

**Orange High School**  
**Course Outline / Syllabus**  
**American Studies**

**Instructors: Ms. Jules/Mr. Dobson**

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**Classroom: 211**

**Phone: 973-677-4050**

**Principal: Mr. Belton**

Parents are encouraged to contact me regarding any concerns regarding your child in my class. You can reach me at my email address or you can leave a message at 973-677-4050 ext 5088. I will do my best to return emails and/or phone calls within 48 hours.

**Overarching question:**

What is responsible and cultural citizenship?

**ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:**

Through the use of empathy, critical thinking, discussion, critical reading and rhetorical writing skills, people can enact social change in the name of equity and justice.

Social and cultural eruptions are a result of changing and evolving ideas.

Social and cultural events embody a multiplicity of cultural assumptions that offer opportunities to understand difference and diversity.

**Course Overview:**

American Studies is an interdisciplinary American History and Language Arts course focusing on social and political conflicts in recent history as seen through the American perspective of global events. The curriculum presents a multitude of materials, including: film, music, information texts, historical texts, and literature. These materials serve to facilitate lessons focusing on close reading skills and writing skills in a multitude of genres. In addition, the curriculum is infused with daily opportunities for small and large group discussions. The skills and discussions will prepare the students to examine and comment on how social conflicts erupt, what rights and social justice issues people have fought for in the past and in the contemporary society, and to gain a clear understanding of the people that were fighting both for and against important social causes. The mission is to teach students to embrace ideas about historical and cultural literacies by helping them gain the skills to analyze events that build their understandings in order to clearly and actively advocate for their beliefs.

The main and guiding set of values of this curriculum intend to show the different sides of social conflict in recent American History, how the conflicts arose, who was involved in the conflicts and how conflicts convey messages and are perceived in media via culture itself and its related media outlets. It is important for students to see how issues of racism, sexism, and discrimination have changed, evolved

and devolved throughout modern / post - enlightenment history by reflecting on what they look like today.

Implementation of these ideas will be enacted by examining and producing expository and contemporary writing on controversial complex topics, students will be able to recognize how discrimination is an ongoing problem, and that being able to recognize it is important and necessary in order to facilitate cultural change on any level. This course aims to show the students how to identify discrimination, but most importantly, how to examine materials and texts to identify it by understanding the language that is used around battling discrimination, hiding discrimination and/or promoting discrimination. The hope and intent of this curriculum is to provide students with the understanding and tools they need to advocate for their beliefs toward empathy and fairness. This curriculum does not aim to show the students a glossy, heroic version of history and civil rights in America, but rather a realistic, well-rounded view of the nature of conflict and social eruption. The aim is to show the students how people and their ideas can absolutely influence and create change from actions that impact society, originating from their own sense of advocacy and found in historical examples that have shown to have helped move and accelerate social justice movements progressively forward.

### **Continuity and Organization:**

The course is project based and allows for a lot of freedom during class time. The students will be provided with a common theme in US History and Literature. They will research historical significance, people's roles and exposure in social justice issues of the time, and role/exposure to important pop-culture milestones. The students will produce three different assessments: A historical assessment, a written assessment and a culminating project tying together the historical, social justice and pop culture themes that they uncovered.

Each week of the four week chunks will be broken down into the specific tasks that will allow the students to gather materials to complete the projects.

Section 1: Modeling research and presenting project menus. Introducing historical themes and themes in literature/media in this time period based on the auxiliary texts that support the theme. Anticipatory sets.

Section 2: Text analysis. Close reading. Annotations.

Section 3: Research for student projects. Include texts from the theme, and a menu choice.

Section 4: Present projects and turnkey to the class. Possible presentation forms can include:

Debates: We will hold debates between the students where the teachers will provide a topic relevant to the city they are researching. The students, in teams, will debate the topic addressing the historical, contemporary, social and cultural aspects of the topic.

Media-Based Presentations: The students will produce a PowerPoint presentation, addressing their research and presenting their project. There will be two different incidences where the students do this type of presentation. With this, the students will have to be concise and accurate and practice important presentation skills that they will use in college and in their civic lives.

**Social Action:** In order to connect the curriculum to the community, the students can choose to do a social action project where students can apply what they have learned in the models of organizing manuals provided in their research, and by the teacher, to a real audience in order to demonstrate social activism. The teacher will have helped the students determine what social injustice they want solved by directing the students' research in the first two weeks to be based off models of past activism and advocacy. This can include anything from organizing a voter registration drive, to establishing and maintaining a recycling program in their school. The goal is for the students to continue to learn about democratic values and responsible citizenship through this kinesthetic application of knowledge.

