

America and the World We Live In

Syllabus

HISTORY

At Our House



BIG PICTURE HISTORY
See the Forest



TOTAL HISTORY
A History At Our House Series
For Those Who Want the Whole Picture

History Through / Art

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Introduction

This syllabus presents the general objectives for an academic year of American History with HistoryAtOurHouse. Its purpose is to give parents an overview of what will be covered during the year. This may, among other outcomes, facilitate the scheduling of other academic work, family trips, and the purchase or borrowing of books and other resources (both non-fiction and historical fiction) to match with your children's studies in the program.

Various aspects of the HistoryAtOurHouse program remain, and will likely always remain, a work in progress. Since I continually teach a range of clientèle spanning age six to sixty, I am always learning new things about history, and new ways to teach it. To meet my clients' and my own needs, I find it essential as a historian to broaden and intensify my understanding of history on a continual basis. I am regularly reassessing the nature and precision of the information I present, as well as the role and significance of historical knowledge in a broader education. Consequently, I am always making pedagogical adjustments to the various programs I offer, and occasionally they are major ones.

The coming year's *American History* program is no exception. It follows a new design, as part of a new three-year program rotation, which in simple terms is: American history (Year 1), World history (Year 2), and European history—including ancient Greece and Rome (Year 3).

The exact title of the *American History* program for the coming year is: **“America and the World We Live In.”** It will cover five primary units: America as “world police power,” the evolution of the American social contract, the United States and its neighbors, the history of technology and its impact on American Culture, and the rise of egalitarian socialism.

Evidently, certain topics will not be covered in the Elementary class because they are altogether too advanced, in such cases, a parallel “age-appropriate” theme will be pursued, or time will be spent on a combination of art and biographies of important individuals connected to the events in order to concretize and enliven the big picture.

There will also be optional writing seminars, optional readings (especially at higher levels), and *History Through Art* classes. Of special interest to families will be the series of optional **“American Government”** seminars to accompany the core curriculum for Jr. and Sr. high students.

I am very excited about the year to come, and I look forward to working with you to make this academic year a terrific success.

Best regards,
Mr. Powell

Course Outline

AMERICA AS WORLD POLICE POWER (Weeks 1-8 - includes 2-Week Introduction)

- the United States and the major cultures of the world today
- the European Roots of American Culture
- Europe and America until the *World Wars*
- World War I and the “return to normalcy”
- World War II and the rise of the World Police Power
- the Cold War
- the War on Terror
- TEST FOR WEEKS 1-8

AMERICA: REPUBLIC AND DEMOCRACY (Weeks 9-16)

- the United States as an evolving “body politic”
- the American Revolution
 - the theory of natural rights
- the presence of slavery in the original republican “social contract”
- the Civil War and Reconstruction
 - emancipation and the theory of civil rights
- women’s suffrage
- racism and the modern Civil Rights movement
- egalitarianism
- TEST FOR WEEKS 9-16

THE UNITED STATES AND ITS NEIGHBORS (Weeks 17-24)

- the United States and the Americas today
- the history of Latin America
 - colonial and neo-colonial history
 - independence and the struggle for a “Bolivarian” identity
- the history of Canada
 - colonial history and participation in the British empire
 - post-imperial culture and multiculturalism
- the Americas in an “America-centric” world
- TEST FOR WEEKS 17-24

THE HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY AND AMERICAN CULTURE (Weeks 25-30)

- America as an advanced industrial society
- the proto-industrial revolution (“Age of Steam”)
- the Industrial Revolution
 - from the transcontinental railroad to the first man on the Moon
 - from the telegraph to the Internet and the smart phone
 - the history of food
- anti-industrialism in American culture
 - Luddism, transcendentalism, conservationism and preservationism
 - modern alarmism
- TEST FOR WEEKS 25-30

THE RISE OF EGALITARIAN SOCIALISM (Weeks 31-36)

- current events in American society
- natural rights and the limited role of government in American society
- civil rights and progressivism
- the Great Depression and rise of the mixed economy
- the “Great Society” and democratic socialism
- the egalitarian theory of rights
- generational change and the future of America
- technocracy
- TEST FOR WEEKS 31-36

Special Topics (American Government - Jr/Sr High Only)

As per the weekly class schedule available at www.historyatourhouse.com the “Special Topics” series will run on **Thursdays and Friday**. It will be available to students in the Jr. and Sr. high class. Here is the anticipated progression of topics that will be presented in the series. Families will have the option of subscribing to the series, or to purchase one or more of the classes separately for both live attendance, and as recordings.

AMERICA AS WORLD POLICE POWER (Weeks 1-8)

- the American government and the challenge of “policing” the world today
- the history of American foreign policy
 - the republican theory of self-determination
 - “the world must be made safe for democracy”
 - anti-communism vs. self-determination (part 1)
 - Russia, China, Korea, Vietnam
- multiculturalism and its impact on American foreign policy

AMERICA: REPUBLIC AND DEMOCRACY (Weeks 9-16)

- the American government under “strict” constitutionalism
- the Reconstruction of the American government after the Civil War
- from federalism to national governance
- constitutionalism and democratization
 - the electoral college
- the evolution of the branches of the government
 - the legislative, executive, judicial, *and* administrative branches

THE UNITED STATES AND ITS NEIGHBORS (Weeks 17-24)

- the United States and Canada
 - common ground: the history of English government
 - divergences: American and Canadian exceptionalism
- the United States and Latin America
 - anti-communism vs. self-determination (part 2)
 - Cuba, Venezuela & South America

THE HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY AND AMERICAN CULTURE (Weeks 25-30)

- the theory of “political economy”
- American “mercantilism” before the Civil War
- the regulation of modern industry
- American government in a mixed economy
- environmentalism and technocracy

THE RISE OF EGALITARIAN SOCIALISM (Weeks 31-36)

- Americans and their government today
- slavery and the challenge of republican government
- civil rights and progressivism in a republican framework
- democratic socialism and the hybridization of government
- the unstable mixture of public and private interests
- generational change and the future of American government

Writing Seminars

Writing seminars are typically held on a monthly or ad-hoc basis as the year progresses. They are an important way for students to cement their understand of the histories presented. Seminars run in pairs, with the first session held to discuss and plan the writing, and, once students have submitted their assignments, the second session dedicated to editing. The assignments are carefully crafted to help students develop their thinking and writing skills. Grading and editing is done by Mr. Powell personally for each student.

History Through Art

History Through Art is a long-running component of *History At Our House*, which has expanded into an additional spectrum of art appreciation seminars, including *Amazing Artists*. American history pairs beautifully with art history, with an enormous range of representational and narrative art to choose from. *History Through Art* will run on Thursdays and/or Fridays, depending on the level of interest.