

**AMERICAN STUDIES
STUDENT/PARENT
Manual**

Success For

All Students!

Valhalla High School
2007/2008

VALHALLA HIGH SCHOOL

1725 Hillsdale Road, El Cajon, CA 92019 619-593-5300 (<http://valhalla.guhsd.net>)

About this Manual:

Your teachers have put this manual together with great care. We expect all students in American Studies to become familiar with the contents within the manual. It contains rules, policies, and specific information that will be needed throughout the year. Please be sure that you have it with you for the entire year. We are sure that you will find the information helpful and necessary to your success in class. Parents and Guardians can also refer to this manual to help clarify and answer questions you might have about the program.

August 21, 2007

Dear American Studies Student/ Parent or Guardian:

Welcome to American Studies! You have chosen to take what we believe is one of the most exciting, challenging and interesting courses offered at Valhalla. Our program is similar to the Humanities classes you may have taken in that both the history and literature we study is integrated and melded into one. Our goal as teachers is to use one class to reinforce what's going on in the other class and vice-versa to help each student to gain a solid understanding of American Literature and history.

This course is designed to give you the tools and knowledge necessary to succeed in college and life. Begin right away by using your organizational and study skills to manage your time and assignments efficiently. As your teachers we view our jobs as teammates in your education. Part of the process is what the teachers do and the other part is what the student does; we need to work together in this endeavor. Please be an active part of your learning. If you should find yourself struggling, confused or uncertain of the expectations please talk to us right away.

Many students consider the junior year the most challenging year of high school. For those of you interested in going on to a university this year is crucial since it can very well determine whether you get in to the college of your choice or not. Those of you who have set your sights on other avenues can benefit from the knowledge and skills you'll be exposed to along with learning the necessary foundations for becoming an active part of the democratic process. However, keep in mind that this class is designated as college prep and will be taught with the rigor needed to prepare ALL students for college. Your teachers are dedicated to helping you reach academic and personal success. Rely on our expertise, know that we will guide you through the challenges, and most of all enjoy what you are learning. We invite you to ask questions about what we go over in class and to participate by being active in your learning.

Students, as teachers, it is exciting to be a part of this year in your life. Parents and guardians, we hope that you will take an active part in your student's learning by asking questions about what your student is learning and doing in class. As teachers we make every effort to make you a part of your student's learning process and to keep you informed. We hope that you will be able to attend Back to School Night on September 6. We will be looking forward to meeting you and to getting to know your student this year!

Sincerely,

The American Studies Team

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Unit Exams are combined history and English items- don't let this be a surprise. For the most part, all of our unit exams have an equal share of history-based questions and English based questions. The grade for the exam will count in English as well as in history. So if you get an 85% then you get that grade in both classes.

Projects help to emphasize a certain topic, lesson or theme that shows up in both subject classes. Be prepared for this, you'll find that you might start a project in one class and then finish it in the other. The grade will count in both classes.

Late Work- No late work will be accepted, unless accompanied by an Emergency Pass. Emergency passes are only valid one day after the assignment was due. Students are given four Emergency Passes for the semester for American Studies. These count for English and history.

Make-up work- All assignments assigned before student was absent are due upon return. Other assignment due dates will be determined by the teacher when the student speaks to the teacher regarding make-up work. IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAKE-UP WORK.

Truancy- Assignments missed due to truancy cannot be made up. Students who are truant have chosen to forfeit the credit that they may have received from the assignment(s) in question. * Please note that this is our long-standing policy and was mistakenly omitted from the version that your student received.

Make-Up Exams- Students must make-up exams and quizzes within two tutorial days of their absence. Tutorials are on Wednesdays and Thursdays after school. **IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE UP EXAMS.**

Help/ Tutorials- Tutorials are on Wednesday and Thursdays after school. Please refer to the tutorial schedule for specific room numbers.

Community Service- Community service can earn a student a maximum of 3% extra credit for their overall grade. Community service activities must be pre-approved by an American Studies teacher. Teachers will go over the requirements more in depth in class. Hours will not be accepted without the accompanying assignment.

Cheating- We do not tolerate any type of cheating (Academic Dishonesty). Cheating will result in a referral- no matter how trivial and **no credit** for that assignment, project or exam. Copying from another student's paper without express permission from the teacher will result in a referral for the copier and the copier. The vast majority of the referrals written last year were for cheating. Two cheating referrals in the program and the student will be dropped.

Important Dates for First Semester

Mini- Exam- September 6

Chasing the American Dream Game Board- September 20

Book Club- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn- September 20

CAD Unit Exam- September 27

Progressive Person Project- October 30

Book Club- The Jungle/ Fast Food Nation- November 1

ACOA Exam- November 7

Book Club- The Grapes of Wrath/ The Great Gatsby- December 6

PDR Project TBA- December 7

PDR Exam- December 12

Mini- Drama Final Project- December 17

ALL AMERICAN STUDIES FINAL EXAMS- Will be on December 18, periods 1 and 4

***Semester 2 dates will be given at a later date.**

Classroom Rules- The American Studies Program operates on four main rules designed to create a safe classroom environment that promotes learning and success for all. We expect all students to adhere to these rules.

