

## **STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges**

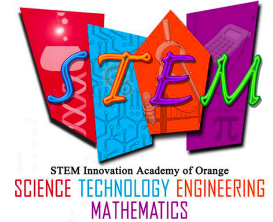
Political Studies (History)

Mrs. Gengaro

Email: [gengarka@orange.k12.nj.us](mailto:gengarka@orange.k12.nj.us)

Website: <https://www.orange.k12.nj.us/Domain/2350>

Teacher Website: <https://www.orange.k12.nj.us/domain/2461>



“The more you know of your history, the more liberated you are.” -Maya Angelo

### **Course Description**

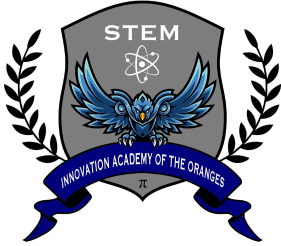
The Political Studies Course integrates the study of various political systems, both nationally and internationally. It maintains a concentrated focus on the development of the state of the nation, political parties, and use of power. We will also discuss the importance of the use of power as an influential tool, and its impact on political figures throughout twentieth and twenty-first century United States history and current world politics. Students use literary interpretation, analysis, comparisons, and evaluations to read and respond to representative works of historical and cultural significance appropriate for grade 10. This course is truly interdisciplinary in that students are enriched by an analysis of the political experience from the perspective of both literature and history.

Activities included are guest speakers from government, field trips to the local court house(s), as well as Congress on hot topic issues. Current political issues are rarely one-sided and the exploration of multiple points of view increases understanding, and critical thinking. Students will produce and present a digital portfolio tracking bias in the media concerning specific hot topics or persons in present-day news. The major focus will be on national issues and their impact locally. The strength of the Honors course of study lies in the extensions of research and tasks related to the analysis of substantive texts and includes real life projects incorporated into each marking cycle. This course satisfies the requirements for U.S. History II.

### **Instructor**

Kathleen Gengaro, B.A., M.A., J.D.

Kathleen Gengaro received her B.A. in Political Science and Economics from Drew University, her Master's in Education from Seton Hall University and her Doctorate in Law from Seton Hall University School of Law.



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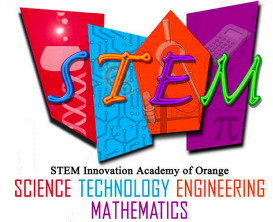
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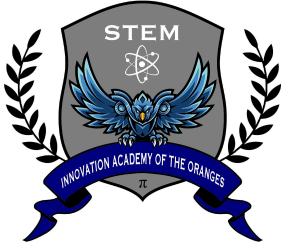
### **Course Objectives**

The ability to communicate is a crucial 21st century skill. This course is geared towards improving your ability to analyze text, articulating what you are reading, listening to others, contributing to discussions, and collaborating with others to improve concepts, ideas, and presentations. We will emphasize the acquisition and application of knowledge to prepare you for college, career, and civic life. We intentionally envision combined English and Social Studies instruction as an inquiry arc of interlocking and mutually reinforcing elements that address the intersection of ideas and learners. Our focus will be developing questions and planning inquiries, applying disciplinary tools and concepts, evaluating sources and using evidence, communicating conclusions, and taking informed action. These dimensions center on the use of questions to spark curiosity, guide instruction, deepen investigations, acquire rigorous content, and apply knowledge and ideas in real world settings to become active and engaged citizens in the 21st century. Active and responsible members of society, like us, are able to identify and analyze public problems, deliberate with other people about how to define and address issues, take constructive action together, reflect on their actions, create and sustain groups, and influence institutions both large and small. We follow the news and current events, and participate in voluntary groups and efforts to change the community positively. Implementing these techniques to teach students to be able to act in these ways (as productive members of society) significantly enhances preparation for college and career.

### **Skills and Proficiencies**

Literacy and Social Studies skills enable us to apply knowledge proficiency in a variety of contexts in repeated performances. In general, these skills promote the participation of studies in civic life and develop your ability to address societal conflicts and problems. The skills will be continuous and will be applied through a process of extension, expansion, and illumination in greater complexity that acknowledges your academic progress and growth.

