

**WorldStrides Discovering United States History**  
1.0 High School Elective credit  
Course Syllabus

**Instructors**

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**Course Description**

It is often said that we cannot know where we are going until we know where we have been. This course invites students to question the validity of this statement through the study of United States History from colonization to the present. Students will examine U.S. History by reflecting on historical places and texts. Students will assess the importance and the applicability of these texts to modern Americans. During this course, students will develop skills necessary to arrive at informed conclusions in order to practice forming opinions about historical issues by making connections between the past and the present.

Throughout the course, students explore universal ideas, values, and perspectives in United States History with a focus on the social, political, and economic factors shaping the U.S. from the colonial period to the present. This course utilizes critical thinking activities and historical analysis to form a rich, interdisciplinary understanding of how people - across time and cultures - influence the structure of U.S. society.

Reflection and synthesis are effective tools in the learning process. Experiential learning, while powerful in its physical application, is made even more effective by guided reflective and analytical exercises to strengthen groundwork established during the field experience. Discovering US History provides students with the tools to cognitively realize the full potential of the field experience.

**Course Expectations**

In this course, students will complete assignments, quizzes, and discussion posts. All materials, including readings and videos, are available in the learning management system, and students may be expected to conduct additional research on their own, with proper citations.

Because of the time and rigor this coursework will require, Discovering U.S. History is recommended for students who traveled in middle or high school (gr. 6-12) and who are looking for elective coursework to supplement the courses they may be taking at their school(s). All students are encouraged to share this syllabus with their school(s) prior to beginning coursework to best inquire about the potential for transferring credits.

Eligibility for enrolling in this course includes participation in any of these WorldStrides travel programs:

- Washington, D.C.
- Washington D.C. + side trip (New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Williamsburg, etc.)

**Course Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of historical chronology.
- Master a broad body of historical knowledge, recognizing significant contributions to modern society.
- Construct and evaluate arguments using historical evidence to create plausible interpretations.
- Write clearly and effectively, citing sources appropriately to demonstrate the ability to think critically, logically, and objectively about historical people, issues, and events.
- Analyze historical influence of modern-day issues using skills of evaluation, cause and effect, compare and contrast.





## Course Units

### Getting Started

#### 1. Exploring a New Nation

Essential Questions: How do we determine what makes a good leader? How does the definition of a good leader change over time? How does learning about the past help us to better value what we have today?

#### 2. The Founding of a Nation

Essential Questions: How can learning alternate details of an historical event change your perception of history? How can new experience build understanding of past events?

#### 3. Civil War and Reconstruction

Essential Questions: What were the economic and political causes for the Civil War? What was Lincoln's role in reconstruction prior to his assassination?

#### 4. An Industrial Society and World War I

Essential Questions: How were rapid industrial and technological advancements both a blessing and a curse for an emerging American society? What were the arguments for and against the United States' involvement in World War I?

#### 5. World War II, the US Society, and its Economic System

Essential Questions: How does the New Deal inform programs we have today? How do you show support for the people and things you feel strongly about? Why is preserving artwork or historical sites important?

#### 6. Domestic and Foreign Affairs, Civil Rights, & Political and Social Developments

Essential Questions: How did the social movements of this time set the stage for the political climate? What impact did Nixon's resignation have on the executive branch?

#### 7. The Current Report

Essential Questions: Why is it important to be aware of current events? How can current events help teach us about historical events?

### Summative Assessment

## Instructional Methods, Activities, and Assessments

Assignments are designed to activate students' prior knowledge, spark interest in new material, and prime students' attention to detail. A series of site-specific readings and activities must be completed to enable students to synthesize and reflect upon what they experienced on their trip. Course content is aligned to national standards and is presented in a variety of ways to promote student engagement including online discussions and reflective analysis. Questions are designed to help students formulate and support their responses into organized opinion statements, while also preparing them for the summative assessment.

### Assessments

The number and type of assessments from which to choose is appropriately rigorous for the credit earned and the intended audience. Assessments fall in one of three categories, differentiated by Bloom's taxonomy (Estes et al., 2016): activities that call upon remembering/understanding functions; mini-projects that demonstrate applying/analyzing skills; and large projects and/or essays that build from the evaluating/creating domains.

