and help students stay focused on current classwork.
 - For assessments late work will incur a 10% penalty and be accepted in the following time frames:
 - *English:* major assignments and assessments will be accepted up to the end of the quarter in which they were due.
 - *History:* tests must be completed within one week of the date they were originally administered in order to receive credit.

Skyward vs. Google Classroom: Skyward is the final word. If there appears to be something incorrect with your gradebook, that's because it was a mistake. Don't be mad, just communicate.

Technology

To fully participate in this course, you will need to have access to your charged BISD chromebook, or a similar device, in class every day.

For tech support, please consult the Bainbridge High School library.

Please complete the Google Form below by 9/8/2023

Parents/Guardians

Hello, Parents/Guardians!

In lieu of physically signing and returning this document, please complete the assignment *(H) American Studies Policies and Procedures* on Google Classroom. See instructions on Google Classroom.

We look forward to partnering with you this year!

Best regards,

Ms. Dorny

Mr. Pollack