

AMERICAN HISTORY FAQ'S FOR SOPHOMORES IN 2013-14



How do I satisfy the American History requirement for graduation?

You can satisfy the American History requirement for graduation by completing any of the following classes; AP US History (11th or 12th grade), American Studies (10th or 11th), American Society –Block (10th only), or U.S. History Traditional (11th only).

Which class should I take?

To answer this you really need to know your own reading ability. One way to do this is to look at your EXPLORE or PLAN Reading Score (ask your counselor about this if you can't find your results) and find the course that best fits your abilities. Each class is designed to address the reading abilities and needs of a range of students. Selecting the appropriate course is critical for your growth and post high school plans. However, understand that we have had students with lower than recommended Reading Scores in each of these classes that have been successful due to their individual interest in the subject or their academic desire to improve. A Reading Score is just a guideline; the decision is ultimately about how much you want to challenge yourself.

	Recommended Courses/Grades	Content Covered	Skills Expected
AP U.S. History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11th or 12th grade only. Recommend 10th grade course of AP European History, AP World History, AP Human Geography, American Studies, or American Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 AP exam guided content that covers the entire American History experience. 📖 Preparation for the AP exam in May. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ College level intensive reading. PLAN Reading of 20+. ☑ Regular use of document based essays. ☑ Free response essays. ☑ In-depth analysis of charts, graphs, maps and primary sources.
American Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11th any – but recommended for EXPLORE/PLAN Reading of 17+. 10th A to B+ in Freshman Social Studies course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 The economic, political, social, and cultural history spanning from colonization to the 1990's. 📖 Focused study of American Culture as it relates to each historical period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Recommended for EXPLORE/PLAN Reading of 17+. ☑ Analysis of culture, events, and people. ☑ Intensive reading of more challenging passages. ☑ Document analysis. ☑ Essay writing.
American Society (Block)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10th grade only. A- to B- in Freshman Social Studies course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 An interdisciplinary approach to history spanning from colonization to the 1990's. 📖 Strong emphasis on connecting literature to historical time periods and English themes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Recommended for EXPLORE/PLAN Reading of 15-18. ☑ Analysis of culture, events, and people. ☑ Frequent reading instruction connected to documents and literature including novels. ☑ Document analysis. ☑ Essay writing. ☑ Integration of literature and history.
U.S. History Traditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11th any - but recommended for EXPLORE/PLAN Reading of up to 16. Recommended 10th grade course work in US Geography and Psych and Group Behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 The economic, political, social, and cultural history spanning from colonization to the current presidency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Recommended for EXPLORE/PLAN Reading of up to 16. ☑ Analysis of culture, events, and people. ☑ Intensive reading instruction. ☑ Document analysis. ☑ Essay writing.

Which course is more difficult?

They all require doing homework, reading, writing, and critical thinking. However, each course is designed to address a variety of reading skills necessary to be successful in college. Three of the courses use the same textbook, but the amount of support each course provides in making sure you understand what you read and can apply varies greatly between courses. Therefore make sure you select the course that best matches your abilities as a reader and your post-high school plans.

There are so many options, how do I know which one is best for me?

Talk with your Freshman Social Studies teacher. They know you and your abilities and what the next courses need in order to be successful. It is ok to ask them why they recommend a course for you. Don't get stuck by just looking at a reading score. It is just one measure of your abilities. Your Freshman Social Studies teacher wants to make sure we get you in a class that is challenging and appropriate for you without being overwhelming.



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If I sign up for one class and don't like it, can I switch into a different class?

No. Since each course covers the content in its own unique way, you are unable to switch into a different course once the semester begins.

If I am a Sophomore and want to take one of the American History options but only have a C or below as a Freshman, what should I do?

Remember that the American History classes are designed as Junior-level content and skills courses. If you are struggling as a Freshman, especially in reading, you will be misplaced taking these courses as a Sophomore. Wait a year for American History. Instead, we recommend you get an extra year of reading and writing for Social Studies content by taking US Geography one semester of Sophomore year and then Psych and Group Behavior the other semester. As a junior, you'll sign up for either American Studies or U.S. History Traditional.



Is there an advantage to taking these courses your Sophomore year?

Yes, it satisfies a graduation requirement a year earlier and it opens your schedule during your Junior and Senior year to take elective classes like AP European History, AP Human Geography, AP World History, Military History, Psychology, AP Psychology, Sociology, and US Geography.

If you have questions, talk to a social studies teacher or Mr. Pankuch, the Department Chair for Social Studies, in G220, call him at 375-8856 or email him at Donald_Pankuch@ipsd.org.