Literacy skills, for example, include not only listening, reading, writing and speaking with comprehension and clarity, but also include defining, describing, and applying connections between and among people, places and events. You will differentiate fact from opinion, determine an author's purpose, develop an ability to use and apply abstract principles, and evaluate sources for validity and credibility to detect bias. You will also investigate, interpret, and analyze multiple historical and contemporary sources and viewpoints, and you will present solutions to problems by analyzing conflicts and evaluating persistent issues.



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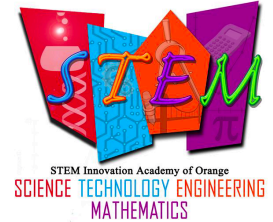
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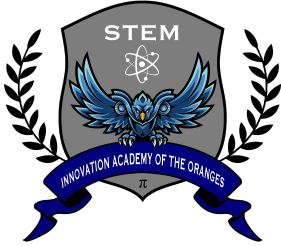
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Critical thinking skills demonstrate the ability to reflect on content in order to form a solid judgment based on evidence and common sense. Critical thinkers gain knowledge through reading, observations, and experiences, which enable a person to identify relationships and determine the accuracy, clarity, reliability, relevance, and importance of what you learn. The practice of these skills requires the ability to conduct research, obtain information through a variety of technologies, and to interpret, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information. You will locate and explore information, organize information in usable forms, use computer-based technology and media/communication technology, and interpret, analyze, and synthesize information. Further, you will be able to synthesize and create an argument, counterargument, and rebuttal for these complex texts.

Learning skills and strategies that you will employ include: Decision-making (identifying situations, securing information, defining criteria, making decisions, taking action to implement the decisions, and examining and evaluating the consequences of those decisions); inquiry learning (being curious, asking powerful and complex questions, observing, investigating, and exploring to develop understanding, discussing and comparing with other works, and self-evaluating and reflecting to monitor progress); issue analysis (defining issues and identifying key opposing positions, determining conflicting values or beliefs, summarizing opposing positions, and stating ways to persuade others to adopt your position); and, problem-based learning (introducing and discussing a real world problem, collaboratively determining what is known and what must be learned, developing and articulating a problem statement, identifying possible solutions, researching, analyzing and resolving potential solutions; and, presenting solutions with supporting documentation).

There are also personal interaction and civic engagement skills that you will use and with which you will become proficient. These include: personal (honesty, integrity, creativity, communication of personal feelings and beliefs, self-direction, flexibility, tolerance); collaborative (contribution to the development of a supportive climate in a group, participation in a group, delegating duties, making decisions about actions in group settings); and civic engagement (understand the fundamental process of democracy, identify and understand public and community issues, engage in dialogue with others who have different perspectives, act to accomplish public purposes, and exhibit moral and civic virtues).



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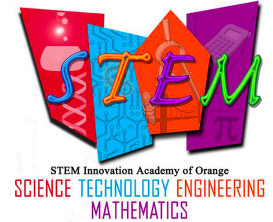
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### **Progression of Topics**

**The Great Depression and World War II:** The Great Depression resulted from government economic policies, business practices, and individual decisions, and it impacted business and society. Aimed at recovery, relief, and reform, New Deal programs had a lasting impact on the expansion of the role of the national government in the economy. The United States participated in World War II as an Allied force to prevent military conquests by Germany, Italy, and Japan. Domestic and military policies during World War II continued to deny equal rights to African Americans, Asian Americans, and women.

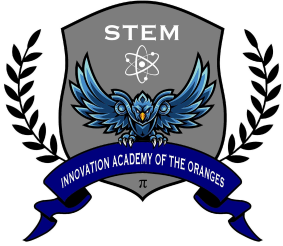
**Postwar United States--The Cold War:** Cold War tensions between the United States and communist countries resulted in conflict that influenced domestic and foreign policy for over forty years. Analysis of this period is critical, particularly with respect to the events of today in Russia, North Korea, and China.

