American Idea(l): Paradigm and Paradox

Course Length: Full Year
Course Credit: 2 | 1 English & 1 History

Course Weight: .33

Driving Question:
• In what ways is America a land of complexities and contradictions?
• How can understanding America’s paradoxes lead us to a deeper understanding of the world around us?
• How can we engage with and enact meaningful change within the broader community?

Big Ideas (Knowledge):
Students will know...
• How to explore the world with inquisitiveness and enthusiasm.
• How to grow in the face of challenge.
• How to share their best ideas with others.
• How to participate in positive local and global communities.
• How to embrace the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
• How to commit to creative solutions.
• How to inspire others to action.
• How to act with compassion, empathy, and integrity, while respecting the dignity of others.

Due to the student-centered nature of this course, the topics are fluid and can change from class-to-class and year-to-year based on the level and depth of student interest.

Broad Topics could include the following:
• Liberty and Justice For All
• My Fellow Americans
• All Men and Created Equal
• This Land is Your Land
• Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness
• America the Beautiful
• One Nation, Indivisible
• The American Dream
• A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand
• The Problem that Has No Name
• Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country

Key Skills:
Students will be able to...
• Conduct research.
• Improve their geographic and cultural literacy.
• Demonstrate empathy and compassion.
• Craft compelling and interesting arguments.
• Synthesize and analyze multiple sources/texts.
• Express themselves logically, both orally and in written form.
• Hone their discussion and presentation skills.
• Refine critical thinking, problem-solving skills.
• Engage in sustained, close reading.
• Take time for reflection in order to improve their skills and knowledge.