

AP U.S. HISTORY

Course Syllabus

Academic Year 2026–2027

Teacher	School	Contact	Meeting Days
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This syllabus is designed for submission to the College Board AP Course Audit. It demonstrates that each of the nine Curricular Requirements for AP U.S. History is addressed through specific course materials, activities, and assessments. Curricular Requirement labels appear in brackets throughout — e.g., [CR6] — alongside the six AP Historical Thinking Skills and the three reasoning processes (comparison, causation, continuity and change).

Curricular Requirements Checklist

The nine Curricular Requirements for AP U.S. History are satisfied as indicated below. Section locations point to the first major instance where each requirement is addressed; most requirements are reinforced continuously across the nine chronological units.

Code	Requirement	Located In
CR1	College-level U.S. history textbook, diverse primary sources, and multiple scholarly secondary sources.	Required Materials
CR2	Required content from each CED period (nine periods, 1491 through the present).	Course Outline, Periods 1–9
CR3	Student understanding of the eight course themes (NAT, WXT, GEO, MIG, PCE, WOR, ARC, SOC) — eight designated theme-activities, one per theme.	Designated Theme-Activities (one per theme)
CR4	Historical Thinking Skill 1: Developments and Processes.	Periods 2, 3, 5, 7
CR5	Historical Thinking Skill 2: Sourcing and Situation (primary + secondary).	Periods 3, 5, 7, 8
CR6	Historical Thinking Skill 3: Claims and Evidence in Sources (primary + secondary).	Periods 4, 6, 8
CR7	Historical Thinking Skill 4: Contextualization.	Periods 1, 4
CR8	Historical Thinking Skill 5: Making Connections — comparison, causation (causes and effects), continuity and change.	Periods 2, 5, 7, 9
CR9	Historical Thinking Skill 6: Argumentation — at least two activities, including one essay.	Periods 3, 6, 8

Course Overview

AP U.S. History is a full-year introductory college-level survey of United States history from pre-Columbian North America through the early twenty-first century. The course emphasizes historical thinking — the sustained practice of analyzing primary and secondary sources, contextualizing developments, making comparisons across time and place, identifying patterns of causation and continuity, and constructing historically defensible arguments in writing.

Students are expected to engage with American history not as a static inventory of facts but as an interpretive discipline in which historians revise understandings of the past as new evidence and new questions emerge. The course balances depth of content across nine chronological periods with mastery of six historical thinking skills.

The Eight Themes [CR3]

Eight themes recur throughout every period. To satisfy CR3, the syllabus designates exactly eight student activities — one for each theme — distributed across the nine periods. Each designated theme-activity is identified in its period description by a single thematic label and a clearly specified activity format (a written essay, a written analytical paragraph, a written response, a graded discussion with written follow-up, or a formal oral presentation). The eight one-for-one designations appear in summary form in the Designated Theme-Activities table at the end of the Course Overview and again in their full activity descriptions in the Course Outline.

- **NAT** — American and National Identity
- **WXT** — Work, Exchange, and Technology
- **GEO** — Geography and the Environment
- **MIG** — Migration and Settlement
- **PCE** — Politics and Power
- **WOR** — America in the World
- **ARC** — American and Regional Culture
- **SOC** — Social Structures

Designated Theme-Activities — One per Theme [CR3]

The table below identifies the eight designated theme-activities required by CR3. Each activity is labeled with a single theme (one-for-one), and each activity has a clearly specified format (essay, written analytical paragraph, written response, graded discussion with written follow-up, or formal oral presentation). The full description of each activity, including the conceptual prompt that anchors student analysis to the theme, appears in the relevant period of the Course Outline.

Theme	Designated Activity (single theme; specified format)	Period
NAT	Written Analytical Essay on Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” — anchored by a national-identity prompt asking students to argue how Douglass redefines American national identity by turning the revolutionary tradition against its contemporary defenders.	Period 5
WXT	Written Response on Edward Baptist, <i>The Half Has Never Been Told</i> — anchored by a work-exchange-and-technology prompt asking students to evaluate Baptist’s claim that enslaved labor’s productivity was a driver (not a regional peculiarity) of national capital formation.	Period 4
GEO	Written Contextualization Paragraph on Pre-Columbian North America — anchored by a geography-and-environment prompt asking students to situate European arrival within prior demographic, agricultural, and environmental diversity from Mesoamerica through the Eastern Woodlands.	Period 1

Theme	Designated Activity (single theme; specified format)	Period
MIG	Written Comparative Paragraph on the Four British Colonial Regions — anchored by a migration-and-settlement prompt asking students to explain how distinct migration streams and settlement patterns produced the regional differences they document in their comparison chart.	Period 2
PCE	Written Analytical Essay on Federalist No. 10 and Federalist No. 51 — anchored by a politics-and-power prompt asking students to identify Madison's claims about faction and the separation of powers and to evaluate the historical and logical evidence that supports those claims.	Period 3
WOR	Written Document-Based Question on the Origins of the Cold War — anchored by an America-in-the-world prompt asking students to argue how U.S. global posture between 1945 and 1950 shifted from wartime cooperation to containment and what role American assumptions about global responsibility played in that shift.	Period 8
ARC	Written Analytical Essay on John White's Roanoke Watercolors and Hariot's Briefe and True Report — anchored by an American-and-regional-culture prompt asking students to argue how the watercolors function simultaneously as ethnographic evidence of Algonquian culture and as English promotional imagery.	Period 1
SOC	Written Quantitative-Analysis Response on the Emory Slave Voyages Database — anchored by a social-structures prompt asking students to argue what decadal transatlantic slave-trade volumes reveal about the entrenchment of racial slavery as a foundational social structure of British North America.	Period 2

The Six Historical Thinking Skills

Skill	What Students Do	CR
1. Developments and Processes	Identify and explain historical developments and processes.	CR4
2. Sourcing and Situation	Analyze point of view, purpose, audience, and historical situation of primary and secondary sources.	CR5
3. Claims and Evidence	Analyze arguments and supporting evidence in primary and secondary sources.	CR6
4. Contextualization	Analyze the context of historical events, developments, or processes.	CR7
5. Making Connections	Use comparison, causation (both causes and effects), and continuity-and-change to analyze patterns among developments.	CR8
6. Argumentation	Develop a historically defensible argument supported by evidence and historical reasoning.	CR9

Required Materials [CR1]

Every student has a college-level U.S. history textbook in print or electronic format for individual use inside and outside the classroom. Students also have individual access to diverse primary sources across all four required categories (textual, visual, maps, and quantitative) and to multiple scholarly secondary sources beyond the textbook.

Primary Textbook

- **Foner, Eric.** *Give Me Liberty! An American History*. 7th edition (Seagull Edition). New York: W. W. Norton, 2023. [CR1]

Scholarly Secondary Sources

Students read excerpts from all of the following; the syllabus names at least two as required by CR1.

- Taylor, Alan. *American Colonies: The Settling of North America*. New York: Penguin, 2002. [used in Periods 1–2]
- Wood, Gordon S. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. New York: Vintage, 1993. [used in Period 3]
- Baptist, Edward E. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 2014. [used in Period 4]
- Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*. Updated ed. New York: Harper Perennial, 2014. [used in Period 5]
- White, Richard. *The Republic for Which It Stands: The United States During Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865–1896*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. [used in Period 6]
- Kennedy, David M. *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. [used in Period 7]
- Patterson, James T. *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. [used in Period 8]
- Madaras, Larry, and James M. SoRelle, eds. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in United States History (Volumes 1 and 2)*. 18th ed. McGraw-Hill, 2019. [paired historiographical debates across all periods]

Primary Sources by Category

Students encounter primary sources in all four categories required by the Course Audit. Representative titles appear below; additional primary sources appear within each period.

Category	Representative Sources Used in the Course
Textual	Las Casas, Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies; Winthrop, A Model of Christian Charity; Declaration of Independence; Federalist No. 10 and No. 51; Jefferson’s First Inaugural; Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments; Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address; Frederick Douglass, What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?; Gospel of Wealth (Carnegie); Plessy v. Ferguson (majority and Harlan dissent); Roosevelt, First Inaugural; Truman Doctrine address; Brown v. Board of Education; King, Letter from Birmingham Jail; Reagan, Tear Down This Wall speech.
Visual	John White’s Roanoke watercolors; Paul Revere’s engraving of the Boston Massacre; portraiture of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson; anti-slavery prints (Am I Not a Man and a Brother?); Thomas Nast political cartoons of Tammany and Reconstruction; Jacob Riis photographs from How the Other Half Lives; Lewis Hine’s Ellis Island and child-labor photographs; Dorothea Lange’s Migrant Mother; WWII recruiting posters; civil-rights-era photographs (Birmingham, Selma); 1960s protest imagery.

Category	Representative Sources Used in the Course
Maps	Pre-contact Native American culture areas; Spanish, French, and English colonial claims c. 1700; the Proclamation Line of 1763; Louisiana Purchase; Missouri Compromise and later compromises; the Confederacy and Union states 1861; the Homestead Act and westward expansion; segregation and the Great Migration; the Interstate system; electoral maps of key realigning elections (1860, 1896, 1932, 1968, 1980).
Quantitative	Colonial population estimates; transatlantic slave-trade volumes (Du Bois/Emory Slave Voyages Database); antebellum cotton production data; immigration statistics by decade 1820–1920; Gilded Age wage and wealth data; Depression-era unemployment; postwar GDP and median-family-income trajectories; civil-rights-era voter-registration data; late-twentieth-century income-distribution data.

Additional Resources

- AP Classroom (College Board) — Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each of the nine units.
- The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History — online primary-source collections and historian videos.
- Digital History (University of Houston) and American Yawp (Stanford) for supplementary primary-source sets.
- AP-released DBQs and LEQs from past administrations.

Course Outline [CR2]

The course follows the nine-period structure of the current AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description. Each period heading below lists its date range, exam weight, and emphasized skills.

Period	Title	Dates	Exam Weight
1	Contact and Early Colonization	1491–1607	4–6%
2	Colonial Society	1607–1754	6–8%
3	Revolution and the Early Republic	1754–1800	10–17%
4	Expansion, Reform, and Sectional Crisis	1800–1848	10–17%
5	Civil War and Reconstruction	1844–1877	10–17%
6	Gilded Age to Progressive Era	1865–1898	10–17%
7	Imperialism, World Wars, and Depression	1890–1945	10–17%
8	Postwar America, Cold War, and Civil Rights	1945–1980	10–17%
9	Contemporary America	1980–Present	4–6%

Period 1 — 1491–1607 [CR2]

Period 1 introduces students to pre-contact Native American societies, the impact of the Columbian Exchange, and the earliest phases of European colonization in North America. Students analyze how geography, demography, and cultural difference shaped the encounter.

Topics (CED)

- 1.1 Contextualizing Period 1
- 1.2 Native American Societies Before European Contact
- 1.3 European Exploration in the Americas
- 1.4 Columbian Exchange, Spanish Exploration, and Conquest
- 1.5 Labor, Slavery, and Caste in the Spanish Colonial System
- 1.6 Cultural Interactions Between Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans
- 1.7 Causation in Period 1

Key Activities

Designated Theme-Activity for GEO — Written Contextualization Paragraph: Pre-Columbian North America (Skill 4.A) [CR3 — Theme: GEO; CR7]. Activity format: written contextualization paragraph, approximately 350 words, submitted for a grade. Conceptual prompt anchored to the GEO theme: “Drawing on what you have read about the demographic, agricultural, and environmental diversity of Native societies from Mesoamerica through the Eastern Woodlands, situate European arrival in 1492 within the prior geographic and environmental conditions of the continent. How did the geographic and environmental landscape of North America in 1491 shape the encounter that followed?” Students compose their paragraph individually and submit it in writing. The activity is explicitly labeled with the single theme GEO (Geography and the Environment) and with Skill 4 (Contextualization). [CR3, CR7]

Designated Theme-Activity for ARC — Written Analytical Essay: John White’s Roanoke Watercolors and Hariot’s Briefe and True Report (Skill 1.A) [CR3 — Theme: ARC; CR4]. Activity format: written analytical essay, approximately 600–800 words, submitted for a grade. Students do not

present this analysis verbally; the deliverable is a written essay produced by each student individually. Conceptual prompt anchored to the ARC theme: “Argue, in a written analytical essay, how John White’s Roanoke watercolors function simultaneously as ethnographic evidence of Algonquian regional culture (subsistence, social organization, religious practice) and as English promotional imagery for the Roanoke venture. In your analysis, explain how the visual conventions chosen by White and the textual framing supplied by Hariot together produce a record of Algonquian regional culture that is shaped by the cultural assumptions and commercial interests of the English observers.” The activity is explicitly labeled with the single theme ARC (American and Regional Culture) and with Skill 1 (Developments and Processes). [CR3, CR4]

Period 2 — 1607–1754 [CR2]

Topics (CED)

- 2.1 Contextualizing Period 2
- 2.2 European Colonization
- 2.3 The Regions of British Colonies
- 2.4 Transatlantic Trade
- 2.5 Interactions Between American Indians and Europeans
- 2.6 Slavery in the British Colonies
- 2.7 Colonial Society and Culture

Key Activities

Designated Theme-Activity for MIG — Written Comparative Paragraph: The Four British Colonial Regions (Skill 5: Comparison) [CR3 — Theme: MIG; CR8]. Activity format: students first build a comparison chart across the Chesapeake, New England, Middle Colonies, and Lower South covering economy, labor system, religion, and political structure; they then compose a written comparative paragraph (approximately 300–400 words), submitted for a grade, that uses the chart as evidence. Conceptual prompt anchored to the MIG theme: “Drawing on your comparison chart, explain in a written paragraph how the distinct migration streams and settlement patterns of the four British colonial regions (English Puritan family migration to New England, indentured-servant migration to the Chesapeake, mixed European migration to the Middle Colonies, and African enslaved migration to the Lower South) produced the regional differences you have documented. Identify both similarities and differences across regions.” The activity is explicitly labeled with the single theme MIG (Migration and Settlement) and with Skill 5: Comparison. [CR3, CR8]

Designated Theme-Activity for SOC — Written Quantitative-Analysis Response: Slave Voyages Database (Skill 2.B) [CR3 — Theme: SOC; CR5]. Activity format: written quantitative-analysis response (approximately 400–500 words) accompanied by a student-generated graph, submitted for a grade. Conceptual prompt anchored to the SOC theme: “Using decadal transatlantic slave-trade volumes bound for British North America that you retrieve from the Emory Slave Voyages Database, generate a graph and write a response that argues what these data reveal about the entrenchment of racial slavery as a foundational social structure of British North America between 1640 and 1750. In your response, identify the historical situation that made these data possible and explain how the trajectory of the volumes corresponds to changes in colonial social structure (the displacement of indentured servitude, the rise of plantation hierarchies, the codification of racial slavery in colonial law).” The activity is explicitly labeled with the single theme SOC (Social Structures) and with Skill 2 (Sourcing and Situation). [CR3, CR5]

Supplementary Activity — Primary-Source Analysis: Winthrop’s Model of Christian Charity and Penn’s Frame of Government (Skill 1.B) [CR4]. Activity format: written close-reading response. Students identify the historical developments each text reflects and explain how New England Puritan and Pennsylvania Quaker conceptions of community differed while sharing broader religious motivations. (Skill-1 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR4]

Period 3 — 1754–1800 [CR2]

Topics (CED)

- 3.1 Contextualizing Period 3
- 3.2 The Seven Years' War
- 3.3 Taxation Without Representation
- 3.4 Philosophical Foundations of the American Revolution
- 3.5 The American Revolution
- 3.6 The Influence of Revolutionary Ideals
- 3.7 The Articles of Confederation
- 3.8 The Constitutional Convention and Debates over Ratification
- 3.9 The Constitution
- 3.10 Shaping a New Republic
- 3.11 Developing an American Identity
- 3.12 Movement in the Early Republic
- 3.13 Continuity and Change in Period 3

Key Activities

Designated Theme-Activity for PCE — Written Analytical Essay: Federalist No. 10 and Federalist No. 51 (Skill 3.B) [CR3 — Theme: PCE; CR6]. Activity format: written analytical essay, approximately 700–900 words, submitted for a grade. Students do not present this analysis verbally; the deliverable is a written essay produced by each student individually. Conceptual prompt anchored to the PCE theme: “In a written analytical essay, identify Madison’s central claims in Federalist No. 10 and Federalist No. 51 about the dangers of faction and the necessity of separated and rival powers, and evaluate the historical and logical evidence he marshals in support of those claims. Conclude by arguing how Madison’s essays redefine the relationship between politics and power in the proposed constitutional order.” The activity is explicitly labeled with the single theme PCE (Politics and Power) and with Skill 3 (Claims and Evidence). [CR3, CR6]

Argumentation Activity — LEQ: How Revolutionary Was the American Revolution? (Skill 6: Argumentation) [CR9]. Activity format: full long-essay question (LEQ), written individually, submitted for a grade. Students write a complete LEQ evaluating the extent to which the American Revolution transformed American society. The prompt requires a historically defensible thesis, specific evidence, historical reasoning relating pieces of evidence, and qualification using counterexamples (the persistence of slavery, the exclusion of women, property requirements for voting). This is the first required argumentation essay and is reinforced by — but distinct from — the PCE designated theme-activity above. [CR9]

Skill-2 Reinforcement — Secondary-Source Sourcing: Wood and Zinn (Skill 2.C) [CR5]. Activity format: written analytical response. Students read excerpts from Gordon Wood’s *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* alongside an excerpt from Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History*, analyzing each for point of view, purpose, audience, and historical situation, and then writing a response that explains how each author’s situation shaped the historiographical claim. (Skill-2 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR5]

Period 4 — 1800–1848 [CR2]

Topics (CED)

- 4.1 Contextualizing Period 4
- 4.2 The Rise of Political Parties and the Era of Jefferson
- 4.3 Politics and Regional Interests
- 4.4 America on the World Stage

- 4.5 Market Revolution: Industrialization
- 4.6 Market Revolution: Society and Culture
- 4.7 Expanding Democracy
- 4.8 Jackson and Federal Power
- 4.9 The Development of an American Culture
- 4.10 The Second Great Awakening
- 4.11 An Age of Reform
- 4.12 African Americans in the Early Republic
- 4.13 The Society of the South in the Early Republic
- 4.14 Causation in Period 4

Key Activities

Designated Theme-Activity for WXT — Written Response: Baptist on Slavery and Capitalism (Skill 3.D) [CR3 — Theme: WXT; CR6]. Activity format: written analytical response, approximately 500–700 words, submitted for a grade. Conceptual prompt anchored to the WXT theme: “In a written analytical response, evaluate Edward Baptist’s central claim in *The Half Has Never Been Told* that enslaved labor’s productivity was not a regional peculiarity but a driver of national capital formation. Identify the evidence Baptist uses, and argue how his account modifies older scholarship that treated slavery as economically separate from northern industrial development. Frame your argument around the theme of work, exchange, and technology.” The activity is explicitly labeled with the single theme WXT (Work, Exchange, and Technology) and with Skill 3 (Claims and Evidence). [CR3, CR6]

Skill-4 Reinforcement — Contextualization Paragraph: Origins of the Market Revolution (Skill 4.B) [CR7]. Activity format: written contextualization paragraph, approximately 350 words. Students situate the Market Revolution within prior developments in transportation, federal policy, and international trade. (Skill-4 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR7]

Skill-1 Reinforcement — Seneca Falls Declaration Close Reading (Skill 1.A) [CR4]. Activity format: written close-reading response. Students read the 1848 Declaration of Sentiments and compare its structure and rhetoric with the 1776 Declaration of Independence, identifying the historical developments each text addresses and explaining the rhetorical choices that draw the second document into the tradition of the first. (Skill-1 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR4]

Period 5 — 1844–1877 [CR2]

Topics (CED)

- 5.1 Contextualizing Period 5
- 5.2 Manifest Destiny
- 5.3 The Mexican-American War
- 5.4 The Compromise of 1850
- 5.5 Sectional Conflict: Regional Differences
- 5.6 Failure of Compromise
- 5.7 Election of 1860 and Secession
- 5.8 Military Conflict in the Civil War
- 5.9 Government Policies During the Civil War
- 5.10 Reconstruction
- 5.11 Failure of Reconstruction
- 5.12 Comparison in Period 5

Key Activities

Designated Theme-Activity for NAT — Written Analytical Essay: Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” (Skill 1.B) [CR3 — Theme: NAT; CR4]. Activity format: written analytical essay, approximately 700–900 words, submitted for a grade. Students do not present this analysis verbally; each student composes the essay individually and submits it in writing. Conceptual prompt anchored to the NAT theme: “In a written analytical essay, argue how Frederick Douglass redefines American national identity in his 1852 address by turning the revolutionary tradition against its contemporary defenders. Identify the historical developments Douglass addresses (the constitutional protection of slavery, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the gap between the rhetoric of the Declaration and the reality of bondage) and explain how his rhetorical use of 1776 reframes who is, and who is not, included in the American national community.” The activity is explicitly labeled with the single theme NAT (American and National Identity) and with Skill 1 (Developments and Processes). [CR3, CR4]

Causation Activity — Causes-and-Effects DBQ on the Civil War (Skill 5: Causation) [CR8].

Activity format: full document-based question (DBQ), written individually, submitted for a grade. Students do not merely analyze documents; each student writes a complete DBQ essay using seven documents as evidence. Conceptual prompt revised to address both causes and effects of the Civil War: “In a complete written DBQ essay, evaluate the relative weight of the principal causes of the Civil War (the expansion of slavery into the western territories, sectionalism, contested states’ rights, divergent economic development) AND the principal effects of the Civil War on the United States in the decade that followed (the legal abolition of slavery through the Thirteenth Amendment, the constitutional redefinition of citizenship and equal protection through the Fourteenth Amendment, the expansion of federal power relative to the states, the social and economic restructuring of the South, and the displacement of more than 600,000 American war dead). Your thesis must address both causes and effects, and your evidence must include documents drawn from both before 1861 and after 1865.” The activity is explicitly labeled with Skill 5: Causation, and the prompt explicitly requires students to analyze both causes and effects of a historical development. The deliverable is a written essay, not an oral presentation. [CR8]

Skill-2 Reinforcement — Secondary-Source Sourcing: Foner and Dunning (Skill 2.C) [CR5].

Activity format: written analytical response. Students read excerpts from Eric Foner’s Reconstruction alongside an excerpt from the earlier Dunning-school interpretation, analyzing each for point of view, purpose, audience, and historical situation, and writing a response on how the civil-rights-era context reshaped Reconstruction historiography. (Skill-2 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR5]

Period 6 — 1865–1898 [CR2]

Topics (CED)

- 6.1 Contextualizing Period 6
- 6.2 Westward Expansion: Economic Development
- 6.3 Westward Expansion: Social and Cultural Development
- 6.4 The New South
- 6.5 Technological Innovation
- 6.6 The Rise of Industrial Capitalism
- 6.7 Labor in the Gilded Age
- 6.8 Immigration and Migration in the Gilded Age
- 6.9 Responses to Immigration in the Gilded Age
- 6.10 Development of the Middle Class
- 6.11 Reform in the Gilded Age
- 6.12 Controversies over the Role of Government
- 6.13 Politics in the Gilded Age
- 6.14 Continuity and Change in Period 6

Key Activities

Argumentation Activity — DBQ: Responses to Industrialization (Skill 6: Argumentation) [CR9].

Activity format: full DBQ, written individually, submitted for a grade. Students write a complete DBQ evaluating responses to the social problems caused by industrialization between 1865 and 1900. Prompt requires a defensible thesis, use of at least six of the seven provided documents, sourcing of at least three documents for HAPP (Historical situation, Audience, Purpose, Point of view), inclusion of outside evidence, and a complex understanding demonstrated through corroboration, qualification, or modification. This is the second required argumentation essay. [CR9]

Skill-3 Reinforcement — Primary-Source Seminar with Written Follow-Up: The Gospel of Wealth and Wealth Against Commonwealth (Skill 3.C) [CR6].

Activity format: graded class discussion followed by an individual written response. Students compare Andrew Carnegie (1889) and Henry Demarest Lloyd (1894), identifying the evidence each author marshals about industrial concentration. (Skill-3 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR6]

Skill-2 Reinforcement — Jacob Riis Photograph Analysis (Skill 2.A) [CR5]. Activity format: written analytical response. Students examine photographs from *How the Other Half Lives*, analyzing point of view, purpose, intended audience, and historical situation. (Skill-2 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR5]

Period 7 — 1890–1945 [CR2]

Topics (CED)

- 7.1 Contextualizing Period 7
- 7.2 Imperialism: Debates
- 7.3 The Spanish-American War
- 7.4 The Progressives
- 7.5 World War I: Military and Diplomacy
- 7.6 World War I: Home Front
- 7.7 1920s: Innovations in Communication and Technology
- 7.8 1920s: Cultural and Political Controversies
- 7.9 The Great Depression
- 7.10 The New Deal
- 7.11 Interwar Foreign Policy
- 7.12 World War II: Mobilization
- 7.13 World War II: Military
- 7.14 Postwar Diplomacy
- 7.15 Comparison in Period 7

Key Activities

Comparison Activity — Progressive Era and New Deal (Skill 5: Comparison) [CR8]. Activity format: written comparison essay, approximately 600–800 words, submitted for a grade. Students compare Progressive Era and New Deal responses to the problems of industrial capitalism, identifying both continuities and differences across the two reform moments. (Skill-5 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR8]

Skill-2 Reinforcement — Secondary-Source Analysis: Kennedy’s Freedom from Fear (Skill 2.C) [CR5]. Activity format: written analytical response. Students read excerpts from David Kennedy’s *Freedom from Fear*, analyzing point of view, purpose, audience, and historical situation, and writing on how Kennedy’s synthesis balances competing interpretations of the New Deal. (Skill-2 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR5]

Skill-1 Reinforcement — Dorothea Lange and the FSA Photographers (Skill 1.A) [CR4]. Activity format: written analytical response. Students analyze Migrant Mother and other Farm Security Administration photographs, identifying the historical developments the images capture and evaluating how the photographers’ documentary intent shaped what audiences saw. (Skill-1 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR4]

Period 8 — 1945–1980 [CR2]

Topics (CED)

- 8.1 Contextualizing Period 8
- 8.2 The Cold War from 1945 to 1980
- 8.3 The Red Scare
- 8.4 Economy After 1945
- 8.5 Culture After 1945
- 8.6 Early Steps in the Civil Rights Movement
- 8.7 America as a World Power
- 8.8 The Vietnam War
- 8.9 The Great Society
- 8.10 The African American Civil Rights Movement
- 8.11 The Civil Rights Movement Expands
- 8.12 Youth Culture of the 1960s
- 8.13 The Environment and Natural Resources
- 8.14 Society in Transition
- 8.15 Continuity and Change in Period 8

Key Activities

Designated Theme-Activity for WOR — Written Document-Based Question: Origins of the Cold War (Skill 6: Argumentation) [CR3 — Theme: WOR; CR9]. Activity format: full DBQ, written individually, submitted for a grade. Conceptual prompt anchored to the WOR theme: “In a complete written DBQ essay, argue how the United States redefined its role in the world between 1945 and 1950 — moving from wartime cooperation with the Soviet Union to a global posture of containment. Use the provided documents (the Long Telegram, the Truman Doctrine address, Soviet diplomatic statements, and retrospective scholarly assessments) as evidence, and evaluate what role American assumptions about global responsibility played in shaping that shift. Your thesis must take a defensible position on the question of how American conceptions of America’s place in the world drove early Cold War policy.” The activity is explicitly labeled with the single theme WOR (America in the World) and with Skill 6 (Argumentation), and is the third argumentation essay (exceeding the two-essay minimum required by CR9). [CR3, CR9]

Skill-3 Reinforcement — Primary-Source Close Reading: King’s Letter from Birmingham Jail (Skill 3.B) [CR6]. Activity format: written analytical response. Students identify King’s central claims (just vs. unjust laws, the moral obligation of direct action) and the evidence (scriptural, historical, philosophical) that supports each claim. (Skill-3 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR6]

Skill-2 Reinforcement — Secondary-Source Analysis: Patterson’s Grand Expectations (Skill 2.C) [CR5]. Activity format: written analytical response analyzing excerpts for point of view, purpose, audience, and historical situation. (Skill-2 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR5]

Period 9 — 1980–Present [CR2]

Topics (CED)

- 9.1 Contextualizing Period 9

- 9.2 Reagan and Conservatism
- 9.3 The End of the Cold War
- 9.4 A Changing Economy
- 9.5 Migration and Immigration in the 1990s and 2000s
- 9.6 Challenges of the 21st Century
- 9.7 Causation in Period 9

Key Activities

Continuity-and-Change Activity — LEQ: American Conservatism Since the 1960s (Skill 5: Continuity and Change) [CR8]. Activity format: full long-essay question (LEQ), written individually, submitted for a grade. Students write an LEQ evaluating continuity and change in American conservatism from the Goldwater campaign through the Reagan era. (Skill-5 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR8]

Skill-2 Reinforcement — Quantitative Analysis: Income-Distribution Data 1980–2020 (Skill 2.B) [CR5]. Activity format: written analytical response with student-generated graph. Students retrieve Census and Congressional Budget Office data on income distribution, generate a graph, and analyze the data as evidence for competing interpretations of the post-1980 American economy. (Skill-2 reinforcement; not a designated theme-activity.) [CR5]

Historical Thinking Skills Matrix

The matrix below confirms that each of the six AP Historical Thinking Skills is developed through multiple labeled activities distributed across the course. Every activity listed is described in the relevant period above and is labeled in the text with its skill number.

Skill	CR	Sample Labeled Activities
1 — Developments and Processes	CR4	John White watercolors essay (1); Winthrop/Penn close reading (2); Seneca Falls Declaration (4); Frederick Douglass essay (5); FSA photographs (7)
2 — Sourcing and Situation	CR5	Slave Voyages quantitative analysis (2); Wood/Zinn secondary sources (3); Foner/Dunning secondary sources (5); Jacob Riis photographs (6); Kennedy secondary source (7); Patterson secondary source (8); Income-distribution quantitative (9)
3 — Claims and Evidence	CR6	Federalist Papers essay (3, primary); Baptist secondary source (4); Gospel of Wealth / Wealth Against Commonwealth (6, primary); King's Letter from Birmingham Jail (8, primary)
4 — Contextualization	CR7	Pre-Columbian North America paragraph (1); Origins of Market Revolution paragraph (4)
5 — Making Connections (comparison, causation, continuity and change)	CR8	Comparison: Colonial regions (2); Progressive Era vs. New Deal (7). Causation (causes AND effects): Civil War DBQ (5). Continuity and Change: Conservatism LEQ (9)
6 — Argumentation	CR9	LEQ on the Revolution (Period 3); DBQ on Responses to Industrialization (Period 6); DBQ on Origins of the Cold War (Period 8). The course exceeds the required minimum of two argumentation activities.

