

# Advanced Topics: United States History and Culture

## 2015-2016

Ms. Maggie Favretti  
mfavretti@scarsdaleschools.org  
Emergency only: [favrettim@gmail.com](mailto:favrettim@gmail.com)

Classroom 2N5/Office 2N3  
914.721.2567

### Course Introduction:

In this course we will explore the history of the United States from the pre-colonial era to the present day. Building upon your fundamental knowledge of American history and culture, this course is designed to challenge your assumptions and stretch your understandings of this history and how to create it. Importantly, American history is not a singular, static story but a complex web of multiple narratives that are full of variations and contradictions - especially depending on who is telling the story—*could be you*. You will uncover these different voices and perspectives, some of which will reinforce your understandings of America, and others that promise to change not only your outlook on America as a nation, but also may change your beliefs about what you expect from your government and yourself as a global citizen.

As an **Advanced Topics** course, this will likely be the hardest work you have ever have done in school. It will demand the intellectual commitment, curiosity, risk-taking and diligence that you will likely encounter in your college academic experience. You will learn to work more productively both independently and collaboratively than you may have ever done in the past. You will be required to synthesize, analyze, debate, discuss and write, write, write in a number of different formats. You will engage in substantial independent research. Your readings will consist of works by renowned historians, substantial primary source material, and a textbook that is quite comprehensive in its detail. Sometimes you will be working on more than one thing at a time (mostly by doing long-term research AND preparing for class). This course will stretch you and push you outside of your comfort zone, a necessity for your personal and academic growth. You are up for the challenge, or you wouldn't be in the class. Also, know that you will have my support and guidance through what promises to be a deeply rewarding academic experience. My office is yours: 2N3, 721-2567, mfavretti@scarsdaleschools.org.

### Grading

Your grades in this course will rest heavily on your written work and your performance on tests/projects and reading assignments, however, your citizenship and participation in debates/discussions will also be assessed as a significant portion of your grade.

Grade Breakdown:

1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter: 20%	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter: 20%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter: 20%	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter: 20%
Midterm: 10%	Final Exam: 10%

### Course Expectations:

#### **1. Class Citizenship**

**Attendance:** You are expected to attend every class. Unexcused absences and excessive excused absences will affect your grade. If you are part of a team, you have a responsibility to them even if you have to stay home. If you are absent the day a paper is due you are required to email it to me and to receive a confirmation response

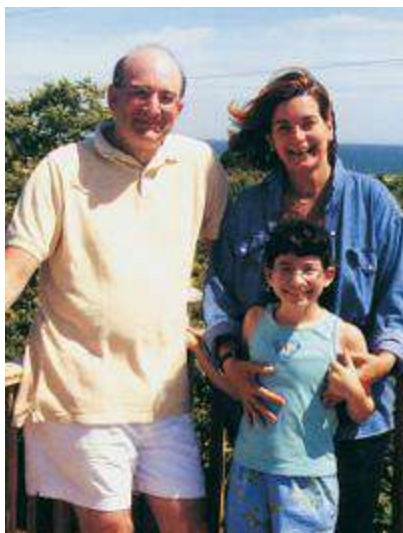
from me (or use Turnitin.com). If you are absent the day of a test you are required to take a test (which will be modified for test security purposes) the day you return from school.

**Class:** You are expected to engage in class each day in a thoughtful manner (i.e., asking ?s, discussing, debating, listening). Your interaction with your peers needs to contribute to an overall atmosphere of encouragement and safety, a requirement for learning. Your grade will reflect your positive attitude, and your efforts to create a strong community of learning. Remember, learning is an iterative process! Mistakes should be made!

## 2. *Homework*

**You** are required to complete all homework assignments. Most homework assignments will consist of reading and annotating a handout or digital text and some form of note-taking. To annotate means to engage with the material you are reading by “marking up the text.” This is more than highlighting/underlining key passages. This means you should ask ?s and synthesize information in the margins – mark up important ideas (see sample annotation in class). Your homework will be checked in class (either by quiz or teacher check or internal accountability). Late homework is not accepted.

**Texts:** Your textbook, *American History*, by Columbia University provost Alan Brinkley will be supplemented by several other texts as well as many excerpts from major historical books, journals, and key primary sources and video clips. The photo below shows Alan at the far left.



Here he is with his wife Evangeline and daughter Elly. His father David, in the above photo with his brothers Joel and John, was a famous news anchor of my childhood. Both photos courtesy of Alan Brinkley.

**Email:** I will be emailing you assignments, readings, links to videos, pictures, class news, etc. I rely on you to set up a Facebook group for you to alert each other to news. We will also have a Schoolwires page, use Turnitin.com, and Googledocs for collective work.

### **3. Assessments – Tests, Writing Assignments**

All of your in class tests will be writing based – from short answer to document response to argumentative essays. You will be required to write several papers out of class each semester as well, *most of which will be researched based*. Each day an essay/project is late 10 points will be deducted from your grade. It is your responsibility to come see me to make up anything you've missed...and to the extent possible, see me ahead of time.

**4. Cheating and Plagiarism –** See the school policy in your planner. The penalty for cheating is a zero, not an "F" (which could be a 50% or a 60%) on the assessment in question (test, quiz, paper, homework assignment). With any incidents of academic dishonesty I will discuss the problem with any and all of the following people: your dean, the department chair, your parents, and the principal.

Remember, YOU are expected to complete the work I assign - therefore, you are expected to complete all reading and take your own notes. ("Dividing up the chapter" and copying one another's notes will be treated as cheating). Remember, in the end, you are ultimately responsible for the work you produce.

**5. See me early and often-** My schedule is posted in the classroom and on my office door. I will also post it to our group. I have a rocking chair, a very comfortable couch, and can provide a quiet place to work or think. Or, we can talk. My office is your office. 2N3.