

# SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE OFFERINGS

## For the Classes of 2014, 2013, and 2012:

### **SOPHOMORES**

Must earn credit in U.S. History, U.S. History Honors or U.S. History Honors Collaborative and meet departmental writing standards.

### **JUNIORS & SENIORS:**

All students must take and pass an additional one and one-half (1 ½) credits in Social Studies in their junior or senior year. These courses must be distributed as follows:

- ½ credit of an Area Study
- ½ credit of American Government
- ½ credit of an additional elective

The American government requirement can be met by taking the ½ year American Government course, or by taking the full year A.P. United States Government and Politics course. The A.P. course fulfills only the government requirement in this case—students must still take an additional elective. See the list of all electives below.

## Beginning with the Class of 2015:

### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Must earn credit in Global Themes B, A, or Honors and meet departmental writing standards.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Must earn credit in U.S. History, U.S. History Honors or U.S. History Honors Collaborative and meet departmental writing standards.

### **11<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Must earn credit in the junior year world studies requirement (pending BOE approval)

### **11<sup>th</sup> and 12 Grade**

All students must earn ½ credit to meet the Government requirement. This can be met by taking one of the following courses:  
American Government (2960)  
AP United States Government and Politics (2985)

All other electives are open to 11<sup>th</sup> and/or 12<sup>th</sup> grade students:

#### Semester Electives

Anthropology (3085)  
Current Issues (3110)  
Environmental Studies (3135)  
Introduction to Economics (3010)  
Introduction to Psychology (3160)  
Women in History (2810)

#### Full-Year Electives

AP Macro/Microeconomics (3035)  
AP United States Government and Politics (2985)  
AP United States History (2710)  
AP World History (2770)

\* It is expected that all students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses will take the standardized Advanced Placement Exam given every spring

## Summer School

The ½ year American Government is offered over the summer by Westport Continuing Education. **This course may only be taken for advancement in social studies.** In order to qualify to take American Government over the summer, students must:

- have earned credit U.S. History, U.S. History Honors or U.S. History Honors Collaborative and met the departmental writing standards
- have earned credit or are enrolled for a minimum of 0.5 credit in social studies **beyond the graduation requirement for the academic year immediately preceding or following the summer in which the course is taken**
- Receive approval from the Department Chair

## **9<sup>th</sup> GRADE COURSE OFFERINGS**

### **GLOBAL THEMES (25 )**

Required of all freshmen  
See level descriptions below

1 credit  
Full year

Global Themes is a course that introduces students to the concept that globalization is not a recent phenomenon but has existed throughout the history of the world and influences all aspects of society. Course content includes historical examples from the early modern world, exploring various themes that relate to global interactions of people, ideas, goods and institutions. The course is not intended to be a survey of modern world history, but instead draws upon various social sciences (economics, political science, sociology, geography and history) to evaluate the contemporary implications of historical developments.

The course is organized around three themes: Global Interconnectedness, Revolutions, and Imperialism. Within each theme essential questions and a contemporary connection explore the relevance of the material in today's world. Within each unit, required content and opportunities for teacher-selected case studies illustrate the core concepts.

Global Themes teachers will assess students' writing progress through four writing assessments. Each assessment will be aligned with an area of the course content and will focus on a different aspect of writing persuasively. Both Social Studies and English classes will focus on critical thinking skills: levels of questioning, critical reading, and analytic writing.

The final assessment for this course will utilize contemporary literacy skills to analyze and synthesize an original solution to a modern-day issue. Part of this assessment will be based on an oral presentation.

### **GLOBAL THEMES HONORS**

The Honors level course is rigorous and intellectually demanding, designed for students who are ready to advance their skills as independent learners and researchers. This entails a significant amount of reading both primary source and high-level secondary source material, as well as sharing the knowledge they've gained with classmates. Students will study topics in more depth and complexity, and be required to do more writing and more critical analysis than in Global Themes A.

Students must be prepared to assume independent accountability for their performance, and be willing to work closely with and interact frequently with their peers. Students who consider taking this course should be strong independent readers who can handle larger amounts of reading, enjoy reading about historical topics, and are willing to make a sustained commitment to success, including being ready to spend up to 1 to 1 ½ hours of preparation for each class.

