**American History II**

**River Mill Academy**

**2019-2020**

Instructor: Caitlin Cushing

Course Location: Middle School, Room 218

Email: ccushing@rivermill-academy.org

Class Website: <https://caitecushing.wixsite.com/caitecush>

The class website, which I will be updating regularly, is the best source for obtaining electronic copies of notes and handouts, confirming dates for assessments and assignments, and finding answers to day-to-day technical or logistical questions you may have about the course. Please check here first, as you will be able to find most information here.

If you need to ask a question specific to you, seek individualized help and/or guidance, or provide feedback, stopping by my classroom or email are the best methods of contact. In addition, with enough notice I am generally able to meet after school. Please email me to arrange a time to meet. No matter the medium, I will aim to respond to all messages promptly.

**Course Overview and Objectives** In this semester-long survey course we will be studying the history of the United States from Reconstruction to the present day. In doing so, we will be exploring five fundamental trends in history: **the relationship between humans and the environment, changes in technology, migrations of peoples and cultures, the evolution of government, and the social and economic ties of American society.** Students will be asked to relate back to these themes constantly throughout the year.

In addition to a short introduction, we will be dividing the year up into nine distinct chronological units. Throughout the course of the term, however, students may be asked to refer back to previous phenomena and topics. The units are as follows:

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| Unit 1: “Brave New World”: the New South, the West, and Populism | Unit 5: World War Two |
| Unit 2: The Gilded Age and Progressivism | Unit 6: Post-War America |
| Unit 3: Imperialism and World War One | Unit 7: Conflict and Change: 1960s-1980s |
| Unit 4: Boom and Bust | Unit 8: Contemporary America, 1980s-2010s |

The skill-based aims of the course include (1) strengthening students’ vocabulary and reading comprehension abilities with bi-weekly readings, periodic formative assessments, and primary and secondary source workshops; (2) broadening students exposure to, and developing their abilities to research and think critically about current events, and (3) refining students’ informative and persuasive writing and speaking skills through in class discussions, writing workshops, projects, and social media.

**Course Materials, Rules, and Expectations**

* Generally, homework assignments will be a section from an online textbook. While it is not mandatory that students take notes, it is strongly recommended. Students will be able to use their handwritten reading notes on all formative assessments. In addition, students will be able to attach their notes to their exams for extra credit. Please expect to have a homework assignment twice a week (or thereabouts)
* Each student will be required to acquire **a binder, paper, and writing utensils**. All binders must have the student’s name. Students should also have three binder tabs or dividers.
* Each student will be required to follow all **class rules** (a copy of which will be posted on the class website). In addition, I will be also enforcing all school rules in the Student Handbook.
* **All students will be expected and required to spend a substantial amount of time each week reading from their course text, primary sources, or listening to required podcasts or videos. All formative assessments will be based off of these assignments.**
* All students will be required to produce a project or a paper roughly every two units, significant portions of which will be completed outside of class. Expectations for each project will be handed out in class. Should you have an idea for a project that you wish to implement (of equivalent difficulty, of course, please see me)
* All students will be required to participate in class discussions—this is especially true of any Socratic Seminars, where grading is based solely off of in-class comments.
* **I will hold students to a strict honor code: any student who plagiarizes or cheats will receive a zero for their assignment, NO EXCEPTIONS**
* Each student will be required to take a summative assessment at the end of every unit.
* All students are responsible for making up any late work in a timely manner and in adherence to the High School’s make-up policy. If students miss a class, their first responsibility is to refer to the class website (see above).
* While I will endeavor to remind students of responsibilities whenever possible;, it is ultimately their responsibility to remember to complete tasks.

**Attendance, Grading Policies, Headings, & Late Work**

**Attendance:** You are required to be in class, on time, every school day. I will take attendance daily. If you are absent from, or tardy to, class, you must either obtain prior permission (in the case of a field trip or school activity) or present an admit slip upon (re)entry to class for the absence or tardy to be excused. All other absences from class will be considered unexcused.

**Regardless of why you may miss or arrive late to class, it is your responsibility to submit all previously due assignments on the day they are due (unless circumstances or prior agreement call for an extension) and to check both the class website and with me (before or after class) for any work that needs to be made-up.**

NOTE: IT IS SOLELY WITHIN MY DISCRETION TO ALLOW STUDENTS WITH UNEXCUSED ABSENCES OR TARDIES TO SIT FOR MISSED QUIZZES AND EXAMS OR MAKE-UP IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, DISCUSSIONS AND/OR PRESENTATIONS.