### Final Project

Students will be given a choice of assignments specifically relevant to their site and course. The project is intended to encourage students to express their creativity while providing evidence of content they have mastered. Students are encouraged to think about this project as they progress through the program, so that they have ample time to prepare their work. A grading rubric and instructions for submission are available in the full assignment, accessible to enrolled students.



## Standards Alignment

Course content is aligned to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and informed by themes espoused by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS).

Each course assignment is aligned with specific CCSS standards and objectives and organized to demonstrate mastery across course curriculum, including but not limited to the following:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1.a · Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1.b · Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 · Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3 · Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.4 · Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.6 · Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.10 · Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Content further draws upon the NCSS's ten themes of Social Studies and include, but are not limited to the following:

1. **Culture** – Understand how culture influences the ways in which human groups solve the problems of daily living;
2. **Time, Continuity, and Change** – be able to formulate questions about topics in history, predict possible answers, and use historical methods of inquiry and literacy skills to locate, organize, analyze, and interpret sources, and present supported findings;
3. **People, Places, and Environments** – understand factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict among peoples of the nation and world, including language, religion, and political beliefs;
4. **Individuals Development and Identity** – be able to describe the influence of perception, attitudes, values, and beliefs on personal identity and the interactions of peoples across time and space;
5. **Individuals, Groups, and Institutions** – identify and analyze the impact of tensions between and among individuals, groups, and institutions;
6. **Power, Authority, and Governance** – understand fundamental ideas that are the foundation of American constitutional democracy.
7. **Production, Distributions, and Consumption**- understand the economic choices that people make have both present and future consequences;



8. **Science, Technology, and Society** – science and technology have changed peoples’ perceptions of the social and natural world, as well as their relationship to the land, economy and trade, their concept of security, and their major daily activities;
9. **Global Connections** – analyze examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, communities, regions, societies, and nations;
10. **Civic Ideals and Practices** – build background through research in primary and secondary sources, make decisions, and propose solutions to address problems;

### Sample Unit Materials and Assignments – Unit 4: An Industrial Society and World War I

**Discussion Board:** Crash Course: The Industrial Economy

Students will discuss what propelled America forward at the turn of the twentieth century.

**Reading:** The Lusitania Sinks and the US Finds Fewer Reasons to Stay out of World War I

**Assignment:** America’s Involvement in the Great War

Using articles, videos, and podcasts, students will write three paragraphs about the United States’ role in World War I.

**Discussion Board:** Song Analysis “Immigrants (We Get the Job Done)”

Students will analyze lyrics and share other songs with similar themes, all while making connections to their travel programs.

**Quiz:** Great Depression photo analysis

Photos from the Library of Congress’ photo collection from the Great Depression give students an opportunity to address multiple points of view.

### Unit View Screen Shot

The screenshot shows the WorldStrides course interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'WorldStrides' logo, 'COURSES', 'GROUPS', 'RESOURCES', and 'TOOLS'. A search icon, a grid icon, a calendar icon, an envelope icon, a bell icon, and a user profile 'Worldstrides Admin' are also visible. The main content area is titled 'Discovering US History - 1CR HS: Section 7' and 'Unit 3: Civil War and Reconstruction'. Below the title, there are buttons for 'Add Materials', 'Options', 'Student Progress', and a refresh icon. The course content is organized into several sections, each with a puzzle piece icon and a gear icon for settings:

- Civil War Causes**: Must make a submission.
- Analyzing the Second Inaugural Address**: In this assignment, you will read and analyze Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address. Delivered in March 1865, just as the Civil War was winding down, Lincoln's speech is ...  
Professionalism | Completeness | Robustness of Response | Clear Communication | Creative Choices | Connection to Experience and/or Research  
Must make a submission.
- Reconstruction**: Must make a submission.
- "Oh Captain, My Captain"**: Now that you have done some research and reflected on what you know about Lincoln and Reconstruction, it's time to share your thoughts. For inspiration and preparation, think carefully about...  
Uses support in initial post | Asks good questions | Builds on prior points in response posts  
Must post a comment/reply.