### **GLOBAL THEMES A**

The A level course is designed to develop students' ability to think critically, help them produce strong written arguments and analyze and interpret varied source information, including written text and visual sources. Students will develop the communication skills necessary to be able to work with others collaboratively, and build strong work habits.

Emphasis will be placed on improvement of writing skills, the ability to think critically about essential questions and oral presentation skills.

### **GLOBAL THEMES B**

The B level course is designed to offer additional assistance to students who have struggled in social studies at the middle school level. The course addresses the same overall themes as Global Themes A, but content may be reduced in order to allow students time to develop the organization, writing, and speaking skills necessary for success in high school. Emphasis is placed on personal organization, daily skill building practice. The goal of the B-level course is to give students as much practice as possible utilizing the skills that will be necessary for success in A Level U.S. History during their sophomore year. *Please note that Global Themes B remains a pilot course for 2011-12.*

## **10<sup>th</sup> GRADE COURSE OFFERINGS**

### **U.S. HISTORY HONORS (2660)**

Prerequisite: Western Humanities or Western Humanities Honors

Guideline: Completion of Western Humanities with at least an A- or Western Humanities Honors with at least a B- and teacher recommendation

The course is open to sophomores.

1 credit  
Full year

It is imperative that any examination of United States History takes its ethnic, socioeconomic and gender diversity into account. Thus, the honors level student is challenged to consider traditionally studied historical events from the lesser-considered perspective. This is accomplished by studying various periods of United States History in the context of broad themes. Class texts

are drawn from the work of historians as well as copious primary documents, which are supplemented by other sources representing both traditional and alternative historical interpretations.

U.S. History Honors is a rigorous and intellectually demanding course that requires a significant amount of writing and independent research. There is a great emphasis placed on student self-assessment and contributions to class discussion. The successful student in this class is a strong independent reader, and one who is willing to take intellectual risks in their speaking and writing.

**U.S. HISTORY HONORS COLLABORATIVE (2660)**

Prerequisite: Western Humanities or Western Humanities Honors and enrollment in English 10 Honors Collaborative.

1 credit  
Full year

The U.S. History Honors Collaborative is not simply an interdisciplinary approach to instruction, but an integrated study of U.S. history and literature. It is a writing intensive course with projects that demand visual literacy as well. The course also stresses a high level of artistic and meta-cognitive knowledge and procedure. The latest technologies are utilized throughout the course.

U.S. History/English Honors Collaborative is designed for students who are intrinsically motivated and desire a course where they can explore the topics with intensive curricular insights, broad instruction, and open-ended direction for all assessments. Such self-motivated students will revel in their freedom to design, produce, and reflect on projects with their unique focus and in their own style.

Historic and literary study has addressed the founding principles of the United States, Native Americans, Industrialization, Immigration, Civil Rights, the Cold War, and the Vietnam conflict. Topics and themes have included responsibility and empathy, and empathy, leadership and power, conscience, fear, liberty, education, labor, and identity.

**U.S. HISTORY (2660)**

Prerequisite: Western Humanities or Western Humanities Honors; Required of all Sophomores

1 credit  
Full year

The United States History course takes a thematic approach to the scope of our nation's history, while emphasizing the skills of being able to critically read, and then form cohesive written arguments around issues of American History. Course themes include: establishing the ideal, an examination of the documents and events that shaped the new American Nation; spreading the Ideals Domestically, a study of events and trends in the United States' expansion across North America; spreading the ideas internationally, where students will evaluate the United States' dedication to its own ideals in dealing with foreign nations; and Reform and Reparations, a unit which students will take a deep look at social reform movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century from their causes to implications on American society.

Students will be asked to read original documents and first person accounts of historical events, as well as textbook readings. Acting as historians, students will have to sort the sometimes conflicting evidence to reach their own conclusions, which they must be able to support with proper and sufficient evidence. Much emphasis will be placed on a student's ability to take a position and defend that position, both in written and oral form. Students will be expected to do a significant amount of writing in this course, and are required to meet the departmental writing standard.

