

Social Studies

Mount Madonna School is committed to preparing students to have an exceptional understanding of the historical, political, and cultural context of their place in the world. Our social studies program prepares our students to be active participants in their community at all levels. The program focuses on producing global citizens capable of discernment and effective civic action. During middle school, students study the ancient world, medieval and renaissance times, and US History. High School students study World History, Government, and US History. They also complete a two-year capstone course in Values in World Thought which includes international and domestic travel. Students also take World Religions and can choose American Women's History senior year.

World History 6 and 7

In sixth and seventh grade, students learn about ancient cultures from all over the world, then progress to focus on Medieval world history in seventh grade. Students begin with the Paleolithic era and end with the Renaissance movement in Europe. Lessons are presented in a hands-on, creative environment that includes projects, research, academic writing, and discussion. Specifically, students build their skills at both persuasive and narrative writing.

US History 8

In eighth grade, students begin with the American Revolution and analyze history and events through the Civil War. A strong emphasis is placed on critical thinking, discussion, and persuasive writing. Students learn how to revise and edit their written work to prepare them for the demands of High School.

World History 9

This course gives students a balanced, comprehensive understanding of global history through practice in all forms of student literacy—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and advancement of skills in notetaking, research and analysis of both primary and secondary sources, and geography. Course themes include the history of science, agricultural and knowledge revolutions, religion, warfare, slavery, colonialism, nationalism, industrialization, migrations, and globalization. 9th graders also focus on geography, with a year-end goal of students creating their own hand-drawn map of the world with all countries labeled.

U.S. History 10 with Honors option

This course is a one-year chronological survey of the social, cultural, and political history of the North American colonies and the United States from the age of exploration to the present day. The emphasis of discussions, readings, and writing exercises will be on analyzing primary sources as well as understanding the role of historians in interpreting themes and events. Students are expected to leave the class with the ability to express ideas clearly in analytical and persuasive writing, incorporating the use of evidence

U.S. Government with AP option (Grade 11)

All MMS Students revisit US History through the lens of Government in their junior year. The students take a one-semester college-level introduction to United States Government and Politics course that prepares them for active and engaged citizenship. Course themes include Constitutional foundations, the roles of the three branches of American government, civil rights and civil liberties, political socialization and beliefs, political parties, the role of interest groups and media in politics, and voting and the electoral process. Students in the AP option study Government with more depth, and are eligible to take the College Board AP U.S. Government Exam in the spring.

Comparative Government and Politics 11 with AP option

Second semester 11th graders take a one-semester college-level Comparative Government and Politics course focused on themes such as political theory, sovereignty and nation-states, institutional power and authority, civil society, political and economic change, public policy, and the role of geography in global politics. The course focused on six representative countries: Great Britain, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Iran, and China. Students who choose to take the Advanced Placement section of the course will be prepared to take the AP Comparative Government and Politics exam offered by the College Board for potential college credit.

American Women's History 12

Seniors have the option to take an elective survey course in American Women's History focused on themes such as work, family, religion, sexuality, and politics. In addition to reading about the lives of women in history, discussion and readings center on how the question of gender has historically been understood according to class, race, religion, and other categories of analysis.

World Religions (Grade 12)

In this course students explore seven religious traditions in a variety of ways. Students use the textbook, look at primary religious sources, explore art and music associated with each religious tradition and have first hand interactions with religious practitioners and traditions.

Values in World Thought I/II (Grade 11 and 12)

"Values" is a Capstone course in Social Studies that spans 11th and 12th Grades, and incorporates trips to Washington D.C., and South Africa or India. Students connect to leaders making a difference through face-to-face interviews in these locations, and prepare for the occasion by reading the interviewee's books and studying their work in an analytical setting that includes reflective dialogue, journaling, presentations, and essay writing. Past interviewees include a wide range of people in the U.S, as well as Nobel Laureates F.W. de Klerk and Bishop Desmond Tutu. Students have interviewed the Dalai Lama and spent time with other schools and non-profit organizations around the world in the program. Curriculum materials include A World of Ideas: Volumes I and II by Bill Moyers. The aims of the "Values in World Thought" program are to develop capacities of self-awareness and to support an ongoing inquiry into the values that inform our actions and our life purpose. Students are expected to strengthen their ability to engage in positive and mutually beneficial relationships with each other and with their communities.