

# 10th Grade: American Studies Curriculum 2021-2022

## **Course Description:**

This course combines American History and American Literature to deepen the student's understanding of America and what it means to be an American. Through interdisciplinary readings, varied writing assignments, and individual and group presentations, students will enhance their skills in composition, discussion, understanding literature, critical thinking, research, and historical analysis. The course will be co-taught by an English and Social Studies teacher during two consecutive class periods. Students will receive one combined grade but will receive credit for both American Literature and U.S. History. This course will be taught through the following units, based on these essential questions and "I Can" statements.

Students have the option of pursuing an "Honors Designation" in American Studies. The Honors Designation for American Studies is: student-created, student-driven, independent, interdisciplinary, and passion-based. You can pursue Honors Designation either or both semesters. Your project will be evaluated by a team of U.S. History and American Literature teachers and they will determine if it meets the Honors Standards. Remember, the two driving criteria are "significant scholarship and deep understanding."

## **Unit One: What is America?**

### **Essential Questions:**

- ★ What defines America as a nation today, and how has it been shaped by its past?
- ★ What is an American?

**Major Texts:** "What is an American?" Michael Brown, various song lyrics offering different "Perspectives of America"

**Common Tasks:** Photojournalism Assignment, Mural Project

### **Skills/Standards:**

- ❑ Reading Informational Texts & Literature: *RSL/RSI 9-10.1-3;4-6; 7-10*
- ❑ Speaking & Listening: *SL 9-10.1-6*
- ❑ Deep Learning: **Critical Thinking, Communication Character, Citizenship, Collaboration, Creativity**

### **Students Can...**

- Identify and analyze threshold events that have served to (and continue to) define America.
- Explain and appreciate various perspectives of what it means to be American.

## **Mini-Unit on Slavery:**

### **Essential Questions:**

- ★ How or why did America's growth as a nation ultimately lead to division and the Civil War?

**Major Texts:** *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass*, excerpts from *12 Years a Slave* by Solomon Northup (film), excerpts from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (nonfiction)

**Common Tasks:** Socratic Seminar on Slavery in America

### **Students Can...**

→ Describe how the debates over slavery influenced politics and sectionalism.

**Skills/Standards:**

- ☐ Reading Informational Texts & Literature: RSL/RSI 9-10.1-3;4-6; 7-10
- ☐ Speaking & Listening: SL 9-10.1-6
- ☐ Writing Informational/Explanatory Texts: W 9-10.2;4-10
- ☐ Deep Learning: *Critical Thinking; Communication; Character; Citizenship; Collaboration; Creativity*

**Unit Two: Antebellum America: Romanticism and the Road to the Civil War**

**Essential Questions:**

- ★ How was America divided politically, socially, economically, and culturally during Antebellum America?
- ★ In what ways did literature reflect and define America's growth and division?

**Major Texts:** *In the Heart of the Sea* by Nathaniel Philbrick or *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer (nonfiction), excerpts from *Nature* and "Self-Reliance" by Ralph Waldo Emerson and from *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau (nonfiction), poems by Emily Dickinson.

**Common Tasks:** Argumentative Essay

**Skills/Standards:**

- ☐ Reading Informational Texts & Literature: *RSL/RSI 9-10.1-3;4-6; 7-10*
- ☐ Writing Arguments: *W 9-10.1;4-6;9-10*

**Students Can...**

- Compare and contrast the differences between the North and South and analyze how politics and ideologies led to the Civil War.
- Identify the characteristics of Romanticism, Transcendentalism anti-Transcendentalism.
- Identify how literature reflects the ideology of the time period.
- Identify context clues while reading.
- Write an argumentative essay using a primary text.

**Unit 3: Civil War and Reconstruction**

**Essential Questions:**

- ★ How did the Civil War redefine America?
- ★ How did the Civil War impact American culture (literature, politics, economy)
- ★ What were the successes and failures of Reconstruction?

**Major Texts:** Excerpts from *Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara (historical novel), speeches by President Obama, Emma Watson, President Kennedy and President George W. Bush (nonfiction).