- 1. All students have a right to learn- No one will be allowed to disrupt the learning of others.**
- 2. Respect all members of the class and school- treat each other with respect.**
- 3. Put-downs or purposefully hurtful comments or actions will not be tolerated.**
- 4. All students are responsible for their individual actions.**

Classroom Behavior

Students and parents need to be aware that the American Studies program adheres to the Valhalla Behavior Code as listed in the student planner. Our expectation is that all students show up to class on time, prepared to learn and are cooperative class participants. In addition, the class uses a fair amount of group work that requires student cooperation and a team spirit. We ask students and parents to take responsibility for their actions in and out of class. We as teachers expect all students to behave in a manner that is conducive to learning. Behavior issues will be dealt with promptly.

Continued negative participation, including being off-task, using cell phones, using headphones, being defiant, anything that is not appropriate or distracting to the classroom or displaying a lack of cooperation will result in one or more of a series of mediations: detention, in-school suspension, behavior referral, and/or possible removal from class.

Referrals- More than three behavior referrals may result in the student being dropped from class. Refer to the Valhalla High School Behavior Code for additional information. (As a note in American Studies last year, most referrals were for academic honesty violations and truancy issues.)

Tardy- Any student who is late to class is considered tardy. If a student chooses to go to lock out, their assignments are still considered due that day. An EMERGENCY PASS, must be used in order for those assignments in order for the student to receive credit on those assignments.

Grading Scale

A	100% - 89.5
B	89.4 – 79.5
C	79.4 – 69.5
D	69.4 – 63.4*
F	63.3 – 0
I	Incomplete- Student has not yet met passing standards

- **Please note that the ‘D’ range is shrunken down**
- **The minimum ‘D’ starting at 63.4%**

At the end of each grading period each student will receive a grade on a progress report. This is an indicator of how the student has performed in the previous term (6 week grading period). At the end of the semester the grade of each of the grading periods plus the finals grade will be averaged together equally to generate the semester grade. The diagram below illustrates the semester grade

The final semester grade categorized in the following way:	
1st 6 weeks	25%
2nd 6 weeks	25%
3rd 6 weeks	25%
Finals	25%

Within the class all course work is broken up into four categories as follows: (The finals category differs slightly.)

Category	%	Explanation
Class Work/ Homework	25%	This is most of the class assignments, notes, home works, quizzes
Projects	25%	These are combined items from both class

Exams	50%	These are the unit exams and major quizzes
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Listed below are the California State Content Standards for 11th Grade, which are used in designing our curriculum.

California State Standards

- *English-Language Arts Grades 11-12*

- ♦ **Reading**

1. Word Analysis, Fluency and Systematic Vocabulary Development
 - a. Vocabulary and Concept Development
2. Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials)
3. Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text
4. Literary Response and Analysis

- ♦ **Writing**

1. Writing Strategies
2. Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

- ♦ **Written and Oral English Language Conventions**

- ♦ **Listening and Speaking**

1. Listening and Speaking Strategies
2. Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

- *History-Social Science Grade 11*

- 11.1 Students analyze the significant events surrounding the founding of the nation and its attempts to realize the philosophy of government described in the Declaration of Independence.
- 11.2 Students analyze the relationship among the rise of industrialization, large scale rural to urban migration, and massive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.
- 11.3 Students analyze the role religion played in the founding of America, its lasting moral, social and political impact, and issues regarding religious liberty.
- 11.4 Students trace the rise of the U.S. to its role as a world power in the 20th century.
- 11.5 Students analyze the major political, social, economic, technological, and cultural developments of the 1920's.
- 11.6 Students analyze the different explanations for the Great Depression and how the New Deal fundamentally changed the role of the federal government.
- 11.7 Students analyze the American participation in World War II.
- 11.8 Students analyze the economic boom and social transformation of post-World War II America.
- 11.9 Students analyze the United States foreign policy since World War II.
- 11.10 Students analyze federal civil rights and voting rights developments.
- 11.11 Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society.

How can a parent/guardian help their student?

- There is a great deal of reading that is involved in the class. If your student repeatedly tells you that they don't have any homework or reading to do for class then they're not being too truthful. They almost always have something to read and assignment to go along with it as well. Check the teacher website if you'd like.

- Parent/guardians are welcome to contact their student's teacher to request an update on student progress. Email is our preferred mode of communication.
- Also please check with your student for assignment information, due dates, calendars, and best of all talk with your student about what they have been covering in class, about their readings, projects and daily class activities.
- Your student will be asked to bring home their test results from time to time. Please look for these and go over them with your student. Our first exam is scheduled for September 6th, students will receive their results and be asked to get a parent/guardian signature on the notice. Please go over the exam results with your student.
- We will be more than happy to provide a copy of core novels and other readings so that you can discuss them with your student.
- Also the counseling department can set up a bi-weekly grade check for your student as well.
- In addition please try and provide your student with a quiet work place at home for their studies as well as time to complete their daily assignments and readings.
- Parents and guardians can also urge their students to take advantage of the tutorial that is offered by American Studies teachers on Wednesdays and Thursdays. We have in the past had parents insist that their student attend and that teachers confirm attendance.
- Be sure that your student has school essentials including Student Planner (this will be issued to each student within the first week of school), 1 1/2" – 2" 3- ring binder specific to American Studies, pens, pencils, highlighters and plenty of paper. A lot of paper.

The American Studies Team knows that the education of each and every student is a team effort and we look forward to working with you to reach *SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS*.