

History and Social Sciences  
Curriculum Overview

*Course Description:  
Twentieth Century American in Film*

This course is an examination of America and American Society in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century through the artistic medium of film and filmmaking. Studying both American history and film, we will attempt to develop a deeper understanding of American society as well as film literacy and a “third eye” with regards to Hollywood and the motion picture industry.

As an elective course, this section is non-leveled and open to all grade 11 and 12 students, but highly recommended for grade 12 as those students have completed their full study of United States History and have therefore developed a more capable and critical view of this subject matter. Selected grade 10 students may also enroll in this course. Students will be asked to review films, research their historical authenticity/accuracy, and examine the film producer & director’s perspective for bias and/or influence. Students will construct essays and research papers as well as create their own “historical films”.

*Major Course Objectives:  
When students have completed Twentieth Century American in Film, they will better understand and be able to:*

1. interpret information using higher order thinking skills
2. draw conclusions about causes of historical interpretations
3. distinguish between national and local events and applications involving issues and concepts
4. understand the relationship between cause and effect by linking actions and ideas to their results
5. analyze historical sources for the purpose of identifying the main idea
6. analyze historical sources for the purpose of recognizing and understanding bias and point of view
7. analyze historical sources for the purpose of recognizing fact vs. opinion
8. analyze historical sources for the purpose of drawing inferences
9. distinguish between primary and secondary sources
10. appreciate the visual arts as an affirmation of American life in past eras
11. formulate hypotheses and test them through research and the presentation of their findings
12. advance their understanding of a particular issue by completing original research projects
13. show connections, casual and otherwise, between particular historical events and ideas and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments (History, Geography, Civics/Government, Economics)
14. interpret the 20<sup>th</sup> Century within its own historical context rather than in terms of present day norms and values
15. distinguish intentions and intended consequences of action from unanticipated and unpredicted effects
16. distinguish knowledge from various forms of opinions: identify valid and fallacious arguments; identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations; distinguish between sound generalizations and oversimplifications

*Relationship to Massachusetts Frameworks for History and Social Sciences*

1. explain the course and significance of Wilson’s wartime diplomacy including his Fourteen Points and the failure of the Versailles treaty (H)
2. analyze how industrialization, religion, and faith in science contributed to the growth of Progressivism and describe the central ideas of important leaders and advocates of Progressivism reform, including Wm. J. Bryan, Sinclair, Tarbell, Steffens, Addams, La Follette, Lippman, Dewey, and presidents Roosevelt, Taft, & Wilson. (H)

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3. describe the major historical trends and events of the 1920s, including the Red Scare, declining influence of organized labor, racial and ethnic tensions, and economic growth and prosperity. (H,E)
4. analyze the human causes and effects of the Great Depression and describe President Hoover's response (H,E)
5. describe President Roosevelt's goals, style of leadership, and the obstacles (including the Supreme Court) he confronted as he implemented New Deal policies (H)
6. describe the ideas and role of important individuals and institutions during the Great Depression, Eleanor Roosevelt, Sen. Robert Wagner, John L. Lewis, the AFL – CIO, Huey Long, Charles Coughlin, Francis Townsend and the American Communist Party (H)
7. explain how the Great Depression and the New Deal led to increased importance of the federal government and the emergence of a "New Deal coalition" consisting of blacks, blue-collar workers, poor farmers, Jews, and Catholics (H)
8. analyze how German aggression in Europe, Japanese aggression in Asia, and the differences between fascism and democracy in political representativeness, political accountability, and the enforcement of individual rights contributed to the start of WW II (H,C)
9. analyze the reasons for the dropping of atom bombs on Japan, including Japan's unwillingness to surrender, the rising cost of American lives as the battle lines moved closer to the Japanese home islands, and the Truman Administration's deep concern about enormous casualties if the U.S. invaded Japan in order to end the war (H)
10. explain important domestic events that took place during the war and the consequences of the war, including how war-time economic growth ended the Great Depression; the migration of African Americans from the South to the North; A. Philip Randolph's efforts to eliminate employment discrimination; the entry of large numbers of women into the work force; the internment of West Coast Japanese-Americans; and the emergence of the U.S. as a global superpower (H,E)
11. analyze the factors that contributed to the Cold War, including Soviet aggression in Eastern Europe and the differences between democracy, capitalism, and communism (H,C)
12. describe why the policy of containment, including the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, and NATO, was an important American response to Soviet expansionist policies (H)
13. analyze the sources and areas of conflict during the Cold War, including Korea, Germany, China, the Middle East, the arms race, Latin America, Cuba, and Vietnam (H)
14. explain the causes, course, and consequences of the Vietnam War, summarize the diplomatic policies of Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon concerning the Vietnam War, describe the various responses of Americans to the war (H)
15. analyze how the failure of communist economic policies and U.S. sponsored resistance to Soviet military and diplomatic initiatives, including the policies of Reagan, contributed to the end of the Cold War (H,E)
16. describe the causes of the post – war economic expansion of the American economy, including America's advantage over war-damaged Europe and Japan, the availability of cheap oil, government defense spending, and technological and scientific improvements that improved agricultural production, speeded business transactions, and increased productivity capabilities (H,E)
17. analyze the relationship between America's postwar economic growth and the rise of living standards, the baby boom, the growth of suburbs and home-ownership, the increase in education levels, and the decline in poverty rates (H,E)
18. analyze the important domestic policies of presidents Truman and Eisenhower, including Truman's Fair Deal, the Taft-Hartley Act, the Interstate Highway Act, Eisenhower's response to Sputnik, the 1957 Civil Rights Act, and Eisenhower's concerns over the growth of the "military-industrial complex" (H)
19. analyze how the American Communist Party's loyalty to Stalin (including the activities of communist spies) contributed to domestic anti-communism, describe the political features of McCarthyism, and analyze the damage it did to civil liberties and the larger communist movement, and explain the role of prominent communist and anticommunist figures and institutions, including Senator Joseph McCarthy, Whittaker Chambers, Alger Hiss, J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI, George Meany, Walter Ruether, HUAC, and the Rosenbergs (H)

