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 (40%)
- Writing (40%)
- Speaking (20%)

Grading:
The course grade will reflect what students have learned, not what students have completed.

Overall Semester grade:
90% Course Grade
10% Final Exam

The final semester grade will be rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Course Grade
Each unit/standard is assigned a particular percentage.
Within each unit, summative and formative sections are weighted as follows:

Formative Assessments 0%
Summative Assessments 100%

Grading Disbursement:
A= 100-90 B=89-80 C= 79-70 D=69-60 F= 59.4 and below

Incomplete or work not turned in will receive a grade of 0 in the grade book.
American Studies Revision Policy

If you submit your summative assessment on time, submit ALL formative assessments leading up to that summative 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.

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 you haven't received a response in 48 hours, please resend the email or call their voicemail. Your email may have gone into the spam folder.

Help

- We are available between 6:30-7:30 by appointment on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings, but can rarely meet after school due to coaching and family obligations. Additionally, we are available during 4th period in the Learning Commons or Large Café where we supervise lunch.
  (Mr. Stanicek will be in room 245/Mr. Platt will be in room 103)
- Attend S.O.S (supervised open study) in the Literacy Center M, W & Th from 3:15 to 4:15.
- Drop in for peer tutor 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.
- 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. Robert Platt
rplatt@naperville203.org
Room 103

Mr. Christian Stanicek
cstanicek@naperville203.org
Room 245

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, your essay guide, a binder, pencils, pens, and a notebook.

  Please print all assignments **before** class.

● **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.

  We often will ask you to use your smartphone in the class, but unless specifically asked to do so, please keep your phone in your backpack. It is distracting to have your phone sitting on your desk.

● **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. Use your calendar and the class Canvas page to determine what you missed, but it is always possible that things might have changed. It is always important to check with Mr. Platt or Mr. Stanicek for any changes when you miss class. We suggest that you email both of us the day you are absent to check in. You may also want to make it a practice to check with a classmate to explain what you have missed each day you are absent. 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 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 sidenote:** 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: Guide to 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. Most days will include time for reading the chosen SSR book followed by a short, writing reflection time. All of the novels read for SSR will be related to projects in some manner. 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