A sidebar on the left contains navigation options: Course Options, Materials, Updates, Gradebook, Grade Setup, Mastery, Badges, Attendance, Members, Analytics, and Workload Planning. An 'Information' section is also present at the bottom of the sidebar.



## Final Project

For your final assignment, you will have the opportunity to compare your favorite Founding Father with a modern leader.

### **Need some help choosing a Founding Father to write about?**

We've provided the following resources to give you some ideas. Be creative and keep in mind that the Founding Fathers were a very large and diverse group of people, and included women, too, known as the "Founding Mothers."

[Founding Fathers, Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)  
[Founding Mothers: Women's Roles in American Independence](#)

Once you've chosen your Founding Father/Founding Mother, choose a modern leader to compare and contrast them with.

Next, you will need to do some background research on both of your chosen leaders. Discover ways in which they are similar and different. Look at how their policies and practices affected the citizens of the United States, then and now.

**Create and Present:** Choose **one** of the following submission options to present your research.

### **Write a comparative essay:**

Your essay should be **three to five pages** in length (Times New Roman, 12pt font, double-spaced) and address the prompts above. Don't forget to cite your sources at the end of your paper.

**-OR-**

### **Make a Presentation:**

Your presentation should include at least **ten to fifteen images**. Write **one paragraph to accompany each image** that explains your thinking and addresses the prompts above. Don't forget to include a slide with your source citations.

**-OR-**

### **Write a letter to your modern leader from your Founding Father/Mother:**

Your letter should discuss your research and what advice the Founding Father/Mother would have for your modern leader. Cite specific examples that address the prompts above. Your letter must be at least **three pages in length** (Times New Roman, 12pt font, double-spaced) with a formal greeting. Don't forget to cite your sources at the end of your paper.



## Final Project Rubric

Criteria	Grading Scale				
<b>Professionalism</b> This category recognizes overall work quality. Care and consideration of the final product are evident. Work exhibits evidence of attention to detail.	<b>16</b> <b>EXCELLENT</b> Outstanding at exceeding the requirements; high quality work and perfect attention to detail.	<b>13.5</b> <b>GOOD</b> Work is strong; additional attention to proofing, word choice, or topic would strengthen the professionalism of your work.	<b>11</b> <b>SATISFACTORY</b> Some evidence of thoughtfulness and organization are present. Work would be strengthened by substantive revisions to the tone, word choice, or topic choice.	<b>9.5</b> <b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b> Little evidence of attention to detail. Work would benefit from another draft.	<b>0</b> <b>MISSIT</b> No evidence of the assignment elements been met or expected.
<b>Completeness</b> This category reflects the inclusion of all of the required and expected elements outlined in the assignment directions. This includes proper formatting and length requirements.	<b>16</b> <b>EXCELLENT</b> Outstanding at exceeding the requirements; each element was more than substantially addressed.	<b>13.5</b> <b>GOOD</b> Good job at meeting the requirements given. All elements have been fundamentally addressed.	<b>11</b> <b>SATISFACTORY</b> Some evidence is present of working through each required element. Work would benefit from a review of the assignment directions.	<b>9.5</b> <b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b> Absence of required elements is significant; work is not sufficient to show achievement of the learning objectives.	<b>0</b> <b>MISSIT</b> No evidence of the assignment elements been met or expected.
<b>Robustness of Response</b> This category addresses the depth and detail associated with each of the required elements of the assignment.	<b>20</b> <b>EXCELLENT</b> Outstanding at exceeding the requirements; items demonstrate well-developed thought, attention to detail, clear examples, and purposeful connections.	<b>17</b> <b>GOOD</b> Requirements have been met. Robustness of work indicates an additional opportunity for expansion of ideas, addition of details/examples, and developed connections.	<b>14</b> <b>SATISFACTORY</b> Work would benefit from incorporating significantly more information to show greater depth of thinking and to reflect additional consideration of the elements of the assignment.	<b>12</b> <b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b> Essential elements of the assignment have not been presented with enough content to demonstrate understanding.	<b>0</b> <b>MISSIT</b> No evidence of the assignment elements been met or expected.
<b>Clear Communication</b> This category addresses your writing, analysis, and/or non-verbal representations. Expressions of your ideas are understandable and well-organized.	<b>16</b> <b>EXCELLENT</b> Outstanding at exceeding the requirements. Your messages are extremely effective and are well-aligned with the assignment directions.	<b>13.5</b> <b>GOOD</b> Your essential message has been conveyed. The content and tone of your work is purposeful and generally focused on the main ideas and information.	<b>11</b> <b>SATISFACTORY</b> While some of the work responds to the ideas and information for the assignment, tone and/or word choice may be distracting or unrelated; the work would benefit from editing or clarifying.	<b>9.5</b> <b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b> Work is unclear. Substantial portions of the assignment would benefit from significant revisions, restructuring, or review.	<b>0</b> <b>MISSIT</b> No evidence of the assignment elements been met or expected.
<b>Creative Choices</b> This category captures the decisions you made and the options you chose in order to express your ideas and complete your work. Thoughtful and/or insightful elements support your ideas and/or analysis and are present.	<b>16</b> <b>EXCELLENT</b> Outstanding at exceeding the requirements; work shows more than a 'completion' mentality and reflects a personal influence on the assignment.	<b>13.5</b> <b>GOOD</b> Standard choices and decisions have resulted in a traditional, solid response to the assignment.	<b>11</b> <b>SATISFACTORY</b> The assignment would be stronger with additional consideration of options more aligned to the objectives of the directions.	<b>9.5</b> <b>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b> Work would benefit from an alternate approach or perspective to demonstrate achievement of the learning objectives.	<b>0</b> <b>MISSIT</b> No evidence of the assignment elements been met or expected.





