



US History Lake Ridge Academy Upper School

Mr. Isherwood



This course surveys the history of the United States of America from its rise as an industrial and political power in the late nineteenth century through to the present day. The combination of lectures, readings, discussions, and films are intended to familiarize you with the major events and figures of the period that influenced the changing social, political, economic, and cultural makeup of the country. A major focus of the course will be a study of recent contemporary history of the last fifty years.

In this class I have several important objectives. The first is to provide you with a general understanding of modern American history. A second goal of this class will be to strengthen your analytical skills as you read, listen, discuss, and write about aspects and interpretations of the past. A final and important goal will be to demonstrate to you the importance, worth, and enjoyment of studying the history of your country.



Instructor Information

Name: Paul Isherwood
Classroom: International Studies Room

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Course Objectives

Each student will:

- Have a broad knowledge of historical developments in the modern United States, in particular recent historical trends.
- Demonstrate an understanding of historical chronology.
- Use historical data to support an argument or position.
- Interpret and apply data from original documents.
- Develop critical thinking skills.
- Demonstrate and ability to research a historical topic around a central thesis.

Course Website

There is no textbook for this course. All material for this course is provided through the course website:

www.lraushistory.weebly.com

Discussion and Participation

Your involvement in the class will be crucial to its success. The study of history, in my opinion, has little to do with the rote memorization of dates and factoids. What is most important is the construction of arguments based on analysis and interpretation. The ability to convey these arguments verbally is crucial and I hope we will have a lively discussion of America's past.

Tests

We will have regular in-class quizzes. These are designed to make sure you are keeping up with the reading and understanding the material. Your scores will contribute to your overall final grade in the class.

There will be an essay-based exam before winter break.

Assignments

There will be a variety of assignments throughout the year including in-class essay. The two major projects for the year will be the Election News project and a lengthy research paper.

Research Project

History informs our contemporary world. This project will allow you to choose a topic of recent political or cultural importance and trace its historical origins. We will start the process in the second quarter. The final draft of the paper will serve as the final exam in the second semester. Further details will be given in class.

Election News

In groups of three, students will construct and maintain an election and politics news website. Using Google sites, each group will follow the developments in the election cycle.

Homework

Homework will generally consist of reading assignments, but from time to time will also include a variety of written assignments.



Grading Policy

Numerical Grades Translate to Letter Grades as follows:

- A-range** - Excels – Full command of and facility with lecture and reading material with the ability to place it within larger historical context.
- B-range** – Good – Very solid understanding of material but without complete command or contextualization of it
- C-range** – Fair – Some understanding of major themes, lack of command with detail, or some understanding of detail but lack of contextual understanding.
- D-range** – Poor – Enough factual understanding to pass, but little to no contextual understanding.
- F-range** – Fails – Lack of Upper School level quality.

Classroom Etiquette

You are expected to arrive to class on time. All cell phones should be switched off. Be prepared to answer questions from the instructor. If you are unsure of something during the class raise your hand and ask.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Academic misconduct - dishonesty or deception in fulfilling any academic requirement, includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, un-permitted collaboration, forged attendance (when attendance is required), fabrication (e.g., use of invented information or falsification of research or other findings), or knowingly permitting another student to plagiarize or cheat from one's work – will result in serious consequences. **Cases of academic dishonesty in this class will result in a grade of zero for the assignment in question and an immediate referral to the Dean of Students and Honor Council.**

Alterations and Changes:

I reserve the right to alter or amend the course as I deem necessary. All changes will be related to you in a timely fashion.

Course Outline

FIRST SEMESTER

Introduction

The Lost Art of Civil Discourse
Do you have what it takes to be an American?

US Government

The American Political System
The United States Constitution

The Revolution

The American Revolution
The Early Republic

The Civil War

National Expansion and Reform, 1815-1860
Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877
In the Valley of the Shadow – Meeting Americans of the Civil War

The Age of Reform

The Gilded Age
The Progressive Era
World War I and the First Red Scare
The 1920s – Laissez Faire and Prohibition

The Great Depression and the New Deal

World War II

The World After the War

SECOND SEMESTER

The Cold War

- Cold War America
- The National Security State
- The Truman Doctrine and the Onset of Global Cold War
- McCarthyism
- The 1950s: Mass Society the Anxiety of Abundance

The Sixties and the Movement

- JFK and the New Frontier: Doing What You Can for Your Country
- The Civil Rights Movement
- The Second Wave of Feminism
- The Vietnam War

Conservative America Ascendant

- Nixon: The Last Liberal President (what?)
- The 1970s: The Real Change Decade
- Watergate
- America in Crisis: From Carter to Reagan
- The Iran Hostage Crisis
- Morning in America: The Eighties

Facing the New Millennium

- Clinton – A Liberal Comeback?
- The Culture Wars
- 9/11- A Changed America
- The 2000 Election – Hanging Chads and Democracy in Danger
- The United States and the Middle East: A Perennial Strategic Problem
- America and its War on Terror
- From Bush II to Obama
- The Great Recession of 2008

