

Content Area Information

Social Studies 2008-2009

U.S. History

Students continue their exploration of United States History from their eighth grade year (Part I / Colonial America through the Civil War). US II begins with the Reconstruction Era and moves through the American experience. Western expansion, industrialization and Progressivism bring the students into the 20th century. Students gain an understanding of the political, social and economic impacts of the 20th century. Study of World War I, the Great Depression and World War II give students exposure to the changing role of the United States and the world. The final units look at the Cold War era of the 1950's to the 1980's. Students learn about the political challenges and social changes of the post-war years. Students finish the year with a look at the United States and the challenges of the late 20th and early 21st century. Service learning hours must be completed through a classroom project.

Government

Students turn their focus to the study of their government in the 10th grade. Government is an overall view/study of federal and state government. It focuses on each of the three branches looking at their constitutional powers and the realities of what they do in the real world. There is an emphasis on the role of the citizen in our democracy and how they can bring about change. There is also an emphasis on current events to help students realize the impact of government policy on each of our lives. A Student Service Learning project that includes volunteer hours must also be completed through various projects.

World History

Students in the 11th grade will turn their focus to the study of World History from the Renaissance Period through World War II and into the Cold War. Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs and themes, organize patterns and events, and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time throughout the world.

Psychology

Psychology is an introduction to basic concepts within the realm of psychology. Topics will include: abnormal psychology, memory, learning, development, etc. Class activities in order to facilitate learning include: discussion, projects, demonstrations, readings, etc.

Contemporary Issues

Students in the 12th grade have the option to take Advanced Placement courses or courses such as Contemporary Issues (CI). CI is a course where students are taught about current events and their impact on our country. This course included more in-depth studying about our government. Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge about different types of economic systems by the end of the year as well as analyze the problems that come along with each. Students will focus on foreign policy for a semester. Activities for the year include a research paper on one country of their choosing and its relationship past and present with the United States. CI also includes class discussions on almost a daily basis and quite a bit of partner/group work. There is a current events day each week where students find interesting and relevant topics and bring them up for class discussion and debate.

Mock Trial

Mock Trial is open to all students, grades 9-12. It is a club that competes with other schools in the region in a courtroom setting. Students will prepare and assume the roles of witnesses, defendants, lawyers and prosecutors in either a criminal or civil case.

Global Diplomacy/Model United Nations

The Global Diplomacy course is designed to give students an understanding of the events and policies in our modern world. Students gain an understanding of geographic and cultural regions. Through a study of the political, economic and social aspects of nations, students can better understand the impact of global relations. Students apply their research to class simulations of the United Nations. Representing nations, students work in delegations to address contemporary policies.

The Model United Nations club is an outreach of the Global Diplomacy class. Students prepare for competition with other schools at United Nations conferences. The Great Mills Model United Nations club has participated in conferences at Old Dominion University and Johns Hopkins University. Students interested in participation in the Model United Nations program should contact their Social Studies teacher for more information.

AP U.S. Government and Politics

Students in the 10th and 12th grades have the option to take AP U.S. Government and Politics. This course imposes a heavy reading and writing load throughout the year and the demands on students are equivalent to a full-year introductory college course. The course includes an in-depth analysis and study of how our government works. The students also learn about topics such as our Constitution, federalism, political behavior, elections, the four branches of government, public policy, economics, civil rights and civil liberties. Students are continuously analyzing how our government impacts our lives on a daily basis. Some of the classroom activities include class discussion, mock elections, debates, and lessons that allow students to become the government in the classroom. Students in the 10th grade must complete a Student Service Learning project throughout the year. At the conclusion of the course, students will take the AP test which, depending on their final score, may grant them college credit depending on the college they choose to attend. Students in the 10th grade will also take the Maryland HSA test.

AP Psychology

Students in the 11th and 12th grades have the option to take AP Psychology. This course imposes a heavy reading and writing load throughout the year and the demands on students are equivalent to a full-year introductory college course. AP Psychology is designed to teach students about concepts in psychology through an in-depth study, discussion, activities, projects, demonstrations, interactive notebook, etc. Students will be introduced to such topics as: behavior, mental processes, development, perception, memory, learning, psychology theories, treatment, etc. At the conclusion of the course, students will take the AP test which, depending on their final score, may grant them college credit depending on the college they choose to attend.

AP World History

Students in the 11th grade have the option to take AP World History. This course imposes a heavy reading and writing load throughout the year and the demands on students are equivalent to a full-year introductory college course. The course is based on a global perspective of the world and human interactions from 800 B.C.E. to present day. Students refine their analytical abilities and critical thinking skills in order to understand historical and geographical context, make comparisons across cultures, use documents and other primary sources, and recognize and discuss different interpretations and historical frameworks.