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT COURSE OFFERINGS**

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (2960)**

Prerequisite: U.S. History or U.S. History Honors.  
Open to juniors and seniors only.

1/2 credit  
Either semester

American Government is a required, one-semester course, open to juniors and seniors. The objective of the course is for students to build an appreciation for the intricacies of governance on the federal, state and local levels as preparation for being active participants in the democratic process. It is an activity-based course that utilizes simulations to illustrate how the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government operate. Important topics in the course include the process by which bills become laws, the pressures that affect law makers, the meaning of the Bill of Rights, the role of the Supreme Court in interpreting the Bill of Rights, the points of view of the candidates on the issues in election years, and discussion of current events.

Students will be required to research and write persuasive papers about contemporary issues and historically significant court cases. (Students who have not made CAPT goal on the Interdisciplinary Writing Test will need to earn a 3 on a 4 point rubric on two persuasive papers in order to meet Staples performance standards for graduation.) Students will also be assessed on their speaking and listening skills, especially during simulations.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (2985)**

Prerequisite: Completion of U.S. History

1 credit  
Full year

Note: If this course is used to satisfy the American Government graduation requirement, it does not count toward the social studies elective requirement.

Guideline: Teacher recommendation and completion of one or more of the following:

American Government with at least an A-

U.S. History with at least an A-  
U.S. History Honors with at least a B  
A.P. U.S. History with at least a B

Open to juniors and seniors only.

A summer assignment will be required.

A.P. U.S. Government and Politics is a demanding college level course designed for motivated and committed students with a keen interest in American history in general, and American government in particular. It is designed to replicate an introductory American government course taught in a university setting. As such, the course requires far more effort and commitment from students than the typical high school course.

The course is a comprehensive survey of the American political system, and is designed to give students a critical perspective on politics and government in the United States. The class involves the study of general concepts used to interpret American politics and requires familiarity with the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that make up the American political reality.

In order to be successful in this class and to prepare adequately for the Advanced Placement exam in May, students must spend a considerable amount of time preparing for class. Assignments must be read and questions formulated before coming to class. Typically, students should plan to spend up to 1 ½ hours preparing for each class meeting.

Students are expected to take the Advanced Placement exam in May. Students must complete the course in order to satisfy the American Government graduation requirement.

### **AREA STUDIES COURSE OFFERINGS**

The purpose of the area studies courses is to afford an in-depth view of a “non-western” portion of the world. The courses provide students with knowledge of areas of the world whose culture and history may make the inhabitants of those places see the world from an entirely different perspective from those of us living in the United States. In a world increasingly interdependent, and increasingly interconnected by modern technology, it is important that students have an understanding of people and cultures that are different from us. Every student must successfully complete an area study course to meet the Staples graduation requirements.

#### **AFRICAN STUDIES (2860)**

Prerequisite: U.S. History or U.S. History Honors.

Open to juniors and seniors only.

1/2 credit

Either semester

African Studies is a one-semester course that focuses on both the traditional and modern aspects of African cultures. Students will examine the impact of geography on African peoples, the traditional languages, literature, art, and music of African societies, the effects of European colonialism on the continent, and contemporary issues facing African nations. Students will read a variety of primary and secondary sources and at least one novel written by an African author.

#### **EAST ASIAN STUDIES (2885)**

Prerequisite: U.S. History or U.S. History Honors.

Open to juniors and seniors only.

1/2 credit

Either semester

East Asian Studies is a one-semester course that focuses on both the traditional and modern aspects of the cultures of the eastern Asian continent. Students will examine the impact of geography on the development of societies, the philosophical and religious foundations of traditional cultures, political traditions and trends over time, and contemporary issues facing the nations of eastern Asia. Students will read a variety of primary and secondary sources as well as literary works by contemporary East Asian authors. Assessments may include analytic essays, seminar discussions, tests and quizzes, and a final project.

#### **LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES (2935)**

Prerequisite: U.S. History or U.S. History Honors.

Open to juniors and seniors only.