**Postwar United States--Civil Rights and Social Change:** The Civil Rights Movement marked a period of social turmoil and political reform, resulting in the expansion of rights and opportunities for individuals and groups previously discriminated against. This topic has recent ramifications, particularly with respect to the Black Lives Matter and Me Too movements.

**Contemporary United States--Domestic Policies:** Differing views on government's role in social and economic issues led to greater partisanship in government decision making. The increased economic prosperity and opportunities experienced by many masked growing tensions and disparities experienced by some individuals and groups. Immigration, educational opportunities, and social interaction have led to the growth of a multicultural society with varying values and perspectives.

**Contemporary United States--International Policies:** The United States has used various methods to achieve foreign policy goals that affect the global balance of power, national security, other national interests, and the development of democratic societies. Implicit in this study is the United Nations policies and goals (International Declaration of Human Rights, and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals) intended to promote human rights and prevent the violation of human rights with actions taken by the United States.

**Contemporary United States--Interconnected Global Society:** Scientific and technological changes have dramatically affected the economy, the nature of work, education, and social interactions. There will be particular emphasis on the impact of American culture on other world cultures from multiple perspectives and how past and present factors have led to the widening of the gap between the rich and poor and how this has affected individuals and society.



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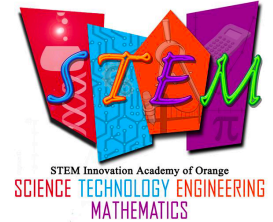
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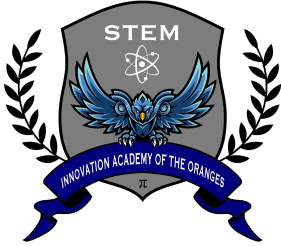
### **Our Routine**

Our history course is the foundation for the ways in which we think, look at the world, and react to challenges. Therefore, it is imperative that we are physically and mentally present in our class meetings. In order to succeed and grow as individuals and as a collective whole, we must all come to class ready to work, willing to push our creative boundaries, and prepared to keep a positive attitude no matter the challenges because we are all capable of designing outcomes that are new and different. It is important to keep in mind that our work in the classroom extends beyond our classroom walls. We are an integral part of English, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math because we examine the ways in which we have a responsibility to ourselves and society. We will be taking many risks in our class when we collaborate, share ideas, participate in the brainstorming process, provide feedback to one another, and try new skills. Throughout our journey together, "it is not about trial and error. It is trying, learning, and trying again."

With these ideas in mind, there are important expectations for each of us. We meet for 40 minutes on Monday, and 80 minutes on either Tuesday and Thursday or Wednesday and Friday, depending on individual schedules. Because we will be spending a considerable amount of time together, any absence will significantly impact your progress. However, I recognize that there may be times over the course of the year that you may be absent. If your absence is excused, you will be allowed two school days to complete missing work for each day absent to receive full credit. You will not be entitled to make up work or tests missed during an unauthorized absence. Each assignment is provided online through the Political Studies classroom and may be submitted electronically via Google classroom or as a shared Google doc. I should be notified if you are going to be absent. Please contact me via Remind @gengaro27 or by email at [gengarka@orange.k12.nj.us](mailto:gengarka@orange.k12.nj.us) with any absences so that I can provide you with direction for the work that took place.

As scholars, we understand that even though we do work together in class, projects often require work outside of the school day. Therefore, homework is mandatory. Homework will be posted online through Google Classroom. Further, I expect you to be honest in all of your academic work in order to learn and grow as responsible, ethical citizens. Any breach of this standard endangers the learning process and impugns the integrity of the entire school community. My purpose is to prepare you to become lifelong learners, and dishonesty inhibits that process. No forms of personal and/or academic misrepresentation are permitted. Anyone, whether cheating alone or helping someone else to cheat, will be subject to disciplinary procedures. If you are in doubt about whether your work is academically honest, ask for guidance before turning in the assignment. For further information, please refer to the section on Academic Integrity in the STEM Innovation Academy of Orange Student/Parent Handbook.





