**United States History**

**Course Description and Procedures**

This course provides an interpretive overview of the history of the United States from the post Reconstruction period on the North American continent through the present day. We will frame our discussion of the social, economic, political, and cultural developments that shaped this nation around three interlocking themes:

1) the ongoing tension between national unity and national division due to geography, ideology, and racial, class and ethnic identity;

2) the changing role of the U.S. in the world, and the efforts to define what that role should be; and

3) the debate over the function and size of government, along with related contests over the meaning of "freedom" and citizenship rights.

Our ultimate objective is to understand not only what happened but why, and to gain some perspective into the arguments and issues whose history shapes our present lives.

**Specific Units of Study**

* A New Industrial Age
* Urban Growth and Immigration
* The Progressive Era
* US Foreign Policy in the early 20th Century
* World War I: Causes, the United States’ Involvement and the Treaty of Versailles
* The Roaring and Turbulent 1920s
* The Great Depression and the New Deal
* Axis Aggression and World War II
* The Cold War
* The 1950’s Domestically
* Civil Rights
* 1960s: Optimism, Discontent and Turbulence
* The 1970s
* The Reagan Era and New Conservatism
* 1990-2001
* Post 9-11-01 to President Obama

You will be required to use a variety of acquired skills to demonstrate an understanding of major ideas, historical eras, social studies themes, and turning points in history. You will need to develop your reading comprehension and your writing ability, especially in analyzing primary source documents and writing document-based essay questions. I will be there to help you, if you have had trouble with these skills in the past.

**Procedures and Expectations**

**Attendance/Class Preparation:** Students are expected to be seated by the first ring of the bell. If are not in the classroom at the time of the bell, you will have to get a pass. No exceptions.

*All students are expected to be ready to go with the following in class:*

* Notebook each day. This does not mean several loose sheets of paper.
* Writing utensils
* Assignments due
* An open-minded, positive approach

**Notebook:** You will need a notebook to keep class notes, ideas, handouts, previous tests, as well as notes from text chapter readings. A notebook keeps you focused and organized and is an important tool for your success. You are required to have a 1.5” – 2”, *History exclusive*, three ring binder. The binder is to have to have three sections: notes, tests, and class handouts. It is suggested that you will need two reams of paper by the end of the year. The notebook will be checked for accuracy and organization, including an accurate up to date table of contents.

It is your responsibility to get notes from classmates if you are absent, so get yourself a “study-buddy” in the class [*exchange email addresses or phone numbers*] and be responsible for each other. Review your notes frequently and if you don’t understand something—please ASK!

**Textbooks:** Textbooks are to be covered. Readings will be assigned that correspond to our units of study. Students are responsible for all material within the chapters. I repeat *everything* in the applicable chapter is fair game!

*Suggested Approach to a successful read:*

1. Preview the chapters by skimming before class discussion
2. Read for detail, and take notes on key content and main ideas
3. Review chapters and class notes prior to tests.

**Student Evaluation:** Grading will be varied to determine a final grade. Testing and non-testing assessments can be expected each quarter. A total points system will determine your grade.

* + *Tests (90-130 points):* multiple choice, short answers, maps and essays will be the expected format. All tests are announced in advance and study guides will be provided. Study groups are recommended and should be arranged by the students. If invited, I will do my best to attend a study session prior to the exam. It is important for you as a student to take the initiative in forming/attending study sessions.
  + *Tests (cont.):* In the unlikely case that a student receives a 69% or below on a test, that student will have exactly one day after receiving the grade to make corrections in order to bring the grade up to 70%. The student must also include a paper explaining three better study methods that they might employ for the next test.
  + *Notebook Check (25-50 pts):* May or may not be announced. Accuracy/Completion are what will determine the grade.
  + *Homework/Quizzes (5-50 points):* May or may not be announced.
  + *Papers/Projects (100-150 points):* Will be given at least three days to complete the assignment. These will be assigned throughout the semester.
  + *Class Participation (100 points):* Based upon contributions and approach to the class. It will be determined twice per quarter. Great ideas or questions will result in additional points throughout the year!