## **Evaluation**

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = 59% and below

WorldStrides Curriculum and Academics will not issue a transcript for a final grade of 69% or below.

## **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to fulfill academic requirements in an ethical and honest manner. This expectation pertains to the following: use and acknowledgement of the ideas and work of others, submission of work to fulfill course requirements, and sharing of work with other students. When you reference ideas and information that you discover through outside research, it is essential to provide proper citation. Failure to do so is considered academically dishonest, as is copying or paraphrasing someone else's work, including that of a classmate. The results of such behavior will lead to consequences ranging from failure on an assignment to failure and expulsion from a course. The full text of expectations is outlined in the Student Honor Code in the 'Get Started' course folder.

## **Course Access and Materials**

Students are expected to enroll in the learning management system. Online discussion posts, assignment submissions, and quizzes will take place through the learning management system.

Feedback on coursework submissions is provided through the learning management system. Students may comment on feedback received, if clarification is needed. Students may also contact the instructor directly via private message through the learning management system. Some communication may be time sensitive and it is the responsibility of the student to check for feedback and communication. Students are responsible for any consequences resulting from failure to receive communication.

Resources may be updated to reflect current events and research. All are made available online after registration. If students have difficulty accessing any part of the course materials or activities for this class, they should contact the instructor immediately.

## **Special Needs**

It is our policy to accommodate students with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation (e.g., extended time) should contact the instructor upon enrollment in the course and provide the appropriate medical or psychological documentation of his/her condition. Once accommodations are approved, it is the student's responsibility to follow up with the instructor about logistics and implementation of accommodations.



### **Mission of a WorldStrides Education**

WorldStrides strives to develop in its students a lifelong love of learning, responsible citizenship, and personal integrity. We are a school community based on trust, mutual respect, and compassion, and we hold all members of the community accountable for upholding these values. Our school is committed to mastery of learning skills, development of intellectual curiosity, excellence, and enthusiastic participation in the travel experience. We encourage our students to develop clarity of thought, confidence, and facility in expressing ideas—traits that help students tackle challenges beyond the textbook. Students learn global citizenship and individual integrity as they develop the skills to manage all sorts of life experiences.

With our commitment to a number of educational initiatives—including civic responsibility, environmental stewardship, international mindedness, creative performance, and university preparation—we hope that our students will go into the world after their WorldStrides program with a greater understanding of themselves and of the world around them.

### **Works Cited**

Estes, T.H., Mintz, S., & Gunter, M. A. (2016). *Instruction: A Models Approach* (7 ed.). Boston: Pearson.