



CHELMSFORD HIGH SCHOOL

American History Through Film SYLLABUS 2023-2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Understanding the importance of history makes it more enjoyable, as well as more interesting, for students. This course will look at American History using the medium of film to dissect the importance of events as well as analyzing if the film is historically accurate in how it portrayed the people and the events. It is apparent today that we live in a visual age, but we need to understand and appreciate that you can not always believe what you see, which means that we must learn how to decide what the truth is and what is presented for the sake of entertainment.

Program of Studies

Prerequisite(s): US History I and II

COURSE GOALS and STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to...

- Determine if a film is a legitimate historical source.
- Determines the legitimacy of film evidence.
- Determines the illegitimacy of film evidence.
- Determine if a film can be seen as an historical source.
- Determine if Hollywood films can be used to teach history.

COURSE STANDARDS****

[DESE STANDARDS LINK](#)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Chelmsford High School is committed to supporting the success and well-being of all students, regardless of varying abilities and levels of adaptive skills. The Special Education office provides services and resources to empower each student to attain their highest level of academic success and learning independence.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At Chelmsford High School, students are expected to maintain high moral and ethical standards, as exemplified by the final sentence of our mission statement: *"A spirit of respect is fostered, as members take responsibility for their actions and acknowledge the rights and differences of others."* (CHS Mission Statement)

Students should respect themselves, other students, staff members and the school. The acts of cheating and plagiarism violate expectations that students will exhibit respectful, ethical behavior.

[The Academic Honor Code](#) exists to address the issues of cheating and plagiarism.

GRADING POLICIES

Please connect with individual teachers for specific information regarding grading. Students will be able to monitor academic progress biweekly through X2/ASPEN.

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the academic support programs and services (such as PRIDE Block, after-school help, etc.) available to them to help ensure and support success. Information about these services can be found at

COURSE SKILLS

The following skills are addressed in this course:

1. Analytical skills
2. Historical Understanding
3. Use critical thinking to evaluate historical films
4. Developing questions that guide inquiry and research
5. Analysis of effective argument and critical thinking from the historic record
6. Expressing oneself clearly and effectively through writing and speaking

COURSE OUTLINE

Elements of U.S. History that will be studied and potential eras and films that will be watched:

1. Antebellum America
Gangs of New York (2002)
Twelve Years a Slave (2013)
2. Civil War and Reconstruction
Birth of a Nation [excerpts only] (1915)
Gone With the Wind (1939)
Cold Mountain (2003)
The Conspirator (2010)
Lincoln (2012)
Free State of Jones (2016)
3. The Western Frontier
Dances With Wolves (1990)
Tombstone (1993)
Unforgiven (1992)
Wyatt Earp (1994)
Open Range (2003)
Hell or High Water (2016)
4. The Great Depression
The Grapes of Wrath (1940)

- Bonnie and Clyde* (1967)
Oh Brother, Where art Thou (2002)
Seabiscuit (2003)
5. The Rise of Organized Crime and Prohibition
The Godfather I and II (1972)
The Untouchables (1987)
6. World War II
Casablanca (1942)
League of Their Own (1992)
Truman (1995)
The Thin Red Line (1998)
Race (2016)
Hacksaw Ridge (2016)
7. McCarthyism, the Cold War and the 1950s
Dr. Strangelove (1964)
Fat Man & Little Boy (1989)
Pleasantville (1998)
Mona Lisa Smile (2003)
Good Night and Good Luck (2005)
J. Edgar (2011)
Trumbo (2016)
8. Civil Rights Movement and the 1960s
Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (1967)
Mississippi Burning (1988)
The Long Walk Home (1990)
Malcolm X (1992)
Parkland (2013)
Selma (2014)
All the Way (2016)
Race (2016)
Loving (2016)
Hidden Figures (2016)
Trial of the Chicago 7 (2020)
9. The Vietnam War and the Middle East
Apocalypse Now (1979)
Full Metal Jacket (1987)
Good Morning Vietnam (1987)
Born on the Fourth of the July (1989)
Argo (2012)
10. ERA and Feminism
Norma Rae (1979)
Tootsie (1982)
North Country (2015)

RBJ (2018)

11. Issues of the Twenty First Century

Three Kings (1999)

9/11 (2002) documentary

Gran Torino (2008)

Zero Dark Thirty (2012)

Lone Survivor (2013)

American Sniper (2014)

This syllabus and course outline are subject to change as Chelmsford High School seeks to continually improve the learning experiences for all students.

“We foster PRIDE* in our pursuit of excellence.”

PRIDE refers to our five core values – Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Empathy. These five pillars represent our points of emphasis in supporting the development of quality students and quality citizens.