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20. analyze the origins and goals of the Civil Rights movement and summarize the ideas and policies of important Civil Rights activists and institutions, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP, Malcolm X, Robert Kennedy, and Walter Ruether (H)
21. summarize the key events of the Civil Rights movement, including *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Little Rock School Crisis, the Sit-Ins, Freedom Rides, the Birmingham protests, the March on Washington, the 1965 Selma protest, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr (H)
22. analyze the causes and the course of the women's right movement of the 1960s and 1970s, including the ideas of Betty Freidan, the increasing number of working women, the formation of NOW, the debate over the Equal Rights Amendment, and *Roe v. Wade* (H)
23. analyze the important domestic policies of presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon, including the space program, Kennedy-Johnson tax cut, the Great Society programs, Nixon's appeal to the 'silent majority', the creation of the EPA and OSHA, and the Watergate scandal (H,C,E)
24. describe the economic and social consequences of the computer and technological revolution of the 1980s and 1990s (H,E)
25. identify and describe the various perspectives on the issues comprising the culture wars, including debates over affirmative action, feminism, and multiculturalism (H)

*Assessment Tools*

*Success in Twentieth Century American in Film  
will be assessed by the following methods:*

1. Outside assignments (essays) will be graded and homework will be assessed for completeness, accuracy, and understanding
2. Class participation will be a significant part of a student's grade
3. Class work will be evaluated by the instructor and by class members for cooperative learning activities
4. Tests are limited and will be primarily essay in nature
5. Midsemester paper – any such research assignment must be properly cited and documented
6. Outside readings and their application to class study. Emphasis is to be placed on organization, accuracy, thoroughness, and proficiency of student work. Such work will result in successful understanding and correct answers
7. Rubrics will be incorporated for all research and outside reading assignments, as well as for a final assessment of the student performance and progress
8. A final film project may be substituted for a final exam with the approval of the department chair

*Materials and Resources:*

There is no textbook for this course, however the standard collection of textbooks available in the Scituate High History classroom will be utilized within this course. The figurative "textbook" for the course consists of the films which will be reviewed and evaluated:

*Modern Times*  
*Rosewood*  
*Birth of a Nation*  
*The Untouchables*  
*All the King's Men*  
*Grapes of Wrath*  
*Der Feuhrer's Face* et al  
*The Front*  
*Guilt by Suspicion*  
*Point of Order*  
*Avalon*

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*Godfather Part II*  
*Mambo Kings*  
*Joy Luck Club*  
*Rebel Without A Cause*  
*Dr. Strangelove*  
*Atomic Café*  
*13 Days*  
*JFK*  
*Eyes on the Prize*  
*Malcolm X*  
*Green Berets*  
*Born on the Fourth of July*  
*Platoon*  
*Deer Hunter*  
*East Rider*  
*And the Band Played On*  
*Dead Man Walking*  
*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*  
*Wall Street*  
*The Big Chill*  
*Boyz in the Hood*  
*Smoke Signals*  
*Bullworth*  
*The Big One*

*Relationship to Scituate High School Students Expectations*

Scituate High School students will have the opportunity in *United States History II* to become:

- effective readers (1)
- effective writers (2)
- effective presenters (written, oral, visual) of their research, their interpretations, and solutions to historical problems (3)
- effective problem solvers (4)
- effective information gatherers/researchers (5)
- effective contributors to the community at large