

# American History I



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## What is American History I?

Sounds pretty obvious, “the first part of the history of the United States.” I guess that description is valid, but could use a little clarification. Since we are living here in the United States, we can say it is the beginning of the story of this country. I know we are not living in the past, so sometimes history seems like something that should be more of a hobby for people who get excited about that kind of thing. The truth is, without knowing the beginning of the story it is difficult to understand the part of the story we live in. For example, if you have ever walked in on the middle of a movie or began watching a TV series from the eighth episode, there are a lot of questions about the events and characters we need answered before we can fully understand what we are currently watching. American History I gives you the back story of where we are today.

We will learn about American History from the settlement of the 13 Colonies through Reconstruction after the Civil War. We will be focusing on key events, people, concepts, and patterns, building on American History that you have learned in previous grades through Middle School and the little bit covered in World History. The focus of both American History I & II is to put it all together to learn how we got to where we are now and understand the ideas behind policies and events taking place in the broader world today.

In this course, I expect each of you to be responsible for your education and learning. In order to best prepare you for all the possible topics on which you will be tested, this course will be taught strictly according to the North Carolina Essential Standards for Social Studies. You must think broadly about subjects we discuss and be able to apply what you know and learn to different situations because the final exam will be about the application of the broad ideas, not necessarily about the specific examples we will use in the class to explain them.

Remember, this is **NOT** the class for the passive or lazy, you get out what you put in. This is **your** education; take an **ACTIVE** part in it. I hope that this semester will make the world around you become more relevant to you instead of simply a series of abstract ideas and concepts.

## What Does It Mean to Be an Honors Student?

Expectations of honors students are higher than those for “non-honors” students. This means that you will be asked to do things that you may not have been asked to do before. You will be asked to think critically. This means to look at information or data and interpret its meaning **WITHOUT** the teacher’s specific instruction. You will be asked to apply prior knowledge, from many disciplines, in new ways. You will be asked to have a *mature* opinion that you will be able to support with facts, information, or data. You will be asked to compare and contrast past history with modern history. You will be challenged with ideas that are new or different or against **your** ideas and be asked to understand them (without asking you to change your personal beliefs). You will not be asked to turn in a homework assignment every day, though you will have homework every night (some written, some not). You will be asked to demonstrate your learning and understanding daily through a variety of methods (tests, quizzes, discussion, and question and answer – though these will not all be used every day).

Remember, this is **NOT** the class for the passive or lazy, you get out what you put in. This is **your** education; take an **ACTIVE** part in it. I hope that this semester will make history relevant to you instead of simply a series of people, places, and dates.

## Common Core & Literacy

North Carolina is on board with the nationwide push to increase literacy in public schools. Where typically, literacy is simply thought of as “reading” and “writing,” it encompasses far more. Common Core has become North Carolina’s standard for literacy goals for all K-12 classes and schools. These standards, broken down by grade level, are found on the [Common Core](#) website. While these have just been adapted beginning last year, it is the hope that students will build through the grades, from kindergarten through senior year and beyond, to improve their ability to not only read and understand the words on the page, but to also interpret, analyze, synthesize, and apply what they read to become more meaningful, more creative, and more personal. I will attempt to use many sources of reading to improve your literacy but also attempt to give you opportunity to demonstrate that literacy by using what you have read and learned together. It is my goal to not only increase your proficiency in Common Core standards of literacy, but to improve your American History literacy simultaneously. As we look toward the future, one of the most important components of your education is literacy. Regardless of how much actual core content from a course you use in your daily life, your ability to understand, comprehend, analyze, and synthesize will **ALWAYS** be necessary.

## Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs

It is important for everyone involved to accept the basic underlying principles that govern my classroom. While not specifically stated below, the most important thread is **mutual respect**. My goal is to create a safe and inviting environment based on mutual trust that will nurture each student’s curiosity in the course and courage to explore the subjects beyond what is required in the curriculum.

**Mission:** To increase the achievement of all students by providing content and standards based learning that will also translate to real-world application and productive citizenship for the common good.

**Vision:** That all students will have a better understanding of the broader world around them than when they began their studies. The knowledge students learn in this class will make them more productive citizens and they will use this knowledge to make their environment a better place for themselves, their families, and all people they meet.

### Core Beliefs:

- 1) All students who come to my class will learn.
- 2) Education is two parts: teaching and learning.
- 3) Learning takes place at ALL times – inside school, at home, at work, and everywhere in between. A person must simply be ready to see and hear the lessons.
- 4) It takes cooperation between school and home to achieve the greatest academic success.

### Supplies

Please obtain the following materials, as soon as possible, for this course:

- 1) Loose Leaf Binder and paper
- 2) A highlighter
- 3) A pencil and pen, black or blue ONLY. (not iridescent blue, or with sparkles, etc.)