1/2 credit

Either semester

This is a one-semester course that focuses on examining the commonalities and differences of the various peoples of the region. Topics of study will include: the impact of geography; the traditional literature, art, and music of Latin American societies; the long-term effects of European colonialism; and struggles for and with independence. Students will read a variety of primary and secondary sources and at least one novel written by a Latin American author. Assessments may include analytic essays, seminar discussions, tests and quizzes, and a portfolio project.

#### **MIDDLE EAST STUDIES (2910)**

Prerequisite: U.S. History or U.S. History Honors.

Open to juniors and seniors only.

1/2 credit

Either semester

Middle East Studies is a one-semester course that examines the historical context of modern-day conflict in this region of the world. Students will study the following areas: the characteristics and impact of geography; the three major monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, their similarities and differences, and their historical conflicts, including the modern-day conflict between the state of Israel and Palestinians; the development of Jewish and Arab nationalism in the 19th and 20th centuries; and contemporary leadership and conflict in the region. Assessments may include analytic essays, seminar discussions, tests and quizzes, and a portfolio project.

## **ELECTIVE COURSE OFFERINGS**

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT MACRO/MICROECONOMICS (3035)** 1 credit  
Prerequisite: Completion of Algebra 2B with a minimum grade of B, Algebra 2A with a B-, or Algebra 2H with a C+. Social Studies teacher recommendation also required.  
Algebra 2 may not be taken concurrently with AP Economics. Full year  
Open to juniors and seniors only.

The AP course in Economics is a rigorous and intellectually demanding course, intended for highly motivated students who possess excellent mathematics skills, and wish to take a course that will prepare them for college-level studies in macro- and microeconomics. Macroeconomics instruction will give students a thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to an economic system as a whole, including particular emphasis on the study of national income and price-level determination, as well as developing students' familiarity with economic performance measures, the financial sector, stabilization policies, economic growth, and international economics. Microeconomics instruction will give students thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to the functions of individual decision makers, both consumers and producers, within the economic system. Primary emphasis is placed on the nature and function of product markets, and also includes the study of factor markets and of the role of government in promoting greater efficiency and equity in the economy.

There is a considerable amount of reading in the course, including many problem sets that students will be asked to solve. Assessment for the course is primarily based on test and quiz scores. Students must be prepared to spend up to 1 to 1 ½ hours of preparation for each class. All students are expected to take the AP exam in May. Students can expect a summer assignment.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (2985)** 1 credit  
Prerequisite: Completion of U.S. History Full year  
**Note: This course may be taken for elective credit if the student has passed the semester American Government course (2960).**  
See full course description above.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT UNITED STATES HISTORY (2710)** 1 credit  
Prerequisite: Completion of U.S. History or U.S. History Honors. Full year  
Guideline: Completion of U.S. History with at least an A- or U.S. History Honors with at least a B- and teacher recommendation.  
Open to juniors and seniors only.

A.P. U.S. History is a rigorous and intellectually demanding survey of American History and culture that assumes students possess a high level of interest and competence. Because the workload is similar to a one year college course, students should expect that the workload will be significantly heavier than a regular U.S. History course. Students must be prepared to spend up to 1 to 1 ½ hours of preparation for each class. All students are expected to take the A.P. exam in May.

The study of American history introduces students to cultural, economic, political and social development that played a fundamental role in shaping the world in which they live. In addition to providing a basic narrative of events and movements, the goals of the course are to develop (a) an understanding of some of the principal themes in American history, (b) an ability to analyze historical evidence, and (c) an ability to analyze and to express historical understanding in writing. The course is designed to prepare students to successfully complete the AP exam. Students can expect a summer assignment.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT WORLD HISTORY (2770)** 1 credit  
Prerequisite: Completion of U.S. History or U.S. History Honors. Full year  
Guideline: Completion of U.S. History with at least an A- or U.S. History Hnrs. with at least a B- and teacher recommendation.  
Open to juniors and seniors only.

