

Course Descriptions & Outlines

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 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS & OUTLINES

Curriculum: History

Department Address

1299 E. 32nd St.

Signal Hill, CA 90755 (<https://goo.gl/maps/lm1lN>)

Department Phone

(562) 997-8000 x 7142956

Course Descriptions

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- **High School Course MATRIX: History / Social Science**
(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sUrvfCk0j34gxfYS4-4Zkxj1wgs/edit?usp=sharing>) | [2025 High School Course Catalogue \(/fs/resource-manager/view/a7abaa2f-5a31-4662-87ee-514d0c2c7dfe\)](#)



- **AP - College Board**
(<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/te>)

Elementary Course Descriptions

KINDERGARTEN

In kindergarten children first begin to understand that school is a place for leaning and working. They learn to share, to take turns, to respect the rights of others and to take care of themselves and their own possessions. These are learnings that are necessary for good civic behavior in the classroom and the larger society. Children also discover how other people have learned and worked together by learning about times past through selected literature.

FIRST GRADE

Children in the first grade are ready to learn more about the world they live in and about their responsibilities to other people. They begin to learn how necessary it is for people and groups to work together and how to resolve problems that get in the way of cooperation. Children develop a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and learn to appreciate the many different people and ways of life that exist in the larger world.

SECOND GRADE

Children in the second grade are ready to learn about people who make a difference in their own lives and who made a difference in the past. People who make a difference in the child's world are those who care for him or her, those who supply the goods and services necessary for daily life, and those extraordinary men and women who made a difference in our nation and in the world community.

THIRD GRADE

Third graders can begin to think about continuity and change in their own locality and nation. By exploring their locality and locating some of the features that were built by people who lived long ago, children can make contact with times past and with the people whose activities have left their mark on the land. Children begin to think about chronological relationships and to analyze how some things change and others remain the same. Teachers introduce children to the legacy of local, regional and national traditions that provide common memories and a shared sense of "for all of us."



FOURTH GRADE

The story of California begins in pre-Columbian times, in the culture of the Native American Indians who lived here before the first Europeans arrived. The history of California becomes a story of successive waves of immigrants from the sixteenth century through modern times and the enduring marks they left on the character of the state. The children study the Spanish explorers and the Spanish-Mexican settlers of the mission and rancho period. They also learn about the Americans who established California as a state and how it developed into an agricultural and industrial economy. They study the Asian immigrants and how they supplied a new supply of labor during the building of the transcontinental railroad, agriculture and industry. Fourth grade students learn about the daily lives, adventures, and accomplishments of all its different cultures and how this energy formed the state and shaped its history.

FIFTH GRADE

The course for grade five presents the story of the development of the nation, with emphasis on the period up to 1850. It focuses on the creation of a new nation and how the waves of immigrants from all parts of the globe brought their traditions to this country. Students examine the major pre-Columbian settlements, the European Explorers and the early settling of the Colonies. Next, they study the causes of the Revolutionary War and the major battles, including the surrender at Yorktown. They also learn about the daily lives of those who built the young republic under the new Constitution. The year ends with students examining the beginning of the pioneer settlements.

Middle School Course Descriptions

6TH GRADE - ANCIENT WORLD HISTORY

The 6th grade year is a study of ancient world history and geography. Students study the development of world civilizations in the Eastern Hemisphere, beginning with Early Humankind and the Neolithic Revolution through the development of the first major civilizations. All units include an examination of the impact of economics, politics, and social history on the developing world. The five themes of geography (location, movement, region,

place, and human-environmental interaction) are woven into all the units, with emphasis on how geography affected the development of these civilizations. Students will learn about related careers in history/social science.

7TH GRADE - MEDIEVAL WORLD HISTORY

The 7th grade year is a study of world history and geography during the medieval and early modern eras. Students study the development and changes of complex civilizations. They identify and explore the similarities and patterns of these civilizations. Emphasis is placed on the fact that many of the civilizations developed concurrently and impacted each other. All units include an examination of the impact of religion, economics, politics, and social history on the medieval and early modern eras. The Five Themes of Geography (location, movement, region, place, and human-environmental interaction) are woven into all the units, with emphasis on how geography affected the development of these civilizations. Students will learn about related careers in history/social science.