### Classroom Supplies Wish List

- Tissues
- Disinfecting (Clorox) Wipes
- Hand Sanitizer
- Color Markers
- Color Pencils
- 3x5 Index Cards

### Class Rules

My philosophy on education is simple – to learn. It is important to remember education is not a destination it is a journey. We never stop learning. Likewise, we all can learn from each other. There is more to learn than what is stated in the curriculum and between the covers of the textbook. As a result, there are some basic rules that will go a long way to making everyone comfortable in class and make this a positive learning environment, and while every teacher has slightly different procedures or expectations, all will agree that the following rules apply in all classes.

**Rule #1:** Read the Directions

**Rule #2:** Be responsible for:

**2(a):** YOUR Grade;

**2(b):** YOUR Learning;

**2(c):** YOUR Work;

**2(d):** YOUR Actions

**Rule #3:** Positive Attitudes ONLY

**Rule #4:** Treat others as you would like to be treated

**Rule #5:** Respect other people's property and person

**Rule #6:** Laugh WITH anyone but laugh AT no one

**Rule #7:** Come to class and hand in work ON TIME

**Rule #8:** Do not disturb people who are working

In addition, there are a couple of other ideas with which you should become familiar. These ideas are important for success in all your classes and beyond the classroom.

### **1. There is no excuse for lazy!**

### **2. We make our own luck**

("Luck favors the prepared!" – Edna Mode)

### Class Policies

**Hall Passes & Time on Task:** I have seen through my own experience that all students show improved grades with increased "time on task"; the more time a student spends in the classroom during instruction time and the less time they spend wandering the halls or in the restroom, the higher their grade. However, as it becomes necessary from time to time for students to need to leave the classroom I will allow it, up to a maximum of 5. Beyond that, students will need to repay the time. On the other hand, any student who needs to leave the room less than 5 times will earn 1 bonus point equal to the number of times less than 5 that the student has remaining. A student who arrives to class late should NOT ask to use their hall pass later in the period. As far as I am concerned, you have already used your time out of the class for the period. *I reserve the right to deny or delay a student's use of their hall pass at any time.*

**Start on Time:** As you are aware, LRHS has implemented this program that has reduced the number of students wandering the halls and arriving late to class. The "Start on Time" program is essentially a zero tolerance program for tardiness. Without exception, teachers are **required** by administration to shut and lock their doors when the bell rings to begin class. Any student not in the classroom at that time is late (regardless of how close or far they are from the room, or if their materials are already inside or not). Students locked out of class are rounded up by faculty and administration and assigned lunch detention the next school day.

ALL students, regardless of where they are coming from, must be in class when the bell rings (on the stairs does not count!) Refer to pages 21 – 22 in the Student Handbook.

**Absences:** I follow the school policy for absences that is found in your student handbook (pp. 14 – 17).

**Bullying/Intimidation:** The classroom is designed to be a safe environment. Students and teachers should not only be safe from physical harm, but also psychological harm. Anytime a student is uncomfortable participating in class due to the actions of other students it is considered a form of bullying or intimidation. My goal is to create an environment where students make smart decisions, think before they

speak or act, and behave intelligently. When this happens we have a productive learning environment where we all can learn from each other.

**Eating and Drinking in Class:** A limited variety of foods are permitted in class. However, overtime insect related problems can sometimes arise due to the lack of responsibility of the students. Food, in the form of snacks not meals, will be permitted as long as the students are responsible to clean up after themselves and not leave crumbs, wrappers, or other such food items in the desks. I will not wait until bugs become a problem to prohibit food in class.

**Electronic Devices and Nuisance Items Policy:** LRHS has created a uniform policy for electronic devices or other items disruptive to class/learning environment (found within the disciplinary procedures section of the LRHS student handbook, pages 18 – 20). If I see a nuisance item (including but not limited to iPod, mp3 player, walkman, cell phone, gaming device (such as PSVita), laser pointer) I will call home and am required to take the following steps:

- 1) **First Incident:** Confiscation with parent notification and return of device at the end of the period.
- 2) **Second Incident:** 2 days of Disciplinary Detention (DD) and the parent is required to pick up the device/item.
- 3) **Third Incident:** 1 day ISS and the parent is required to pick up the device/item.
- 4) **Fourth Incident:** 2 days ISS and the parent is required to pick up the device/item.

**EXCEPTION:** Use of a “smart phone” for academic purpose is permitted IF the device is located ON TOP of the student desk. The use of a phone or electronic device NOT on the top of the desk will be considered inappropriate use and will be subject to the policy above.