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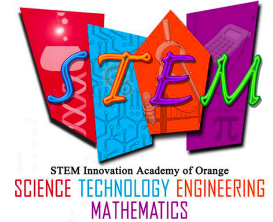
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In addition, in this course and/or projects, my expectation is that you will not use any artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programs such as ChatGPT or DALL-E to help you with your assignments. Any use of AI-generated work to write, create, or edit your assignments will be considered an academic integrity violation. My reasoning for this is that these programs may provide inaccurate or biased information, but more importantly, they do not serve your development as a student. In this course you will learn valuable skills from generating, and editing your own work. If you have any questions about this policy or are not sure if a resource you have found will violate this policy, please ask.

### **Technology**

**Google Classroom:** Links to handouts, PowerPoints, videos, readings and other class materials will be posted here and/or on the website. This, and Google docs, is also where you will upload assignments for submission and view teacher feedback.

**Genesis:** Grades will be available to students and parents through the Genesis portal. You are responsible for reviewing your grades at least weekly.

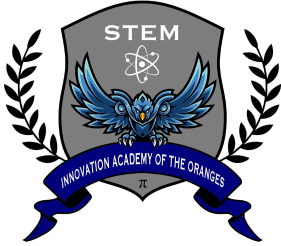
**Videos and Podcasts:** You will be responsible for a variety of multimedia projects and we will work with the latest technology to ensure professional productions of your work.

### **Assessments**

Our curriculum is guided by Project Based Learning, which is a teaching method in which we gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge. You will be working on projects throughout the year. Your grade will be based on the work that you do in class, homework, attendance, quizzes, tests and authentic assessments. Your grade will be weighted in accordance with the District policy:

- 10% Homework
- 20% Formative Assessments (quizzes, anecdotal notes, etc.)
- 20% Class Work (class participation, journals, logs, assignments, tasks, demonstrations, skill applications)
- 25% Summative Evaluations (tests, district assessments, unit assessments, etc.)
- 25% Authentic Assessments (portfolios, projects, performance assessments, 21<sup>st</sup> Century real world experiences)

### **Teacher Availability**



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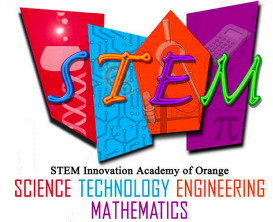
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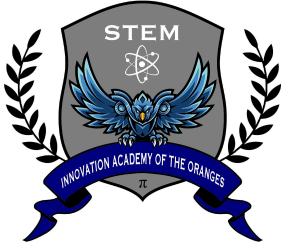


- Before school from 7:30 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.
- Each day during Advisory (Tuesday through Friday)
- Lunch (except Monday)
- After school from 3:30-4:00 p.m. (except Monday)
- After 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday by appointment.

### **Other Things to Know**

If you arrive at class after 8:20 a.m., that means that attendance has already been taken and you need to get a pass from the main office to ensure that the attendance is updated.

Missing and incomplete assignments can be viewed on Genesis. If absent, each student will have two days to make up a missing assignment. After that, a 5-point penalty will be taken off any assignment for each day it is late. If a student is not absent, but failed to complete an assignment, they may request an extension by speaking with the instructor. A 5-point penalty may be taken off the assignment for every day it is not turned in. For example, a homework or classwork assignment that is late for a period of 5 school days, without being excused, is only eligible to receive a maximum score of 75. Additionally, your parents will be contacted when you miss an assignment and administration will be notified. Excessive missing assignments will result in a disciplinary action.



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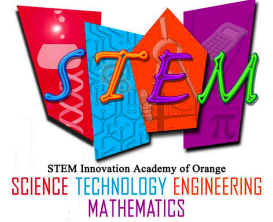
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We, the undersigned student and parent/guardian, have reviewed the expectations of the Political Studies (History) class as outlined in the syllabus and accept the terms and expectations as laid out.

I, as the student, further understand that my parent/guardian may be contacted if I am found to be in default of my expectations, solely for the purpose of correcting the problem before my grades are put in jeopardy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(student signature) (name) (date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(parent signature) (name) (date)

Internet access at home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Any other information I should know about your student: