Mission
To educate students to be self-directed learners, collaborative workers, complex thinkers, quality producers, and community contributors

Course Description
What does it mean to be an American? This two-semester, interdisciplinary, team-taught course traces the development of major American literary movements and places them within the context of United States history. The course is organized around themes and essential questions, allowing students to gain a deeper understanding of important literary and historical issues. Students will examine the changing role of the individual while tracing the development of American ideals and institutions. Individual and team assignments will challenge students to address the course question. Strong reading, writing, and speaking skills are needed. The class will be taught in a two-hour block and meets the requirements for a Communication Arts credit as well as the U.S. History requirement for graduation.

Social Studies and English Language Arts Standards
- Reading (45%)
- Writing (45%)
- Speaking (10%)

Grading Disbursement
A= 90-100 B= 80-89 C= 70-79 D=60-69 F= <59

Revision Policy
For every major, non-negotiable assessment, you will be provided with at least two opportunities for feedback prior to final submission. These will take the form of formative assessments. If you do not submit this formative work on time, then you lose the opportunity to receive feedback in order to improve your final, summative product.

If you submit your summative assessment on time, and if you submit ALL formative assessments but still score less than 80% on your summative assessment, then you will be provided with the opportunity to revise your essay. Your revised assessment may earn up to 80%.

If you choose to revise your essay, then your revision must be submitted within two weeks of receiving your graded essay. When you submit your revision, you must include your new copy, your old copy, and your original rubric.
Please note that formative work is practice that helps you do well on your summative work. As such, formative work cannot be turned in late.

Communication
- Teachers make every effort to respond to emails and phone calls within 48 hours during the work week.
- The best way to communicate with teachers is through email; however, if a response is not received within 48 hours, please resend the email, check with the teacher in person, or leave a voicemail.
- Students and parents can check Infinite Campus for information about grades. Infinite Campus is a communication tool until a final grade is posted.
Help

- Make an appointment with your teacher.
- Attend S.O.S when available (supervised open study).
- Utilize peer tutoring during lunch periods or before school through the Literacy Center.

Parents or Guardians

We need your help.
- Parents should actively check Infinite Campus for their student’s grade.
  - The grades on Infinite Campus will be accurate only at Mid-Quarter and Quarter. Prior to those dates, the grade reflected is fluid.
  - Infinite Campus is a communication tool until final grade is posted.
- Please ask your student about their school work
- Check with your individual teacher for classroom procedures, schedules, and daily class news.

Course Policies and Procedures

Mr. Dan Iverson
diverson@naperville203.org

Mrs. Jenni Johnson
jmjohnson@naperville203.org

Expectations

- **Be Prepared.** Bring what you need to class each day. You will need your completed assignments, SSR book, any course materials, packets, etc. that we are using, a folder, pencils, pens, and your charged Chromebook. We only have one charger in our room, so it is imperative that you come ready to work. We use our Chromebook daily. Please print all assignments **before** class. It is disruptive to have students running to the lit center to use their printers.

- **Be Respectful.** You are expected to participate in classroom discussions in a positive manner. This expectation includes using appropriate language as well as practicing common courtesy. Also, we respect a person's right to speak and be heard independently without interruption. Please keep your phone in your backpack. It is distracting to have your phone sitting on your desk. Google Hangouts should not be used during class.

- **Be Responsible.** If you are absent, it is your responsibility to know what you missed and to return, to the best that you are able, ready with all work prepared. Check the announcements on Canvas to determine what you missed. **We also suggest that you email both of us the day you are absent to check in.** Assignments with long-term due dates announced ahead of time are due immediately upon your return to class.

- **Be Honest.** Unless specified as a group project, assignments are to be completed on your own. All essays must be turned in to turnitin.com through Canvas to receive credit. Please consult your student handbook for Naperville North’s plagiarism policy. Be careful to cite all sources, even if you paraphrase them. Remember, if you didn't come up with the idea yourself, you have to be sure to give credit to the person who did.

- **A side note:** When emailing us, please include both of us on the email. We work as a team!

Course Structure
The unit structure of American Studies is as follows:

**Unit One: How do we know what we know?**
This is a discussion of knowledge itself and how we know what we know. We will discuss how historical facts are arrived at and debate the meaning of “truth.” We will use several historical examples to illustrate our unit, including the American Revolution, the Civil War, Christopher Columbus, the Kennedy Assassination, and others. Unit project: Academic Discussions: Learning from Columbine’s mistakes

**Unit Two: To what extent do we have an American Identity?**
This is a discussion of how the frontier experience has affected the American experience in terms of historical and cultural significance. We will visit the traditional frontier of the American West as well as more modern applications of the frontier ideal.

**Unit Three: What responsibilities do individuals and societies have to one another?**
This unit begins with a discussion of the Holocaust to illustrate the various roles of victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers in society. It will then cover civil and human rights movements in United States history. Unit project: Social Activism

**Unit Four: What are the fruits of America and how are they distributed?**
This unit is a discussion of how the United States has developed into the capitalist world power that it is today. The unit covers a wide swath of American history from the development of industrialization to modern free trade. The unit focuses especially on the 1920s and the Great Depression. Unit Project: Family Social History Paper

**Unit Five: What is America’s role in the global society?**
The unit tours the US rise to prominence in the world from the late 1800s to the present day. Special attention will be paid to the Cold War and Vietnam in particular. Events of the last century will be used to help students interpret modern day events. Unit Project: The American Character Tea

**Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)**
This is your opportunity each quarter to choose a book (or group of books) within a certain genre that may interest you. The books should be by American authors or be somehow directly a part of the American experience. Your book MUST be approved by one of the teachers. The first 15 minutes of every day will be devoted to reading an independent novel, and then five minutes for a short, written response. All of the novels read for SSR will be related to the quarter project in some manner; however, SSR will be assessed primarily through written responses throughout the quarter. Please see your SSR packet each quarter for more detail.

1st Quarter: *Columbine*
2nd Quarter: Social Activism non-fiction
3rd Quarter: American Classic
4th Quarter: American Character Tea Biography

If you read just 30 minutes a day, in one year you would have finished over 30 books!

Look at the figures: An average book contains about 75,000 words. Reading at an average rate of 250 words a minute, a rate that is neither fast nor slow, you can read 7,500 words in 30 minutes. So, if you read just a half hour every day, you would finish a book every ten days! In a month, you would read three books, and in a year, three dozen. –Barron’s ACT, 1995