8TH GRADE - U.S. HISTORY: GROWTH AND CONFLICT

The 8th grade year is a study of the critical events, issues, and individuals in United States History to 1880. It begins with a selective review of the Age of Exploration, the colonial period and the American Revolution. The major focus of the year is the development of the Constitution, the impact of the Westward Movement, and the struggles of the Civil War and Reconstruction. All units include an examination of the impact of economics, politics, and social history on the development of the United States. The five themes of geography (location, movement, region, place, and human-environmental interaction) are woven into all the units, with emphasis on how geography affected the development of the growing nation. Students will learn about related careers in history/social science. They will also complete their high school program and class selections as part of this course.

Middle School History Electives **- Course Descriptions**

THE GLOBAL CLASSROOM

The purpose of the Global Classroom is to offer students the affective and cognitive skills necessary to be successful in rigorous high school and college-level courses taken in high school. Students learn about current issues in order to understand the need for international diplomacy. Students realize developments tied to globalization and thus, the importance of international organizations and the law. In this vein, students consider the purposes of intergovernmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and multinational corporations. In addition, students describe the global economy and their relationship to world trade and global resource management. Students identify, explore, and evaluate the major causes of international conflict post, as well as human rights issues. Students examine international security and the use of military force as a tool for establishing and maintaining global security. Furthermore, students synthesize their learnings to write a research papers, engage in a Local Forum and create a community action project.

ETHNIC STUDIES MIDDLE SCHOOL

Ethnic studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that encompasses many subject areas including history, literature, economics, sociology, anthropology, and political science. In particular, students understand the politics of privilege and the historical reasons for structural racism, classism and discrimination. Ethnic studies seeks to empower all students to engage socially and politically and to think critically about the world around them. This course highlights the experiences of people that have been traditionally marginalized in order for students to critique dominant-narratives, construct counter-narratives and develop a more complex understanding of the human experience. Through these studies, students should develop respect for cultural diversity and see the advantages of inclusion. (Description adapted from H/SS Framework 2016)

High School Course Descriptions

10TH GRADE - MODERN WORLD HISTORY

This history/social science course examines the major turning points of the modern world from approximately 1750 to the present. Components of this class include: Historical Linkage, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the Rise of Imperialism and Colonialism, World War I, Totalitarianism, World War II and Nationalism. Students should develop an understanding of the historic as well as the contemporary geographic, social, political and economic consequences of the various areas and problems they review.

11TH GRADE - U.S. HISTORY

The year begins with a review of the settlement of the colonies and the American Revolution, to westward expansion, the Civil War and Reconstruction. This should provide the students with a connection to their past learnings. Students will then examine the major turning points in American History from the Industrial Revolution through the twentieth century. Emphasis should be placed on the expanding role of the federal government and the federal courts; the balance of power between the right of the individual and states rights; and the continuing struggle between minority rights and majority power. Importance should also be placed on the emergence of a modern corporate economy, the impact of technology on American society and culture, the movements toward equal rights for racial minorities and women, and the role of the United States as a major world power.

12TH GRADE - U.S. GOVERNMENT

In this course, students apply knowledge gained in previous years of study to pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American Government. In addition, they draw on their studies of world and American history and geography and other societies to compare differences and similarities in world governmental systems today. This course is the culmination of history/social sciences classes to prepare students to solve society's problems, to understand and to participate in the governmental process, and to be a responsible citizen of the United States and the world.



12TH GRADE - ECONOMICS

The general objective of a high school economics course is for students to master fundamental economic concepts, appreciate how the principal concepts of economics relate to each other and understand the structure of economic systems. Students will use economic concepts in a reasoned, careful manner in dealing with personal, community, national and global economic issues. They will use measurement concepts and methods such as tables, charts, graphs, ratios, percentages and index numbers to understand and interpret relevant data. They should learn to make reasoned decisions on economics issues as citizens, workers, consumers, business owners, managers and members of civic groups.

Year-Long Electives

ETHNIC AND IDENTITY STUDIES

In this course, students grapple with concepts of identity, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and class. In particular, students understand the politics of privilege and the historical reasons for structural racism, classism and discrimination. Specifically, students discuss how various demographic identifiers including race, ethnicity, and gender, religion, class and sexuality influence human experiences. Students learn about the historical treatment of people from differing identity groups, as well as the ways that differing racial and ethnic identities originate by studying significant events and people. Students discuss the current issues informing the opportunities for and constraints of people associated with differing communities.

Law Courses

INTRODUCTION TO LAW

Introduction to Law introduces students to the U.S. legal system, including constitutional, criminal, and civil law. Students learn about legal concepts, historical foundations, and principles and procedures of law, experiencing law and justice as dynamic forces, shaped by people and events over time.

