

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common Defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to our selves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article 1

# American History: Instructor's Syllabus

A VRC Curriculum Syllabus

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided into three Classes, in such Manner, that one Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the first Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the second Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the third Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the Term of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

No Person shall be a Senator, who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall choose their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the Absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of Honor, Profit or Trust under the United States; but the Party convicted, shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.

Section 5. The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of choosing Senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by Law appoint a different Day.

Written by: Kevin Marshall

VRC Editorial Team: Aaron Spevack, Ibrahim Qureshi, and Justin Poe

V2025.07.14

# **American History: Understanding American History through American Voices**

A **Verification and Renewal Curriculum (VRC)** Syllabus

Written by Kevin Marshall, with VRC Editorial Team Aaron Spevack, Ibrahim Qureshi, and Justin Poe

Produced with a generous grant from the **John Templeton Foundation**, #62642

## **Course Description & Objectives**

Through guided, instructor-led conversations, analytical reading and writing, and a healthy dose of imagination, students will step fully into the American historical experience by combining their thoughtful study of a renowned history textbook (*American History* by Dr. Jason S. Kidd) with that of key short American literary works taken from McMichael and Leonard's *Concise Anthology of American Literature*, as well as that of relevant interviews and documentary materials.

Using the fundamentals of what is known as seminar (or Socratic) discussion during lessons, students will combine analytical and imaginative thinking to more deeply engage the key ideas, traditions, trends, events, landscapes, peoples, and individuals which have made America what it is.

This approach is intended to stimulate lasting interest in, and deep understanding of, American history within Muslim students and facilitate vividly thoughtful and memorable discussions regarding that historical experience—all while engaging some of life's *Great Questions* throughout the course. In doing so, students will develop a greater awareness of their fellow Americans' historical contexts and experiences alongside their own.

## **A Note for Muslim Educators**

The author of this course's textbook, Prof. Thomas S. Kidd, is a dedicated adherent of the Baptist faith who has provided a factual, academically researched history of America at-large, which includes a unique sensitivity for the American Christian historical experience. This is of particular interest because of the influential role Christianity has played in America's history on through the 2000s, even with the rise of the evangelical electorate. This, we believe, does not pose a problem for our educational purposes.

In fact, Kidd's historical description of the rise of American consumerism and the resultant decline of Abrahamic values, for example, is a strength to be utilized in shaping the overall learning experience we'd like for our American Muslim students to have. Additionally, parallel introductions to short, historically appropriate selections from American literary works, speeches, documentaries, and so on will add an animating touch to otherwise fossilized historical content.

## Course Duration & Lesson Frequency

This is a year-long course comprising one 15-week semester during the fall, and one 16-week semester during the spring.

It is recommended that students meet a minimum of four times weekly for lessons lasting 60 mins each.

## Required Texts

- Kidd, Thomas S. *American History*. B&H Academic, 2019.
- McMichael, George L., and Frederick C. Crews, editors. *Concise Anthology of American Literature*. 4th ed, Prentice Hall, 1998.

## Additional Materials

- A range of documentaries and websites will be accessed for this course.
- A detailed map of North America, and of the world, should also be referenced throughout the course whenever locations are mentioned. This will aid students in acquiring knowledge of human/cultural geography.

## Prerequisites

Satisfactory completion of a middle school-level world history and/or world cultures course

## Grading Structure

- Annotative homework due by the beginning of each lesson (10%)
- Class participation and attendance (10%)
- Short answer-based exams (40%; 5 per semester; 10 total)
- Midterm presentations (20%; one per semester; 2 total)
- Final reflective paper (20%)

## Academic Honesty

We live in a time in which new forms of academic dishonesty are all too readily available, including the use of “artificial intelligence” to write our homework assignments, papers, etc. This cannot be tolerated and will not be for the following reason: your honest participation in this course will result in the development of your *actual intelligence*—rationally, morally, and imaginatively. Of course, other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

## Suggested Instruction Method

While preparing lessons in advance, instructors should use their best judgment to develop appropriate additional discussion questions for the preparatory homework and lessons

which are either directly or indirectly based on the *Guiding Questions* found in the table below. Since the development of authentic interest and understanding of American history through memorable discussions and writing-oriented assignments are the primary objectives of this course, appropriate topic-specific questions about essential historical content should also be integrated throughout each theme per the instructor’s discretion.

As much as possible, discussion questions have been suggested below for instructors to use as topical guideposts while introducing key themes as the course progresses.

These are not exhaustive but are instead intended to connect the core content of the course to those much bigger, overarching questions about life known as the *Great Questions* which, as a result, anchor our experience studying American history within what is called the *Great Conversation*.

