

**United States History**  
2005-2006  
Menlo School

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“Life must be lived forwards, but can only be understood backwards.”  
--Soren Kierkegaard

“Turn and face the strange.”  
--David Bowie

### **Description**

This course covers American political, social, economic and diplomatic history as well as trends in American culture and religion. Rather than start with European expansion and work our way up to the present day, we will approach these topics in reverse chronological order: starting with contemporary America and moving backwards to explore the people and events that have brought us to where we are today. Instead of starting in the 1500s and asking “What next?,” we will start in 2005 and ask “Why?”

The course will be divided into the following units, each of which will end with a test:

#### Fall

1. Watergate
2. Roots of Watergate
  - (a) The Cold War and Vietnam
  - (b) Civil Rights and the 1960s
3. The Second World War
4. Boom and Bust
5. America Meets the World

#### Spring

1. The Civil War and Reconstruction
2. Roots of the Civil War
3. The Revolution and the Constitution
4. Colonial history
5. Review

### **Reading**

Alan Brinkley, American History: A Survey, 11<sup>th</sup> edition (2 volumes)  
John Tulp, Essentials of American History  
Horatio Alger, Ragged Dick  
Larry Gonick, Cartoon History of the U.S.  
Assorted documents and handouts to be distributed in class

## Supplies

3-ring binder for storing class notes, reading notes, and handouts.  
Bring this binder, with a supply of writing paper, to every class.

## Assignments

Your grade will be based on attendance and class participation, quizzes, tests, papers, research projects and exams. These will be weighted roughly as follows:

Attendance and participation	10%
Quizzes and tests	40%
Papers and projects	30%
Exams	20%

Improvement will be rewarded: you can do poorly at the beginning and still do well in the class. Make-ups and extensions are negotiable as long as you take the responsibility to come see me **before** the day that work is due. The further in advance you talk to me the more reasonable I will be. Late work---including late make-ups---will otherwise be penalized one full grade per day, or one-third of a grade if completed late on the due date. Be ready to make up any missed work on your first day back at school.

## Attendance

I expect you to attend all classes and to arrive prepared to participate in discussions. This means doing the assigned reading for the day and remembering to bring the assigned reading with you. If you know that you will be unable to attend class, be sure to make arrangements with me **in advance** about making it up. Yes, unexcused absences (and unprepared attendance) will affect your grade.

### ...and remember:

- Like most things in life, what you get out of the class will depend on what you put into it. Try to take part in an active way, which means not only doing your homework but also keeping an open mind about other people's ideas. It will make class discussion a lot more interesting.
- Deadlines matter. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. It is always your responsibility to come to me to arrange make-up times or alternate due dates for missed deadlines. Otherwise, "Ain't no love on the day of."
- I will let you know in advance when we are going to meet during the gray period.
- Do not lie, cheat, or steal someone else's work and present it as your own. Such behavior will get you a zero on the assignment and formal disciplinary action by the school.
- Keep in touch. Check your *Menlo* e-mail account regularly; you are responsible for reading whatever I send you. Talk to me, call me, or send me e-mail if there is anything you want to go over. I'm usually available during most of my prep periods (B, E, and F) and during breaks, but it's a good idea to book ahead.

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