**Common Tasks:** Persuasive Speech

**Skills/Standards:**

- ☐ Reading Informational Texts & Literature: *RSL/RSI 9-10.1-3;4-6; 7-10*
- ☐ Speaking & Listening: *SL 9-10.1-6*
- ☐ Writing Arguments: *W 9-10.1;4-6; 9-10*

- ❑ Deep Learning: *Critical Thinking; Communication; Character; Citizenship; Collaboration; Creativity*

**Students Can...**

- Identify how literature reflects the ideology of the time period.
- Explain how the Civil War evolved (into one for a “new birth of freedom”).
- Describe the military, political and social experience of the war.
- Evaluate the successes and failures of Reconstruction of the North, South and West.
- Employ the characteristics of historical fiction as a means by which to better understand characters/character development in literature.
- Develop sentences based on an understanding of clauses, sentence structure types; while identifying and avoiding sentence errors (fragments, comma-splices, and run-ons).

**Unit 4: America at the Turn of the Century: The Gilded Age, Realism, and Progressivism**

**Essential Questions:**

- ★ How did America change as a result of the cultural and demographic shifts in the post-Civil War Era?
- ★ Why did America begin to move towards industrialization and urbanization within the United States?
- ★ What was the Progressive Era and what was it in response to?
- ★ What in America evoked a change from Romanticism to Realism in literature?

**Major Texts:** *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (optional novel); “The Damned Human Race” and “Advice to Yourth” by Mark Twain (nonfiction); “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin, “To Build a Fire” by Jack London and “Paul’s Case” by Willa Cather (short stories).

**Common Tasks:** Socratic Seminar on Race

**Skills/Standards:**

- ❑ Reading Informational Texts & Literature: *RSL/RSI 9-10.1-3;4-6; 7-10*
- ❑ Speaking & Listening: *SL 9-10.1-6*
- ❑ Deep Learning: *Critical Thinking; Communication; Character; Citizenship; Collaboration; Creativity*

**I Can:**

- Identify how literature reflects the ideology of the time period.
- Analyze critical perspectives of literature.
- Employ secondary support in order to defend an argument in writing.
- Identify the use of satire and analyze its use in political/cultural commentary.
- Explain how the Industrial Revolution transformed America by analyzing industrialization, immigration and urbanization.
- Identify and evaluate the causes and consequences of American expansionary policies  
Trace the origins of the Progressive movement.
- Understand progressivism at the national level.
- Demonstrate correct use of punctuation (comma, colon, and semicolon).

**Unit 5: World War I and Modern America** (ODELL)

**Essential Questions:**

- ★ What caused WWI and what was the outcome?

- ★ What are the characteristics of Modern literature and how do they reflect the 1920s as a decade of change?
- ★ What is the American Dream?
- ★ How was the 1920s a decade of change?

**Major Texts:** *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald [Link to Odell Unit](#) (novel), “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” by T.S. Eliot (poem), “Hills Like White Elephants” and “Soldier’s Home” by Ernest Hemingway (short stories); poetry of the Harlem Renaissance: Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Countee Cullen

**Common Tasks:** Argumentative Essay (Literary Criticism)

**Skills/Standards:**

- ☐ Reading Informational Texts & Literature: (RSL/RSI 9-10.1-3;4-6; 7-10)
- ☐ Writing Arguments: (*W 9-10.1;4-6;9-10*)

**Students Can...**

- Identify how literature reflects the ideology of the time period.
- Identify the elements of Modern literature.
- Analyze the changing nature of the American Dream in the Modern era.
- Identify the literary and cultural characteristics of the Harlem Renaissance.
- Analyze the changing role of the United States in world affairs in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Identify various reasons for United States involvement in WWI.
- Analyze the impact of WWI at home and abroad.
- Examine the 1920s from dual perspectives: change and resistance to change.
- Explain the origins of a modern capitalist economy.