AP World History is a rigorous and intellectually demanding course, intended for qualified students who wish to complete studies in secondary school equivalent to an introductory college course in world history. The purpose of the course is to develop greater understanding of the evolution of global processes and contacts in different types of human societies. This understanding is advanced through a combination of selective factual knowledge and appropriate analytic skills. The course highlights the nature of changes in global frameworks and their causes and consequences, as well as comparisons among major societies. It emphasizes relevant factual knowledge, leading interpretive issues, and skills in analyzing types of historical evidence. Periodization, explicitly discussed, forms an organizing principle to address change and continuity throughout the historical periods and are included in the course. Specific themes provide further organization to the course, along with consistent attention to contacts among societies that form the core of world history as a field of study.

Students must be prepared to spend up to 1 to 1 ½ hours of preparation for each class. All students are expected to take the AP exam in May.

**ANTHROPOLOGY (3085)** 1/2 credit  
Prerequisite: U.S. History or U.S. History Honors. Either semester

Open to juniors and seniors only.

This course will provide students with an understanding of the major theories about the development of man, culture and civilization. Units will include an introduction to anthropology and archeology, the role of myth and superstition, the purpose of religion and the elements of culture. Evaluation may include but is not limited to tests, papers, PowerPoint projects, group projects, debates and daily class participation.

**CURRENT ISSUES (3110)**

1/2 credit

Prerequisite: Successful completion of U.S. History or U.S. History Honors.

Second semester

Open to seniors only

This course is designed for second semester seniors who are interested in learning more about issues facing contemporary America, while exploring local issues that reveal bigger questions about our society. Topics will be drawn from a broad spectrum of social science areas, including, but not limited to political issues, the state of the American economy, human and civil rights, and cultural trends. The specific content of the course will, by necessity, be fluid. Students will be able to direct some elements of the course based on personal interest, application to their senior internship, etc. Class activities will include reading, analyzing and discussing online and print periodicals, student presentations, as well as evaluation of current and archived video resources. Grades will be based on discussions, projects, and quizzes.

**ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES (3135)**

1/2 Social Studies credit, 1/2 Science Credit

Prerequisite: U.S. History or U.S. History Honors.

Either semester

Open to juniors and seniors only.

This course is designed for students having an interest in environmental issues. Utilizing field experiences that will focus on both scientific and social issues, students will study local habitats such as estuaries, marshlands, wetlands, and seashores. Using class and field experiences, students will explore past, present and future proposed use of a particular habitat. Political and environmental factors regarding land use are explored as well as future plans and anticipated impact on the total environment. The course will run for two consecutive periods, being team taught by a science teacher and a social studies teacher. The course is limited to 40 students.

**INTRODUCTION TO ECONOMICS (3010)**

1/2 credit

Prerequisite: U.S. History or U.S. History Honors.

Either semester

Open to juniors and seniors only.

This course will provide students with a conceptual framework for effective economic decision-making. Units studied include basic concepts, American capitalism, money, credit, banking, investment, fiscal and monetary policy, macroeconomics, and international trade. Considerable attention is given to personal fiscal policy. Students are encouraged to see how politics, international relations, and daily life are affected by economic factors. Class activities include films, speakers, discussion, game simulations, and student presentations. Grades will be based on tests, quizzes, and projects.

**INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY (3160)**

1/2 credit

Prerequisite: U.S. History or U.S. History Honors.

Either semester

Open to juniors and seniors only.

Psychology is a course designed to introduce students to the study of human behavior. In the words of Paul Valery, "The purpose of psychology is to give us a completely different idea of the things we know best." Therefore, students will be given the opportunity to understand their own behavior in order to better cope with issues in adolescence and beyond.

Areas of study will include how the human body affects and is affected by the mind, the different types of research and how to use them effectively in a study, what motivates people to perform different behaviors, and how emotions affect behaviors. Assessments may include tests, projects, graded discussions, papers, and book reviews of independent outside reading.

**WOMEN IN HISTORY (2810)**

1/2 credit

Prerequisite: U.S. History or U.S. History Honors.

Either semester

Open to juniors and seniors only.

Women in History is intended for students who are interested in exploring the humanities from a perspective not available in traditional history courses. Course content includes the contributions 20th and 21st century women have made in art, literature, music, philosophy, and politics. This is a project and discussion oriented class that allows students to research their own interests pertaining to global women's history. Course assessments will be based on class discussions, essays, and individual projects...Both young women and young men are encouraged to take this course.