## Unit-Based Calendar

### Semester 1

Week	American Hist. Chapter/Themes	American Lit. Selection(s)/ Documentary Material	Guiding Questions to Consider
Week 1	Ch 1: Early American Encounters	Native American Voices (p. 36-37)  “How the World Began” according to the Seneca (p.37-40)	What was the Native Americans’ relationship with the non-human world and with non-Natives?
Week 2	Ch 1: Early American Encounters	“How the World Began” according to the Seneca (p.41-45)  Cabeza de Vaca and Esteban the Moor:  <a href="https://www.nps.gov/ro/learn/historyculture/esteban-de-dorantes.htm">https://www.nps.gov/ro/learn/historyculture/esteban-de-dorantes.htm</a>	What was the Europeans’ relationship with the non-human world, and with non-Europeans?  Who were the <i>moriscos</i> ?  Are Muslim-descended people new to America?
Week 3	Ch 2: England and Its Colonies	From John Withrop’s journal (p. 67-70)	How did the Puritans perceive their

			<p>relationship with God and between themselves?</p> <p>Do Muslims ever seem “puritanical”? And how could that be a problem?</p>
Week 4	Ch 3: A Maturing Colonial Society	From “What is an American?” by Michel-Guillaume Jean De Crevecoeur (p. 350-352)	What was the colonial White American’s idea of a good, meaningful life?
Week 5	Ch 4: The Coming of Independence	From “Common Sense” by Thomas Paine (p. 365-367)	What responsibilities did the colonies owe to the Crown, and what responsibilities did the Crown owe to the colonies? Was this a just relationship?
Week 6	Ch 5: The American Revolution and the Constitution	<p>“Declaration of Independence as Adopted by Congress” by Thomas Jefferson (p. 375-378)</p> <p><a href="#">“Why the Quran Was a Bestseller Among Christians in 18th Century America”</a></p>	<p>What were some of the American revolutionaries’ ideas about the best form of government vs the worst form of government?</p> <p>How do you think a familiarity with Islam and Muslims influenced the American revolutionaries’ ideas about “pluralism”?</p>
Week 7	Ch 6: The Early National Period	<a href="#">African Muslims in Early America</a>	
Week 8	Ch 7: A Growing Republic		
Week 9	Ch 8: The Age of Andrew Jackson		How did Jackson’s policies affect Native

			Americans?
Week 10	Ch 9: The American West	“The Big Bear of Arkansas” by Thomas Bangs Thorpe (p. 510-515)	How did the frontiersman view their place in the frontier, and in the world? How did they view Native Americans and Mexicans?
Week 11	Ch 11: The Crisis of the 1850s	<p><a href="#">“Aint I a Woman?”</a> by Sojourner Truth</p> <p><a href="#">Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</a></p> <p>(First five paragraphs of Ch. 4; first five paragraphs of Ch. 5)</p>	<p>What made Sojourner Truth’s perspective on women’s rights/suffrage unique from that of her White counterparts?</p> <p>What was plantation life like for African Americans?</p>
Week 12	Ch 12: Secession and the Coming of the Civil War + Ch 13: The Civil War Begins	Herman Melville’s “Shiloh” (p. 824)	
Week 13	Ch 14: To Appomattox Courthouse (the Civil War)	“To Horace Greeley” by Abraham Lincoln (p. 1058-1059)	How have this week’s readings changed our perception of President Lincoln’s motivations, if at all?
Week 14	Ch 15: Reconstruction	<p><a href="#">“Industrial Education of the Negro”</a> by Booker T. Washington</p> <p>Closing paragraphs of Du Bois’ “Wings of</p>	<p>What is an “HBCU”?</p> <p>What types of HBCUs did Du Bois and Washington separately advocate</p>

		Atlanta” from <a href="#">Souls of Black Folk</a>	for and why?
Week 15	Ch 16: Reforging the Nation	Documentary: <a href="#">Slavery by Another Name</a>	How did life change for African Americans during the period after Reconstruction?

## Semester 2

Week	American Hist. Chapter/Major Themes	American Lit. Selection(s)	Guiding Questions to Consider
Week 1	Ch 17: The Gilded Age (rise of early American corporate power)	Excerpts from Mark Twain’s work (see Anthology)	
Week 2	Ch 18: Populism and Empire	Excerpts from Mark Twain’s work (see Anthology)	Was “manifest destiny” really a new idea?
Week 3	Ch 19: The Progressive Era	Eugene V. Debs materials	
Week 4	Ch 20: World War I	<a href="#">Native American “Code Talkers”</a>	How did women’s role in support roles during the war contribute to the passage of the 19th Amendment?  Would there have been any social friction between Native American and White American military people?
Week 5	Ch 21: The Roaring Twenties	<a href="#">The Great Migration &amp; Harlem Renaissance</a>	How were the White and Black American experiences of the 1920s similar? How were they different?
Week 6	Marcus Garvey and early American Muslim	1) Transcript of Garvey’s <a href="#">Principles of the United</a>	How do you think Garvey influenced some