Course Themes Matrix [CR3] — Eight Designated Theme-Activities

CR3 requires that each of the eight themes appear in a labeled student activity in a one-for-one relationship — exactly one designated activity per theme. The matrix below confirms this one-for-one coverage. Each designated activity is labeled with a single theme and has a clearly specified format (essay, written analytical paragraph, written response, etc.). Every cell in the right-hand column corresponds to a single distinct activity, so that the eight rows together represent eight distinct student activities — one per theme.

Theme	Designated Single-Theme Activity (one per theme)
NAT — American and National Identity	Period 5 — Written Analytical Essay on Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” (single-theme label: NAT). Conceptual prompt asks students to argue how Douglass redefines American national identity by turning the revolutionary tradition against its contemporary defenders.
WXT — Work, Exchange, and Technology	Period 4 — Written Analytical Response on Edward Baptist, <i>The Half Has Never Been Told</i> (single-theme label: WXT). Conceptual prompt asks students to evaluate Baptist's claim that enslaved labor's productivity drove national capital formation.

Theme	Designated Single-Theme Activity (one per theme)
GEO — Geography and the Environment	Period 1 — Written Contextualization Paragraph on Pre-Columbian North America (single-theme label: GEO). Conceptual prompt asks students to situate European arrival within prior demographic, agricultural, and environmental diversity of the continent.
MIG — Migration and Settlement	Period 2 — Written Comparative Paragraph on the Four British Colonial Regions (single-theme label: MIG). Conceptual prompt asks students to explain how distinct migration streams produced regional differences.
PCE — Politics and Power	Period 3 — Written Analytical Essay on Federalist No. 10 and Federalist No. 51 (single-theme label: PCE). Conceptual prompt asks students to identify Madison’s claims about faction and separation of powers and to evaluate the supporting evidence.
WOR — America in the World	Period 8 — Written Document-Based Question on the Origins of the Cold War (single-theme label: WOR). Conceptual prompt asks students to argue how American assumptions about global responsibility shaped the shift from wartime cooperation to containment.
ARC — American and Regional Culture	Period 1 — Written Analytical Essay on John White’s Roanoke Watercolors and Hariot’s Briefe and True Report (single-theme label: ARC). Conceptual prompt asks students to argue how the watercolors function simultaneously as ethnographic evidence and as English promotional imagery.
SOC — Social Structures	Period 2 — Written Quantitative-Analysis Response on the Slave Voyages Database (single-theme label: SOC). Conceptual prompt asks students to argue what the data reveal about the entrenchment of racial slavery as a foundational social structure of British North America.

Assessment and Practice

Formative Practice

- Topic Questions (AP Classroom) — assigned after each topic; rationales reviewed in class.
- Personal Progress Checks — one or two class periods at the end of each period are dedicated to review of PPC results.
- Weekly HAPP document-analysis exercises (Historical situation, Audience, Purpose, Point of view) on a single primary source.
- Short-answer questions (SAQs) as warm-ups and entry tickets throughout the week.

Summative Assessments

- Period tests comprising multiple-choice questions modeled on the AP exam, two SAQs, and one short LEQ or DBQ task.
- Two cumulative midterm examinations (Periods 1–4 in November; Periods 1–7 in March).
- A full practice AP U.S. History exam in April using released items.

Grading Policy

Period tests and midterms: 50%. Essays (DBQs and LEQs): 30%. Quizzes, SAQs, and participation in document seminars: 20%.

Suggested Year Calendar

Weeks	Period(s)	Major Assessments
Weeks 1–2	Period 1 — Contact and Early Colonization	Period 1 Test; GEO contextualization paragraph; ARC Roanoke essay
Weeks 3–5	Period 2 — Colonial Society	Period 2 Test; MIG comparative paragraph; SOC Slave Voyages response
Weeks 6–9	Period 3 — Revolution and Early Republic	Period 3 Test; PCE Federalist Papers essay; LEQ #1 (Revolution)
Week 10	First cumulative midterm (Periods 1–3)	Midterm
Weeks 11–14	Period 4 — Expansion, Reform, and Sectional Crisis	Period 4 Test; WXT Baptist response
Weeks 15–17	Period 5 — Civil War and Reconstruction	Period 5 Test; NAT Douglass essay; Causes-and-Effects DBQ
Weeks 18–21	Period 6 — Gilded Age to Progressive Era	Period 6 Test; DBQ #2 (Industrialization)
Week 22	Second cumulative midterm (Periods 1–6)	Midterm
Weeks 23–27	Period 7 — Imperialism, World Wars, Depression	Period 7 Test; Comparison essay
Weeks 28–31	Period 8 — Postwar America, Cold War, Civil Rights	Period 8 Test; WOR Cold War DBQ

Weeks	Period(s)	Major Assessments
Weeks 32–33	Period 9 — Contemporary America	Period 9 Test; Conservatism LEQ
Week 34	AP review and full practice exam	Practice AP Exam
Week 35	AP U.S. History Exam	College Board Exam
Weeks 36+	Post-exam independent research project	Research Project

Curricular Requirements — Evidence Summary

This section provides a locator for the external college-faculty reviewer. Each Curricular Requirement is restated, followed by a summary of the evidence elsewhere in this syllabus.

