America: Prophecy, Power, Politics

Start university in Year 11

America: Prophecy, Power, Politics is a Board of Studies endorsed HSC course that offers Year 11 and Year 12 students the opportunity to develop university-standard writing and critical thinking skills, and earn credit towards a tertiary degree. Offered by the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, America: Prophecy, Power, Politics covers new and exciting ground outside the HSC curriculum to enrich the study and understanding of the United States.

About the course

The course will provide a conceptual overview of major issues in contemporary and historical American society, politics, and culture. As the partisan divide in American politics demonstrates, the United States is a nation deeply divided by disagreements over: the role and size of government; religion and the separation of church and state; foreign policy and the nation's role in the global order; and the balance of individual liberties with collective justice.

The course is designed to give students the conceptual tools, research skills and critical methodologies they can apply to understanding contemporary political and policy debates—global, American, and Australian. It will complement other HSC subjects in the humanities and political sciences—regardless of whether they have an American focus—and will provide excellent preparation for humanities and political science at the university level.

The benefits

- Knowledge and understanding of the United States and its impact on the world.
- Contextual knowledge that will enrich topics in the HSC Modern History syllabus.
- Skills in oral and written expression of conceptually difficult ideas; skills in independent critical thinking; and skills in developing evidence-based arguments. These skills will prove useful for essay-based HSC subjects (including History, English, Geography, Legal Studies and Society and Culture) and debating.
- After successful completion of the course, students will gain one subject (a six credit point semester-length unit of study) towards a degree in Arts or other combined degree programs at the University of Sydney. The course may be counted towards a major in American Studies at the University of Sydney.
- The course fee is approximately one-third of the full fee rate for one subject (a six credit point Arts unit of study) at the University. Students who gain admission to a degree—which this subject can be credited toward—will not incur a HECS-HELP debt or be liable for the full fee for this subject.

How is this course recognised?

America: Prophecy, Power, Politics is endorsed as a one-unit option. The course is recognised by the Board of Studies as a Year 11 preliminary unit and forms part of a student’s final HSC record. Board Endorsed Courses are designed for high-achieving students to supplement and extend the HSC curriculum, though the results in these courses are not included in the calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR). The result for America: Prophecy, Power, Politics will appear on a student’s Record of Achievement and is worth one subject toward an undergraduate degree at the University of Sydney.

The United States Studies Centre

Established by the University of Sydney and the American Australian Association with support from the Australian and New South Wales governments, the United States Studies Centre aims to be the world’s premier centre for the study of the United States. The Centre offers a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate programs, including study abroad and internship opportunities. Students have unprecedented access to academic and professional networks with distinguished scholars, policy makers, media and business leaders through our high profile events and research.

Visitors have included: Administrator of NASA and former astronaut, Charles F Bolden, multiple Pulitzer Prize winner and New York Timescolumnist Thomas Friedman, Pulitzer Prize winners Eric Foner, Annette Gordon-Reed and Jack Miles, journalists Peter Beinart and James Fallows, Princeton University Professors Daniel Kurtzer and Thomas Romer, Harvard Law School Professor Mark Tushnet, Stanford University Professor Amy Zegart, and policy makers US Deputy Secretary of State Thomas Nides, United States Ambassador to Australia John Berry, and former Australian Prime Ministers Bob Hawke AC, John Howard AC and Paul Keating.
Course outline

The course consists of the following core modules:

Prophecy
This module introduces and examines foundational and enduring American beliefs including American exceptionalism, the frontier, Manifest Destiny, the American dream, and freedom and equal opportunity for all.

Power
This module discusses America as both a nation and an empire. It considers the rise of American imperialism and expansion; the migration and movement of peoples; borders, security, media, and technology.

Politics
This module discusses the impact of the founding ideas of republicanism, liberalism, and democracy on responses to economic crises, using the GFC and connecting it back to the Great Depression. It analyses the battles over the separation of church and state, and the relationship between conservatism, religion, and politics.

Assessment
Research essay 50% (including essay proposal and annotated bibliography)
Exam 30%
Group presentation and class participation 20%

Session times
Contact hours: 1 x 1 hour lecture and 1 x 2 hour tutorial each week
Time: 4.00 – 7.00pm each Tuesday throughout Semester 1 (3 March – 2 June 2015)
Location: University of Sydney campus, Darlington (exact venue TBC)

Course costs
The cost of America: Prophecy, Power, Politics in 2015 is $775. In 2015 the University's Student Services and Amenities (SSA) fee will be $107.24* (charged at part-time student rate). Detailed information on the SSA fee is available at http://sydney.edu.au/current_students/student_administration/ssa_fee.shtml.

The total fee of $882.24* is payable once you are accepted and enrolled into the course. See information about available scholarships below.

*Please note SSA fees are indicative and subject to change.

Who should apply?
Any student who has an interest in the topics covered and the ability and aptitude to undertake university-level study is welcome to apply. Only students who will commence Year 11 or Year 12 in 2015 may apply to enrol in the course.

Selection process
Applications are assessed by the course convener on the basis of a student’s past academic record and their school principal’s recommendation that the student has the capacity to meet the demands of the course. This takes into account a candidate’s potential to work at university-level and their ability to work both in a team and independently.

Applications
Applications for 2015 open on 7 October 2014 and close on 21 November 2014 at 5pm.
For instructions on how to apply please visit our website at ussc.edu.au/highschool.

For more information
Dr Rodney Taveira
Email: rodney.taveira@sydney.edu.au
Web: ussc.edu.au/highschool

Scholarships
The United States Studies Centre is offering two scholarships: one merit scholarship to a student with an outstanding academic record and one equity scholarship to a student who can demonstrate financial hardship and/or educational disadvantage. All students will be considered for a merit scholarship based on their principal’s report and school report. If students wish to be considered for an equity scholarship please email a statement addressing financial hardship and/or educational disadvantage to Amelia Trial at amelia.trial@sydney.edu.au.

ussc.edu.au/highschool