**Unit 6: Depression at Home and Aggression Abroad**

**Essential Questions:**

- ★ To what extent was the generation of the Great Depression and WWII era “The Greatest Generation”?
- ★ What events led to the Great Depression?
- ★ What influence did the Great Depression have on American culture?
- ★ In what ways do Modern Authors capture the essence of the Great Depression through their literature?
- ★ Why did America get involved in WWII?
- ★ How did WWII impact the homefront and America’s place in the world?

**Major Texts:** *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen (novel), excerpts from *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (novel), *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines (novel), and poetry of World War II: Randall Jarrell and Karl Shapiro

**Common Tasks:**

Informational Research Paper  
Literature Circles Project

**Skills/Standards:**

- ☐ Reading Informational Texts & Literature: *RSL/RSI 9-10.1-3;4-6; 7-10*
- ☐ Writing Narrative Texts: *W 9-10.3-8; 10*
- ☐ Writing Informational/Explanatory Texts: *W 9-10.2;4-10*
- ☐ Speaking & Listening: *SL 9-10.1-6*

- ❑ Deep Learning: *Critical Thinking; Communication; Character; Citizenship; Collaboration; Creativity*

#### **Students Can...**

- Identify how literature reflects the ideology of the time period.
- Assess the impact of the Depression and the Dust Bowl on American culture.
- Describe the causes of the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the Depression that followed.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the New Deal and the Roosevelt Administration.
- Explain the direct and underlying causes of WWII.
- Analyze American involvement in WWII and explain how the Allies emerged victorious.
- Explain the impact of WWII on the American homefront.

### **Unit 7: American Society in a Nuclear Age** (ODELL)

#### **Essential Questions:**

- ★ How did the Cold War impact the American political and cultural consciousness?
- ★ How did the U.S. handle international policy: Cold War?
- ★ What caused various cultural movements in the U.S.: Civil Rights, Hippie, Feminism, 1950s and consensus American?
- ★ How did literature in the Vietnam era differ from war fiction and poetry that preceded it?

**Major Texts:** *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller (play), *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien (short stories), and [Link to Odell Unit: Telling Stories](#)

**Common Tasks:** Narrative Writing

#### **Skills/Standards:**

- ❑ Reading Informational Texts & Literature: *RSL/RSI 9-10.1-3;4-6; 7-10*
- ❑ Writing Narrative Texts: *W 9-10.3-8; 10*

#### **Students Can...**

- Identify how literature reflects the ideology of the time period.
- Identify the societal expectations for women in the post war society.
- Identify the characteristics of contemporary literature.
- Explain how the social changes of the post war period affected various Americans.
- Identify the causes of the Cold War and analyze the domestic consequences.
- Analyze the rise and fall of McCarthyism, its effects on civil liberties, and its repercussions.
- Explain and evaluate the reasons for involvement in Vietnam and evaluate the consequences of the quagmire in Vietnam.
- Evaluate the women's movement for civil rights and equal opportunities.
- Explain the "Second Reconstruction" and its advancement of civil rights.
- Assess the effectiveness of the "Great Society" programs.

### **Unit 8: Contemporary America**

#### **Essential Questions:**

- ★ How has the past shaped contemporary America?
- ★ How has foreign policy changed in the post-Cold War era?
- ★ What defines Contemporary literature?

**Major Texts:** *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer (novel)

**Common Tasks:** Multimedia Presentation

**Skills/Standards:**

- ❑ Reading Informational Texts & Literature: *RSL/RSI 9-10.1-3;4-6; 7-10*
- ❑ Speaking & Listening: *SL 9-10.1-6*
- ❑ Writing Informational/Explanatory Texts: *W 9-10.2;4-10*
- ❑ Deep Learning: *Critical Thinking; Communication; Character; Citizenship; Collaboration; Creativity*

**Students Can...**

- Identify how literature reflects the ideology of the time period.
- Explain the impact of political scandal on American society.
- Assess the social, economic, and political impact of the Reagan Revolution.
- Evaluate the foreign and domestic policies of President Clinton.
- Assess the role of the United States in changing world affairs.
- Explain how 9/11 changed America.
- Identify various demographic and cultural changes that reshaped American society.