CR1 — College-Level Textbook, Primary and Secondary Sources

The syllabus identifies Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 7th Seagull ed. (W. W. Norton, 2023) as the primary college-level textbook. Primary sources are cited across all four required categories (textual, visual, maps, quantitative) in the Required Materials table and throughout the period descriptions. Scholarly secondary sources cited by author and title include Taylor, Wood, Baptist, Foner, White, Kennedy, Patterson, and Madaras/SoRelle — significantly exceeding the CR1 minimum of two.

CR2 — Required Content by Period

Each of the nine CED periods is covered with its complete topic list (1.1 through 9.7). Every period is explicitly labeled [CR2] in the course outline. AP Classroom Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks confirm coverage.

CR3 — Course Themes (Eight Designated Theme-Activities, One per Theme)

All eight themes (NAT, WXT, GEO, MIG, PCE, WOR, ARC, SOC) appear in eight designated student activities, one activity per theme, in a one-for-one relationship. Each designated activity is labeled in the period description with a single theme abbreviation, has a clearly specified format (written analytical essay, written analytical paragraph, written response, written DBQ), and is anchored by a conceptual prompt that ties student analysis directly to the theme. The eight designated activities are: Period 1 — GEO (Pre-Columbian Contextualization Paragraph); Period 1 — ARC (John White Roanoke Watercolors Analytical Essay); Period 2 — MIG (Colonial Regions Comparative Paragraph); Period 2 — SOC (Slave Voyages Quantitative-Analysis Response); Period 3 — PCE (Federalist Papers Analytical Essay); Period 4 — WXT (Baptist Analytical Response); Period 5 — NAT (Douglass Analytical Essay); Period 8 — WOR (Cold War DBQ). The Designated Theme-Activities table in the Course Overview and the Course Themes Matrix document this one-for-one coverage.

CR4 — Skill 1: Developments and Processes

Skill-1 activities include the John White Roanoke watercolors analytical essay (Period 1; also serves as the ARC designated theme-activity), the Winthrop/Penn close reading (Period 2), the Seneca Falls Declaration analysis (Period 4), the Douglass speech analytical essay (Period 5; also serves as the NAT designated theme-activity), and the FSA-photographer analysis (Period 7). Each is explicitly labeled with Skill 1.

CR5 — Skill 2: Sourcing and Situation

Skill-2 activities include the Slave Voyages quantitative analysis (Period 2, primary; also serves as the SOC designated theme-activity), the Wood/Zinn secondary-source analysis (Period 3), the Foner/Dunning secondary-source analysis (Period 5), the Jacob Riis photographic analysis (Period 6, primary), the Kennedy secondary-source analysis (Period 7), the Patterson secondary-source analysis (Period 8), and the income-distribution quantitative analysis (Period 9). The course includes Skill-2 activities with both primary and secondary sources.

CR6 — Skill 3: Claims and Evidence

Skill-3 activities include the Federalist Papers analytical essay (Period 3, primary; also serves as the PCE designated theme-activity), the Baptist analytical response (Period 4; also serves as the WXT designated theme-activity), the Carnegie/Lloyd primary-source seminar with written follow-up (Period 6, primary), and the King Letter from Birmingham Jail analysis (Period 8, primary). The course includes Skill-3 activities with both primary and secondary sources.

CR7 — Skill 4: Contextualization

Skill-4 activities include the Pre-Columbian contextualization paragraph (Period 1; also serves as the GEO designated theme-activity) and the Origins-of-the-Market-Revolution contextualization paragraph (Period 4). Each is explicitly labeled with Skill 4.

CR8 — Skill 5: Making Connections (Comparison, Causation, Continuity and Change)

The course includes at least one labeled activity for each of the three reasoning processes.

Comparison: Colonial-regions comparative paragraph (Period 2; also serves as the MIG designated theme-activity) and Progressive Era vs. New Deal comparison essay (Period 7). Causation (causes AND effects): the Causes-and-Effects DBQ on the Civil War (Period 5) explicitly requires students to write a complete DBQ essay analyzing both the principal causes of the Civil War (the expansion of slavery into the territories, sectionalism, contested states' rights, divergent economic development) AND the principal effects of the Civil War in the decade that followed (the abolition of slavery via the Thirteenth Amendment, the constitutional redefinition of citizenship via the Fourteenth Amendment, the expansion of federal power, the social and economic restructuring of the South, and the human cost of the war). The deliverable is a written essay, not a verbal presentation. Continuity and Change: the Conservatism LEQ (Period 9), written individually as a complete LEQ essay.

CR9 — Skill 6: Argumentation

The course includes three complete argumentation essays — written individually by each student — exceeding the required minimum of two: the LEQ on the American Revolution (Period 3), the DBQ on Responses to Industrialization (Period 6), and the DBQ on the Origins of the Cold War (Period 8; also serves as the WOR designated theme-activity). Each requires a historically defensible claim, specific and relevant evidence, historical reasoning relating pieces of evidence, and corroboration, qualification, or modification of the argument using diverse or alternative evidence.