**Extra Help/Questions:** I am available every morning, and the majority of afternoons. It is recommended that you make an appointment to avoid confusion. I will not discuss a grade on a paper or test until 24 hours after the assignment is handed back. This allows self introspect before speaking your mind.

If you have a quick question that does not need much explanation, you are more than welcome to contact me on my school Twitter account, **@MrLee125**. This is for school purposes only, and if anything is said or done on this account that is not appropriate for school, I will report it

**Assignments:** Quality not quantity. I should never be asked how long an assignment should be. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. A good effort is expected as well as neatness and appeal. If you can type the assignment, then type it. Take advantage of non-testing opportunities. Assignments are always to be completed with the student handbook in mind. Anything found otherwise will be dealt with accordingly.

**Respect:** Unkind remarks, discriminatory statements, or any other evidence of lack of respect will not be tolerated. Any adult in or out of the room will be addressed by a Mr./Dr./Mrs./Ms. and their last name; anything else will not be tolerated.

**Class Rules:**

* Always give your best effort on all class activities and assignments. They are opportunities to learn, achieve and grow. Take advantage of them.

* Academic Freedom: All students have a right to their opinions, however unpopular. How you support your opinions is a key to doing well in this class. Respect for the opinion of others is a class requirement.

* Remember that your personal honor and integrity are a very precious and important part of who you are as a person. Therefore, I expect that you will do all of your OWN work at all times (see the AHS Student Handbook for further information regarding cheating/plagiarism).

* Do not be late. Be inside the door when the bell rings, unless you have a legitimate excuse to be tardy.
* **The Cell Phone Charging Station**. **Cell phones** are not allowed in class. BUT I am not unreasonable. *So here’s how cell phones will work in our class: sometimes we need them to look something up quick, but most of the time, you know they’re a major distraction to your education. And that’s what you’re here for after all, right? Well, the bottom line here in this room is that I don’t want to see them out and being a distraction, but I also want you to learn how to control your own behaviors and be able to use them at appropriate times.*

*So here’s what we’re going to do: if you know that you can’t handle the distraction for the day, drop your phone off at the charging station. Plug it in, turn the ringer off, and just forget about it for the class period. You won’t even be tempted to look, plus, when class is over, you’ll probably be back to a full charge! For those of you who choose to take your chances and I have to ask you more than once to put your phones away, the second time I see the phone I’ll simply ask you to walk it over to the charging station since you couldn’t follow the first warning****. If the breaking of this simple rule becomes a habit, your phone will be confiscated and a parent must pick it up.***

Remember, this is OUR class, yours as well as mine. What you do in it has a direct affect on everyone. My goal is to have a class where the teacher and the students work, talk, and think together—a place where no one tries to take advantage of another and where we learn from and help each other! Keep in mind that I want all of you to do well. I am one of your many teachers and I want you to reach your goals and your full potential as a student and as a person.

I look forward to sharing our knowledge this year.

Mr. Lee

@MrLee125 (Twitter)

[jlee@avon.k12.ct.us](mailto:jlee@avon.k12.ct.us)

**Historical Essay Writing**

**Structure**

* *Introduction:* Answer the question. Prepare the reader for what you will do in the essay. Have a thesis statement that directly answers the question. The rest of the introduction should explain what to expect in the upcoming paragraphs. A strong introduction shows that you already know what you are doing before you start to write.
* *Bod*y*:* Here you offer historical evidence that supports what you were saying in the introduction. Each new paragraph should have a topic sentence which supports the thesis statement. The sentences in the paragraph should then support the topic sentence.
* *Conclusion:* Do not skim here. This is where you quickly remind the reader of the points you have made and how they supported your thesis statement which answers the question. A good way to remember how to do a summary is to ask yourself, “self, what was the point I was trying to make?!”

**Tips:**

* + One inch margins, 12 pt. font, 1.5 spaced, and avoid title pages with me. Just name, date, and title in the upper left hand corner.
  + Original title for every assignment. Make it yours.
  + Quality not quantity.
  + Keep it concise, this is not a *creative writing* paper
  + MLA Format
  + A strong intro and conclusion beats an enormous irrelevant body with a weak intro and conclusion everyday.
  + Make sure the facts are relevant rather than just related.
  + Avoid contractions and numbers under 999 if at all possible.