

Honors: U.S. History since the Civil War

This course traces the nation's history from the end of the Civil War to the present. It describes the emergence of the United States as an industrial nation, highlighting social policy as well as its role in modern world affairs. Students evaluate the attempts to bind the nation together during Reconstruction while also exploring the growth of an industrial economy. Moving into the 20th and 21st centuries, students probe the economic and diplomatic interactions between the United States and other world players while investigating how the world wars, the Cold War, and the "information revolution" affected the lives of ordinary Americans. Woven through this chronological sequence is a strong focus on the changing conditions of women, African Americans, and other minority groups. The course emphasizes the development of historical analysis skills such as comparing and contrasting, differentiating between facts and interpretations, considering multiple perspectives, and analyzing cause-and-effect relationships. These skills are applied to text interpretation and in written assignments that guide learners step-by-step through problem-solving activities. Students perfect their ability to use logic and evidence to create persuasive written arguments in five-paragraph essays and in shorter exercises such as document-based questions and analytic discussions. The content is based on standards from the National Council for History Education (1997), the National Center for History in the Schools (1996), and the National Council for Social Studies (1994) and is aligned to state standards.