



ATUS History: Course Description and Goals

The ATUS History course has four main goals, all of which require engaged reading, reflection and study; curiosity; and sufficient patience and open-mindedness to understand, appreciate, and analyze the opinions and claims of the living (including your classmates and teacher) and the dead (those whose writings and actions have indelibly stamped us and our world). Goal 1 is to help students become wise, well-informed, responsible citizens and supporters of democracy, in theory and in practice, by ensuring that they understand the significant events, ideas, institutions, and people that shaped our nation's past and continue to impact its present and future. Goal 2 is to help students significantly improve their critical thinking and reading skills by learning to closely read and analyze both traditional and less traditional historical sources from various eras (letters, essays, editorials, news reports, cartoons, poetry, fiction, popular music, political and commercial advertisements, television, theater, and feature films, and of course the textbook). Goal 3 is to prepare students for college-level research and writing in the Social Sciences by giving them a hands-on introduction to working in Regenstein and similar libraries and archives across the nation, and close guidance and practice doing in-depth historical research and writing. Goal 4 is to help students design and complete meaningful, historically relevant academic research projects that demonstrate their competence in the Social Sciences, by giving them opportunities to write and submit op-eds, essays, letters, and research papers to various news outlets and history journals, and design research projects for possible entry in the National History Day competition and inclusion in their college application portfolios.