Students understand the role of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, learning why and how laws are created, enforced, interpreted, and changed. They look at the relationship between law, public policy, and advocacy at the federal, state, and local levels of government. They learn the foundations of criminal law with a focus on crimes against the person and the foundations of civil law with a focus on strict product liability and negligence. Finally, students explore civil and human rights issues and the role of advocacy and civics in reforming our legal system.

At the center of each unit in the course is a Key Assignment that involves substantial reading, critical thinking, collaborating, writing, listening, and speaking. Students participate in simulations, mock trials, multimedia presentations, Socratic seminars, and debates. In addition, throughout the year, students explore legal, public service, and criminal justice career pathways through interaction with industry professionals.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND LAW

The Criminal Justice and Law curriculum provide students with an overview of the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Throughout the course, they will explore the meaning of crime and justice, and the relationship between criminal justice and social justice. Students will learn how and why the criminal justice system functions. Students will explore diverse areas of criminal law, constitutional and civil rights, and how the system functions for adults and juveniles. Students will apply critical thinking and problem solving techniques by researching historical and political causes for legal issues and present on findings to essential questions, work in teams to analyze, reason, negotiate and develop questions for further study. Students will examine how the U.S. legal system compares with legal and political systems, philosophies, and practices of other countries. Students will learn about advocacy and policy by researching how individuals and groups, including young people, can take action to reform our legal system.

JUSTICE IN AMERICA

Justice in America is a course designed to provide students with the necessary skills and content knowledge in American Government to pursue a career in the government services and legal sectors, as well as become informed, active citizens in their respective communities. Students will understand the principles on which the United States was founded, the



structure of government at the federal, state and local levels, the individual and civil liberties needed to maintain a democratic society, and the way in which order is maintained through law enforcement and the judiciary.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

In this course, students explore multiple definitions of social justice and methods used to promote social change. Students begin by evaluating how self and group identities shape individual perception and communities by investigating social identities and the agents of socialization. Students evaluate power dynamics by analyzing the distribution of wealth and power. Students investigate how public policy is developed to identify how lawmakers, community organizations, lobbyists, and popular movements shape policy and create a platform to affect social change. Students examine the historical importance and the contemporary relevance of struggles to overcome inequality and injustice. Students apply their understanding of social justice by identifying existing issues present in their own school and community. Students evaluate emerging social justice movements on a local, state, national, and global level by studying social justice issues, movements, pedagogy, and case studies. This course will consider the impact that the arts and social movements have on each other. Historical and theoretical materials will be contextualized by guest lectures, collaborations with local organizations, discussions, and performances by local artists, social justice advocates, lawyers, and community workers. Students will learn skills to proactively address issues of social justice, focusing on effective group and inter-group communication and organizing, development and implementation of action plans, linked learning projects, participation in discussion via community building circles, the critique of media, research, analysis of statistics with meaningful reflection.

One-Semester Electives

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Students learn about the origins of the International State system and the need for international diplomacy. Students realize developments tied to globalization and thus, the importance of international organizations and the law. In this vein, students consider the purposes of intergovernmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations, non-

governmental organizations, and multinational corporations. In addition, students describe the global economy, global finance, international monetary structure and their relationship to world trade and global resource management. Students evaluate free trade and economic aid in the context of actions of multinational corporations, international cartels, and international organizations. Furthermore, students identify, explore, and evaluate the major causes of international conflict post World War II. Lastly students examine international security and the use of military force as a tool for establishing and maintaining global security.

GEOGRAPHY

Geography is the study of the world, its physical features and its human inhabitants. In this course, teachers suggest questions to explore our planet and provide students with a framework to study the Earth. Students will study physical, cultural, political and economic Geography. Students apply an understanding of the five themes of Geography, which include location, place, region, movement and human-environmental interaction. The first unit in the course focuses on location, place and region, while units two through five emphasize movement and human-environmental interaction.

PSYCHOLOGY

In this course, students are introduced to the discipline of psychology as they learn about various careers associated with this field of study. The focus of this course of study is on human development, personality, psychological disorders and treatment, biological reasons for human behavior as well as scientific research. Students study such topics as influences of heredity and environment on personality, abnormal behavior, biopsychology and experimental design. They examine case studies to evaluate psychological perspectives and choose possible treatments. In addition, students create their own scientific problem for study in order to synthesize research methods and questions important to psychology scholars.