**Grading Policies**:

Consistent with state policy, students’ grades will be based on a 100-point scale. Scores of:

**100-90 (pts) = A   
89-80 (pts) =B   
79-70 (pts) =C   
69-60 (pts) =D   
59-0 (pts) =F**

During each grading period, students will be asked to complete a variety of assignments both in-and-out of class. A brief description of common assignment types and the total percentage of your grade allocated to each are included as follows:

Quizzes: (25%)

Formative Assessments: You will be given **up to NINE SHORT ORAL OR WRITTEN SPOT CHECKS** (approximately one a week) on assigned readings or materials covered in-class. The SEVEN highest scores will be counted. The **formative assessments typically will be unannounced, comprised of 3-5 questions**, and occur at the beginning or ending of class. Students may use any notes (in-class or from the text) they have taken to answer the questions posed. **Missed formative assessments cannot be made up**.

Notebook: You are required (and will be shown how) to keep a notebook of class work, including numbering, creating a table of contents for, and keeping in an organized fashion, all notes, handouts, and assignments. I will **spot check notebooks** for accuracy and completeness **each time a UNIT EXAM** is held. If you forget your notebook, or your notebook is incomplete/not organized you may present a revised notebook for full credit.

Tests: (25%)

Unit Exams: You will take **TEN EXAMS** that test course material previously covered in-class and/or presented in assigned readings. Exams will be announced ahead of time**.** Students who turn in vocabulary definitions, which define and provide examples of all terms selected, from the assigned readings prior to the start of the exam will have up to TEN points added to their score. Students may earn up to an additional TEN (10%) percentage points (up to a maximum of 120%) by preparing and submitting, prior to the start of the exam, INDIVIDUAL notes (the format for which will be explained) taken from the chapters of the text to be tested. Please keep in mind that I will be checking both your vocabulary and your notes for completeness.

Homework and Classwork: (25%)

In-Class Primary & Secondary Source Skills Workshops: You, in groups or individually, will participate in primary and secondary source skills workshops (on literature, primary documents, art, theatre, etc.) that require you to read or interpret, analyze, and write informatively about the selections presented. Primary Source Skills Workshops may be announced ahead of time or may be decided the day of. Some workshops may be graded on a basis of output (announced in advance), whereas others might be graded based upon completion (day of assignments). In addition, some workshops might take place over the course of many days. Unless otherwise noted, all readings and writing prompts are to be completed in class. Your lowest scored workshops will be dropped (the number of which is to be determined). Please note that missed workshops may be the one that is dropped.

Socratic Seminars: On occasion I will hold in-class Socratic Seminars that allow us to engage in meaningful discussions and debates about modern research or interpretations of historical documents related to subject matter material covered in lecture or assigned readings. I reserve the right to convert seminars to out-of-class writing assignments or online forums if participation in and contributions during seminars is found to be lacking. Students will be graded on the completeness of their responses and will be expected to speak at least twice in class.

Projects: (25%)

Unit Project: You will be assigned, in groups or individually, **ONE PROJECT EVERY TWO UNITS** (or thereabouts) that will require you to demonstrate a deeper level of understanding of an issue, concept, or skill that is relevant to the unit. That being said, projects are also your time to apply *your* skills to history. Do you have a great idea for a personal study? Is there something that really interests you or that you would like to include in a portfolio? Please let me know! **In most, if not all cases, students will be expected to collaborate and work on these projects outside of class, although some class time will also be set aside**.

**Headings:** Every set of class notes, assignment, project, formative assessment, quiz, and exam must contain the student’s name. **Any work turned in without a name may be given a zero.**

**Late Work:** Students are eligible to make up work they have missed due to absence, as per the Student Handbook. Students will have three days for each day missed with a maximum of five days for make-up work. Students are responsible for securing their make-up work on the class website, and if it is not there, then through the teacher. Make-up work not completed in the allotted time will result in a zero. Students are responsible for seeking out and completing any missing work.

**Email Policy:** As River Mill Academy is a college prep high school, I will expect my students to comport themselves with professionalism at all times, including when using email. As such all students MUST email me in complete sentences, using appropriate grammar and spelling.