**Student Choice:** The students can choose how they would like to present their information. Each group will meet and discuss what they would like to do, and then they will write a proposal to the teacher, explaining their plan. There will be two different incidences where the students do this type of presentation.

### **Themes and Objectives:**

#### **Conflict and Compromise**

##### **The New American Dream**

###### *Creating and Dismantling Borders*

SWBAT research historical significance, people's roles and exposure in social justice issues of the time, and role/exposure to important historical milestones involving the Mexican American War, Spanish American War, Cold War, Korean War, Vietnam War, September 11, 2001, Afghanistan from 1979-2015, and Iraq foreign conflicts in the United States.

###### *Culture, Assimilation, and the American Identity*

SWBAT research historical significance, people's roles and exposure in social justice issues of the time, and role/exposure to important historical milestones involving reconstruction, sharecropping, debt peonage, the Great Migration, Harlem Renaissance, Great Depression, New Deal, redlining neighborhoods, civil rights movements, and urban unrest in the 1960's, 1990's and 21st century in the United States.

##### **Economics and Human Welfare**

###### *Gender and Society*

SWBAT research historical significance, people's roles and exposure in social justice issues of the time, and role/exposure to important historical milestones involving the 1830's woman's movements, Susan B Anthony, Cady Stanton, turn of the 20th century suffragists, and movements within the movement, Ida Wells Sojourner Truth, 1920 and the 19th amendment, 1960's and 1970's feminist movements (Roe v Wade), and LGBT movements in the United States.

###### *Immigration*

SWBAT research historical significance, people's roles and exposure in social justice issues of the time, and role/exposure to important historical milestones involving Native American history, Tecumseh, trail of tears, Wounded Knee and Wounded Knee in 1970 immigrant demographics from the 1800's-2015

with practices of exclusion (Chinese exclusion acts, domestic de facto discrimination) and inclusion in the United States.

**Make-up Policy:** Students who are absent are responsible for the work and instruction missed. If you are absent on a due date and have an “excused absence” card, all work is due by the second day you return; deadline for assignments given on the day you were absent will be discussed. Students must be present on the day of a major test.

**Classroom Rules of Conduct:**

1. Be prepared for class in the following ways:
  - a. Bring your material to class everyday: pen/pencil, college ruled notebook paper, and/or binder.
  - b. Be on time and be prepared to begin as soon as the bell rings.
2. Be considerate of other people’s feelings, opinions and thoughts.
3. Pay attention and participate in class.

**Conference Period/Tutoring:** I am available to tutor students in \_\_\_211\_\_\_. Please refer to the following schedule for tutoring hours.

Monday-Friday: before or after school

If any tutoring times need to be changed; the changes will be announced and posted on my door. I am also available by appointment. To schedule an appointment you may reach me by school phone or email or students can schedule with me individually.

**Academic Dishonesty Policy:** Students will receive a copy of the Orange High School Dishonesty Policy. All students and faculty will follow the policy as stated in the Student Handbook.

**Requirements to receive credit:** State law requires attendance 90% of class time. If a student fails to attend the required number of classes, credit cannot be given without making up time missed and approval from the Attendance Committee. One of the easiest things you can do to obtain your goal of graduation is to COME TO CLASS EVERY SCHOOL DAY!

**Note to Parent/Guardian:** I am looking forward to working with your child. I strongly encourage parent/teacher conferences. If needed, a conference may be set through the counselor’s office. The more you know about your child’s school performance, achievement, and behavior, the more we will be able to assist him/her to obtain his/her achievement and success.

Please feel free to call or email me if you have any questions about this class. I wish you and your child much happiness and success this school year!

¡Saludos! Estoy contento de poder trabajar con su hijo/hija. Para aseguramos de que sea exitoso

en esta clase, creo fielmente en que usted y yo debemos trabajar juntos. Le invito a pasar por mi salon para poderle conocer. Tambien se puede comunicar conmigo via correo electronico ó por telefono. De necesitar una cita estructurada o hablar conmigo llame a la oficina y ellos gustosamente me pasarán el comunicado. Estaré dando tutorias algunas tardes, y les pido que anime a su hijo/hija a aprovechar esta oportunidad.

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Make sure this syllabus is in your notebook at all times!

COURSE OUTLINE/SYLLABUS AGREEMENT

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE EXPECTATIONS OF THIS CLASS

AS OUTLINED IN THE SYLLABUS. I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE RULES

AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE INSTRUCTOR.

Student's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Current Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Current Email \_\_\_\_\_

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Student's Signature:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Printed Name:

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Parent/Guardian's Signature:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Phone

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Email Address:

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PLEASE RETURN THIS PAGE SIGNED!