OH011: AP United States History

Course Description
The AP US History course introduces students to American history, covering the period from the seventeenth century to the present. The course focuses on political life in America with an emphasis on three main influences on its development: the structure of society, ideas of freedom, and external relations. The course highlights the specificity of the American experience by situating national developments in a global context. Students broaden and deepen their knowledge of United States history, analyze primary sources and historical accounts, and create their own interpretations. Course materials include a textbook, interpretative essays, and primary sources (documents, images, sound recordings and film). Prerequisite: Placement in Modes of Writing and Argumentation (OE011).

Learning Objectives
In this course, students broaden and deepen their knowledge of United States history, analyze historical accounts, and create their own interpretations. The assignments help students attain specific knowledge and develop fundamental historical skills, including:

• mastering the basic narrative of United States history;
• analyzing primary sources (including documents, images, sound recordings, and film);
• judging alternative historical accounts;
• linking their own experiences to broader historical and geographical patterns; and
• creating their own interpretations.

Course themes
The course focuses on political life in America, with an emphasis on three main influences on its development.

• Social structure
  America's social structure, that is, the distribution of wealth, status and power, has changed dramatically since the seventeenth century. This course traces these changes to a number of important developments, including the implantation of an aristocratic society, religious revivals, the spread of markets, the rise and fall of slavery, the frontier experience, the expansion of industrial capitalism, immigration, wartime mobilization and the emergence of a service economy. A grasp of these structural changes provides essential background for the study of American political and cultural life.

• Ideas of freedom
  Americans have often differed over the nature of freedom, the conditions under which it can flourish, and the institutions needed to maintain those conditions. This course examines influential concepts of religious, political, economic, and social freedom, the ways in which these concepts have evolved, and their influences on each other. An appreciation of American ideas of freedom makes it possible to appreciate the goals of the country's political leaders and movements.
• **External relations**
  Despite desires to remain isolated from the world of international commerce and great power competition, the American nation has engaged in cultural exchanges, economic networks, and military conflicts with other peoples, nations, and empires. An understanding of American experiences with other peoples helps students analyze the country’s changing national identity.

**Major Assignments**
Each semester, the final letter grade will be determined on the basis of the following types of assignments:

• participation in class discussions;
• quizzes on readings, maps, lectures, and discussions;
• essays and brief written exercises
• a mid-semester examination
• a final examination.