

# American Culture & Ethnic Studies (ACES) Graduation Requirement

At a meeting on **June 28, 2018**, the SMMUSD BoE approved a revised set of graduation requirements (6146.1) that included the following:

“[Students must] Pass an additional course(s) from a list of Board approved courses that meet an American cultures and ethnic studies requirement [ACES]. This requirement is equal to ten credits and is to **commence with the class of 2024.**”



# What Does a Course Need to Have in Order to Fulfill the ACES Requirement?

It must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- Include at least **5** perspectives such as (but not limited to)
  - Race
  - Ethnicity
  - Class (SES Status)
  - Gender
  - LGBTQ
- Integrate **all** 20 of the Social Justice Standards
- Include SJS aligned **tasks and rubrics** to evaluate student work
- Include a **culminating project** (i.e. a Capstone, Service Learning, Inquiry Based Learning)



# How Does a Student in SMMUSD Meet this Graduation Requirement?

Students must take  
**11<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History** at Santa Monica High School

At present, the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade United States History course is the **only** course that allows students to fulfill the BoE's ACES requirement.

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The option to get a course ACES certified is open to all academic areas.

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The history department is taking the lead in this work. Building on work started last year, other History-Social Science courses are in the process of being revised to fulfill the ACES requirement and thus offer students further choice.



# What Does the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade U.S. History ACES Class at Santa Monica Provide?



Department	History Social Science	Course Title	United States History--ACES	Course Code	
Grade Level	11	Short Title	US Hist ACES	Graduation Requirement	Yes
Course Length	1 year	Credits Per Semester	5	Prerequisites	None
Meets UC/CSU "A-G" Requirement	Yes (A: History)	Meets District ACES Requirement	Yes	Meets NCAA Requirement	Yes
Required Teaching Credential			Social Science		

## Course Overview

In this year-long survey course, students will examine the major turning points in United States history. After a review of early U.S. history including the establishment of the colonies, the American Revolution, the Westward Movement, and the Civil War & Reconstruction, students begin exploration of major units of study which include the era of Industrialization, America's Rise as a World Power, World Wars I and II, the Cold War, Movements for Equality, and Contemporary American society.

The traditional perspectives on historical events are interwoven with other historical perspectives using a social justice lens, integrating the experiences of diverse people from a range of ethnic, racial, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds. All 20 of the Social Justice Standards (SJS) created by Teaching Tolerance, are woven throughout the course. The SJS include four domains (Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Action) and enrich the content of the U.S. History course by providing a framework for anti-bias education, rich engagement opportunities, and inclusionary pedagogical practices.

The course aligns with the California History-Social Science Framework and investigates important essential questions about the expanding role of the federal government, what it means to be an American in modern times, the United States' development into a superpower, and the changing demographics and increased diversity of the nation during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Students are expected to read and analyze primary and secondary source documents and write evidence based historical argumentative essays. The course culminates with a Project Based Learning activity in which students take on the role of a historians learn the process of conducting and writing research and engage in community action.

New U.S. History ACES approved by the BoE, May 2020  
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Granted U-C "A-G" approval June 2020  
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Officially offered beginning September 2020  
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Embeds engaging instructional strategies  
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Integrates all Social Justice and State History-Social Science Content Standards  
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Provides students with direct instruction on the rhetorical writing & research skills needed for college success