**Grading:** Assignments will be graded using the following scale based on the type of assignment.

<b>Major Assessments</b>	<b>50%</b>	Test, Projects, Reports	
<b>Minor Assessments</b>	<b>50%</b>	Quizzes (30%)	Periodic evaluation of learning throughout the unit - Potentially daily quizzes involving written explanations based on the homework from the night before.
		Homework / Classwork / Daily Work (20%)	<b>Homework:</b> Assignments given that are to be completed AT HOME. If there is a question if an assignment will be counted as “homework”, please ask. <b>Classwork / Daily Work:</b> Assignment given in class. I will specify if it is homework or classwork. Often times you will not finish Classwork in class, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO FINISH IT AT HOME.

The quarter and semester grades will be recorded as per the school’s grading policy (presently this policy is determined by the State Department of Public Education). I will not round grades that are further than .5 away from the next letter grade. (i.e. 92.5 = A, 92.4 ≠ A)

- A = 93 – 100**
- B = 85 – 92**
- C = 77 – 84**
- D = 70 – 76**
- F = less than 70**

**Make-up Work:**

**Homework/Classwork:**

Absences:	An absent student may make-up missed homework and classwork at home and is expected to turn it in as soon as possible according to the Wake County make-up policy.
“Late work”	This includes any homework/classwork assignment that the student is in class to receive and is present on the day it is due but fails to submit it. These assignments can be turned in late for reduced credit.

**Tests & Quizzes:**

Absences:	Students are expected to make up tests and quizzes that are missed due to absence in a timely manner. This should be done after school. HW Quizzes will be omitted for excused absences.
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**IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND OUT THE WORK THAT WAS MISSED DURING A PARTICULAR ABSENCE. THE TEACHER WILL NOT REMIND THE STUDENT TO SUBMIT THIS ABSENT WORK** (as per Wake County Schools make-up policy and can be found on page 17 in the LRHS Student Handbook). The primary way to learn what work was missed during a student absence is from the online resources provided for you on the class website and homework feed (via twitter). **I expect any student who is absent from class, for whatever reason, to access the missed information and handouts online.**

**Mid-term & Final Exam:**

There will NOT be a Mid-Term Exam. The Final Exam is a state-wide exam, "North Carolina Final Exam." The goal of the NC Final Exam is to test on broad ideas and concepts that are learned overtime throughout a course. It will consist of two sections:

- *Multiple Choice* – cover ideas that will be discussed throughout the semester.
- *Constructed Response* – written section covering big ideas or concepts.

**A word about Homework and Classwork:** Many students believe that teachers assign homework just to make them do more work and cut into their social life. Well that is entirely untrue. We give you homework to give you another opportunity to think about what we have done in class. It also gives you a chance to talk with your parents about what you are learning and allows them to give some input. I find this very important, especially when it comes to current events.

Homework is very important in your preparation for the day's discussion and activities. That is to say, the more time I have to spend giving notes on information that was already assigned in the reading, the less time we will have to do interesting activities in the classroom. Being prepared is directly related to success. The better prepared a student is, the more they will understand the discussion, the more they will be able to participate, the better the questions that student will ask, and the deeper the understanding of the subject. All this will translate into a better understanding of the material which will be demonstrated on tests and quizzes – the bulk of your grade for this course. As a result, I strongly emphasize your preparation for class each day.

In an effort to keep up on homework assignments, in addition to writing it on the board in class, I will be posting the day's homework on Twitter at the address on the front of this handout. If you are already familiar with Twitter and have an account, I suggest you follow this course on your account. If you do not have a Twitter account and do not wish to have one, you can still keep tabs on the homework by visiting the same web address. You may also keep up with the course and get copies of handouts, view related videos and other content for enrichment by visiting my American History website, also found on the front of this website (or use the QR Code from your mobile device).

I can tell, just by grading your homework if you did it while watching television or in front of some other distraction or quickly in an earlier class. Usually when a person does their homework while watching TV they don't read the question correctly or their answers do not make sense. So, for all intents and purposes, doing your homework in front of the TV is pointless because you will not remember what it is that you have read or written. Take the time to put in a good effort. It will pay off in the long run.

Also remember, everything that you do is a reflection of you. If you turn in a sloppy, folded/creased, half completed assignment, it tells people something different than if you turned in a neat complete assignment. So before you turn something in, look at it and say to yourself, "what does this paper / assignment say about *me*?"

**Dress Code:** Student attire has become a concern for administration, faculty, and staff at Leesville, as well as for the Wake County School Board. I expect that all students will adhere to the dress code instituted by the Wake County School Board as described in the student handbook on page 20.

**Amendments:** I reserve the right to amend these policies, as the situation makes necessary. A handout explaining any changes will accompany any amendments to the above policies.

I expect that we will have a GREAT term. We will all be successful by trying to do our best, and hopefully we will all look back on this term as one of the most positively memorable.

Sincerely,  
Matthew Caggia

**CAGGIA**

**HONORS AMERICAN HISTORY I Period 3**

Please read the course expectations and return this signed portion of the paper by \_\_\_\_\_ it will be your first homework assignment of the term. (date due)

Student's Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian's Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_