	Movements	<a href="#">Negro Improvement Association</a> 2) TRT documentary: <a href="#">“Who was Malcolm X?”</a> 3) <i>The Autobiography of Malcolm X</i> (p. 12-24 from Ch. 1)	African American thinkers and activists during the 1920s and afterward? How do you think Garvey’s ideas influence African American Muslims today?
Week 7	Ch 22: The Great Depression and the New Deal	John Steinbeck’s “Flight” (p. 1938-1952)	In what ways did President FDR’s New Deal help American workers and middle class? Did it help push back against American socialist organizing?
Week 8	Ch 23: World War II	<a href="#">Native Americans in WWII</a>	
Week 9	Ch 23: World War II cont.; Ch 24 The Cold War	<a href="#">Life in a U.S. Japanese American Internment Camp</a> Red Scare/McCarthyist literature	What makes someone an American, and why were Japanese Americans considered non-Americans? Do any of the same reasons apply to why American Muslims are seen as non-Americans? How so?
Week 10	Ch 25: The 1950s (American consumerism; Cold War continued)	Scenes from <i>Dr. Strangelove</i> President Eisenhower’s <a href="#">“Military Industrial Complex” speech</a>	Is consumerism consistent with the pursuit of a meaningful life? Could president Eisenhower’s warning apply to other industries in America as well?
Week 11	Ch 26: Civil Rights and the Great Society	Materials on the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, leading to greater	How did African Americans, and African American Muslims, view the “American Dream”?

		<p>immigration from Muslim majority countries:</p> <p><a href="https://www.lbjlibrary.org/news-and-press/media-kits/immigration-and-nationality-act">https://www.lbjlibrary.org/news-and-press/media-kits/immigration-and-nationality-act</a></p> <p><a href="https://immigrationhistory.org/item/hart-celler-act/">https://immigrationhistory.org/item/hart-celler-act/</a></p>	<p>How have immigrant-background Muslims viewed the “American Dream” since the 1965 immigration act that came after the civil rights acts?</p>
Week 12	<p>Ch 26: Civil Rights and the Great Society (cont.); the Black Power Movement; the rise of Mexican and Puerto Rican American activism</p>	<p><a href="#">The Black Power Mixtape</a> (mins 0-12:05 and 55-60)</p> <p><a href="#">Cesar Chavez Materials</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Young Lords</a> (0-8 min)</p>	<p>How did the typical Puerto Rican-American experience mirror the typical African American experience in America’s northern cities?</p> <p>How did the Civil Rights Movement influence Cesar Chavez’ work?</p> <p>What connection was there between the Black Power Movement (and its influences in Garvey, Malcolm, etc.) and Puerto-Rican American activism?</p>
Week 13	<p>Ch 27: Nixon, Watergate, and Carter (and J. Edgar Hoover, and Imam W.D. Mohammed)</p>	<p><a href="#">Disrupting Disagreement</a></p> <p>Scenes from former Secretary of State McNamara’s <i>Fog of War</i> documentary</p> <p><a href="#">The Transition of the Nation of Islam</a></p>	<p>How might have the government’s suppression of Latino, Black, and Native American activism during the 1960s and 70s contributed to continued racial disparities today?</p> <p>How might the underlying points in President Eisenhower’s speech about the military industrial complex relate to American involvement in Vietnam? What does this suggest about America’s latter wars around the</p>

			<p>globe?</p> <p>How did indigenous African American Muslims see themselves and their place in America before Imam W.D. Mohammed? And after his rise to leadership? How would this have affected aspects of American race relations?</p>
Week 14	Ch 28: Reagan’s America	<p><a href="#">The Iran-Contra Scandal</a></p> <p><a href="#">13th</a> (full Documentary)</p>	<p>What does “dog whistle” politics mean?</p> <p>Why would some lawmakers think filling prisons are a good idea? Who are they responsible to, and do these responsibilities/commitments help them act justly?</p> <p>Were President Reagan’s international priorities in line with his domestic responsibilities? How could this have been problematic for the idea of a “War on Drugs”?</p>
Week 15	<p>Ch 29: George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and a Changing America</p> <p>Ch. 30: The “Age of Terrorism” (George W. Bush)</p>	<p><a href="#">Clinton’s Sanctions on Iraq</a> (Associated Press)</p> <p><a href="#">Big Tobacco Lawsuit</a></p>	<p>Once the Cold War ended, how did American foreign policy change, and how did it remain the same? Has it been in any way connected to what Americans consume and to the quantities which they consume?</p>
Week 16	Ch. 30: The “Age of Terrorism” (George W.	<a href="#">(T)Error</a> documentary discussion	Does anything about the “War on Terrorism”

	<p>Bush, Obama, and Trump years); the Age of Social Media</p>	<p><a href="#"><i>Washington Post</i></a> piece on social media</p>	<p>remind you of the “War on Drugs”, and of what was shared in the 13th documentary about the prison industrial complex, or to President Eisenhower’s warning about the military industrial complex?</p> <p>What do the tobacco and social media industries have in common? How have America’s youth been involved in both?</p> <p>Does any particular company and their major shareholders benefit our social media use?</p> <p>Are the experiences we consume through scrolling and posting on social media a means to a truly rewarding/fulfilling life?</p>
--	---	---	---

*This project/publication was made possible through the support of Grant 62642 from the John Templeton Foundation. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the John Templeton Foundation.*