

300 American Studies
Darien High School 2011/2012

Mr. Pavia
Office: Room A202
Mr. Egan
Office: Room A208

mpavia@darienps.org
655-3981 x.2302
pegan@darienps.org
x.2217

What then is the American, this new man?
– J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur

We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak with our own minds.
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this interdisciplinary course, you will study American history and literature from the 17th century through the 20th century. In each of the time periods we study, you will examine various aspects of society, including art and architecture, religion, music, politics, military actions, social interactions, economics, foreign policy, and others. Readings will include travel and captivity narratives, poetry, sermons, pamphlets, speeches, short fiction, novels and plays. Your writing for this class will be primarily analytical in nature, and will ask you to develop original and insightful interpretations of the ideas and readings studied.

GOALS

Though we will cover a great deal of material between now and June, the fundamental goals of this course are rather straightforward. In all the work you do, you will develop your ability to:

- **think critically and creatively** about the history, literature and art of the United States;
- **communicate clearly and effectively** in writing and in discussion;
- **read purposefully and critically**, with attention to detail and larger ideas;
- **understand and consider multiple perspectives** on a given event, issue or idea, and
- **develop an awareness of the aesthetic choices** authors and artists make in their work.

CLASS RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

- **Act with integrity:** tell the truth, do your own work, be respectful, play nicely with others.
- **Take responsibility for your education:** think for yourself, come in for help when you need it, communicate with your teachers, don't take shortcuts, and don't make excuses.
- **Be here now:** Arrive on time, body and mind, prepared to stay in the classroom and work until the bell rings. Turn all cell phones off (not on silent or vibrate); put simply, attempting to use your phone during class is rude.
- **Add, Don't Subtract:** do not disrupt the momentum of class instruction, discussion, or activities.
- **Listen:** please speak one at a time and listen to each other's ideas. This is the only way to create a safe, supportive, and respectful environment for everyone.
- **Be patient:** you will do a lot of work, much of which will be challenging. You might not initially earn the grades you have earned in the past, but if you are serious about your work, in time you will become a better reader, writer and thinker, and will receive grades that reflect your growth.

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- A three-ring **binder** (or two) for in-class writing, note-taking, homework, handouts, etc. (**Please, no spiral-bound notebooks or composition books/pads.**)
- lined paper for your binder(s)
- your copy of whatever readings are being discussed
- your **covered** course text book
- a pocket dictionary (recommended)

GRADING POLICIES

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Writing assignments, tests, and projects will be typically graded on a scale of zero to one hundred, all with corresponding letter grades. Each quarter you will be assigned an **interdisciplinary essay** (i.e. your “Quarter Paper”), as well as smaller “**micro analyses**.” Some essays will count for both classes, others for either history **or** English. The assignments will be accepted up to one week past the due date, but their final evaluation will be reduced by **one full letter grade for each day late (including weekends)**. (There may be additional deadline policies associated with the quarter projects.)

Occasionally, written homework will be given at the end of class in order to prepare you for the next class. When homework is assigned, you should be prepared to have yours evaluated at the beginning of class, where it will be assigned a grade between 0 and 10. Grades will be determined by the clarity, completeness, and accuracy of the homework. If you arrive late (excused) to class and miss handing in a homework assignment, it is your responsibility to submit that assignment during that class.

Late homework will not be accepted, even when due to an excused absence. Whenever you are absent, you are responsible for e-mailing us on that day and getting your assignment. We also post all assignments on our websites.

READING QUIZZES

In place of written homework assignments in American Literature, you will be given a **reading assignment** every night (between 20-35 pages). Frequently you will be given *un-announced* reading quizzes. These quizzes will often feature quick, plot-based open-ended questions, with occasional multiple-choice questions.

Again, you will not be excused from a day's reading quiz because of an absence, excused or otherwise. It is your responsibility to e-mail me or a peer for the assignment, and/or check Mr. Pavia's website.

IN-CLASS WRITING

In your notebook, you will often be asked to spend the opening moments of class responding to a question, series of questions or a quotation related to your readings. You should also use your notebook as a repository for your class notes. We expect that you use this journal regularly, and you will jeopardize your participation grade if you neglect to bring it to class or if you choose not to fill it with serious, thoughtful writing. Periodically Mr. Pavia will collect your notebook to read and comment on your in-class writing.

PARTICIPATION

You will be expected to arrive on time with all necessary materials (assigned texts, journal, binder, pens, pencils, etc). To earn full participation credit for a marking period, a student must regularly be seated when the bell rings, have brought all required materials (textbook, journal notebook, binder, paper, pen, etc.), follow all class rules, comply with fair requests, demonstrate a willingness to participate in class discussion and activities, recognize the importance of peers' ideas and opinions, avoid monopolizing

class discussions, and continue to work until the dismissal bell rings. A tardy, an absence, and/or a failure to meet the above basic requirements will result in a reduction of points for a given class period.

Your participation grade can raise or lower your final quarter average by as many as three points. (We'll explain this further at a later time.)

YOUR WORK AND EXTENDED TIME

We think we have already made our policies about late work and absences quite clear. Let us also add a word about extended time: if you have an IEP accommodation allowing extended time, keep in mind that this accommodation entitles you to **50%** extra time. You do **not** have until the end of the quarter, and this does **not** apply to nightly homework assignments. In addition, you may not simply arrive to class on the day an assignment is due and tell us that you don't have your work because you have extended time. In order to receive this accommodation, you must meet with us **before** the due date, show us your progress, and let us know what you need help with. We are very supportive to students who seek my help but need extra time, but we will not make accommodations for students who do not show that they are putting forth a strong effort.

ATTENDANCE

The DHS attendance policy will be followed in this class. As you know, cutting and tardiness will affect your final grade. A "cut" is defined as "any absence not satisfactorily accounted for by the student within two days of the student's return," and will result in a three-point deduction to your grade. Please review the DHS Handbook for further details of the attendance policy.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND WRITING POLICIES

Darien High School values a learning environment that operates ethically, respectfully, and honestly. "Cheating," as defined in the DHS handbook is "participation in any activity in which a student knowingly misrepresents 'or assists another student to misrepresent' his or her actual achievement in the course." Any student who violates the code of academic integrity of this class (including, but not limited to, copying answers, cheating on tests, and plagiarizing papers) will be subject to disciplinary action. A student in violation will lose credit for the assignment in question (as well as credit for the course) and can expect to be formally asked to leave the course.

For specified writing assignments, you will be allowed to revise your work. If you elect to do so, you must first contact me and negotiate a revision plan. Revised drafts may raise your score on a writing assignment.

Some final drafts will only be accepted if submitted with suitable process work.

EXTRA HELP

We **always** make ourselves available for extra help during or after school. Instead of struggling with an assignment, please make an appointment to come by and see us. You'd be surprised—we can be quite helpful). If you or your parents need to get in touch with us, you can e-mail us at mpavia@darienps.org or pegan@darienps.org.

Here are our website addresses: www.darienps.org/teachers/mpavia
www.darienps.org/teachers/pegan