

PERIOD 9 Content Outline: 1980–Present

The content for APUSH is divided into 9 periods. The outline below contains the required course content for Period 9, which corresponds to our Unit 9. The Thematic Learning Objectives (historical themes) are referenced in parentheses along the way and are included following each segment. You should be confident in answering these questions with substantial historical evidence by the end of the unit. All questions on your assessments will measure understanding of both content and themes. Bolded items emphasize some of the important people/places/things that you are likely to be asked directly about on the AP exam. All content in this outline is potential material on any assessment; however the illustrative examples will not *explicitly* appear on the AP exam (although you may see them on class assessments).

MAIN IDEA:

As the United States transitioned to a new century filled with challenges and possibilities, it experienced renewed ideological and cultural debates, sought to redefine its foreign policy, and adapted to economic globalization and revolutionary changes in science and technology.

Key Concept 9.1: A new conservatism grew to prominence in U.S. culture and politics, defending traditional social values and rejecting liberal views about the role of government.

- I. Reduced public faith in the government’s ability to solve social and economic problems, the growth of **religious fundamentalism**, and the dissemination of **neoconservative** thought all combined to invigorate **conservatism**. (POL-3)
 - A. Public confidence and trust in government declined in the 1970s in the wake of economic challenges, political scandals, foreign policy “failures,” and a sense of **social and moral decay**.
Illustrative Examples: OPEC oil embargo, 1970s inflation, Iranian hostage crisis
 - B. The rapid and substantial growth of evangelical and **fundamentalist Christian churches** and organizations, as well as increased political participation by some of those groups, encouraged significant opposition to liberal social and political trends.
Illustrative Examples: Moral Majority, Focus on the Family

Thematic Learning Objective

POL-3 Explain how activist groups and reform movements, such as antebellum reformers, civil rights activists, and social conservatives, have caused changes to state institutions and U.S. society.

- II. **Conservatives** achieved some of their political and policy goals, but their success was limited by the enduring popularity and institutional strength of some **government programs** and public support for **cultural trends** of recent decades. (WXT-8) (POL-4)
 - A. Conservatives enjoyed significant victories related to **taxation** and **deregulation** of many industries, but many conservative efforts to advance **moral ideals** through politics met inertia and opposition.
Illustrative Examples: tax cuts passed under Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, Contract with America, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*
 - B. Although Republicans continued to denounce “big government,” the size and scope of the federal government continued to grow after 1980, as many programs remained popular with voters and difficult to reform or eliminate.
Illustrative Examples: expansion of Medicare and Medicaid, growth of the budget deficit

Thematic Learning Objectives

WXT-8 Explain how and why the role of the federal government in regulating economic life and the environment has changed since the end of the 19th century.

POL-4 Analyze how and why the New Deal, the Great Society, and the modern conservative movement all sought to change the federal government’s role in U.S. political, social, and economic life.

Key Concept 9.2: The end of the **Cold War** and new challenges to U.S. leadership in the world forced the nation to redefine its foreign policy and global role.

- I. The **Reagan administration** pursued a reinvigorated anti-Communist and interventionist foreign policy that set the tone for later administrations. (WOR-7) (WOR-8)
 - A. **President Ronald Reagan**, who initially rejected **détente** with increased defense spending, military action, and bellicose rhetoric, later developed a friendly relationship with Soviet leader **Mikhail Gorbachev**, leading to significant arms reductions by both countries.

Illustrative Examples: “Star Wars” missile defense system, Start I
 - B. The end of the **Cold War** led to new diplomatic relationships but also new U.S. military and peacekeeping interventions, as well as debates over the nature and extent of American power in the world.

Thematic Learning Objectives

WOR-7 Analyze the goals of U.S. policymakers in major international conflicts, such as the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, and the Cold War, and explain how U.S. involvement in these conflicts has altered the U.S. role in world affairs.

WOR-8 Explain how U.S. military and economic involvement in the developing world and issues such as terrorism and economic globalization have changed U.S. foreign policy goals since the middle of the 20th century.

- II. Following the attacks of **September 11, 2001**, U.S. foreign policy and military involvement focused on a **war on terrorism**, which also generated debates about domestic security and civil rights. (POL-7) (WOR-7) (WOR-8)
 - A. In the wake of attacks on the **World Trade Center** and the **Pentagon**, U.S. decision-makers launched foreign policy and military efforts against **terrorism** and lengthy, controversial conflicts in **Afghanistan** and **Iraq**.
 - B. The **war on terrorism** sought to improve security within the United States but also raised questions about the protection of **civil liberties** and **human rights**.

Thematic Learning Objectives

POL-7 Analyze how debates over civil rights and civil liberties have influenced political life from the early 20th century through the early 21st century.

WOR-7 Analyze the goals of U.S. policymakers in major international conflicts, such as the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, and the Cold War, and explain how U.S. involvement in these conflicts has altered the U.S. role in world affairs.

WOR-8 Explain how U.S. military and economic involvement in the developing world and issues such as terrorism and economic globalization have changed U.S. foreign policy goals since the middle of the 20th century.

Key Concept 9.3: Moving into the 21st century, the nation continued to experience challenges stemming from social, economic, and demographic changes.

- I. The increasing integration of the U.S. into the **world economy** was accompanied by economic instability and major policy, social, and environmental challenges. (WXT-3) (WXT-7) (WOR-3) (ENV-5) (CUL-7)
 - A. **Economic inequality** increased after 1980 as U.S. **manufacturing jobs** were eliminated, **union membership** declined, and **real wages** stagnated for the **middle class**.
 - B. Policy debates intensified over **free trade agreements**, the size and scope of the government **social safety net**, and calls to reform the **U.S. financial system**.
Illustrative Examples: North American Free Trade Agreement, debates over health care reform, debates over Social Security reform
 - C. Conflict in the **Middle East** and concerns about **climate change** led to debates over U.S. dependence on **fossil fuels** and the impact of economic consumption on the environment.
 - D. The spread of **computer technology** and the **Internet** into daily life increased access to information and led to new social behaviors and networks.

Thematic Learning Objectives

WXT-3 Explain how changes in transportation, technology, and the integration of the U.S. economy into world markets have influenced U.S. society since the Gilded Age.

WXT-7 Compare the beliefs and strategies of movements advocating changes to the U.S. economic system since industrialization, particularly the organized labor, Populist, and Progressive movements.

WOR-3 Explain how the growing interconnection of the United States with worldwide economic, labor, and migration systems affected U.S. society since the late 19th century.

ENV-5 Explain how and why debates about and policies concerning the use of natural resources and the environment more generally have changed since the late 19th century.

CUL-7 Explain how and why “modern” cultural values and popular culture have grown since the early 20th century and how they have affected American politics and society.

- II. The U.S. population continued to undergo significant **demographic shifts** that had profound cultural and political consequences. (ID-6) (ID-7) (PEO-2) (PEO-3) (PEO-7)
- A. After 1980, the political, economic, and cultural influences of the **American South and West** continued to increase as population shifted to those areas, fueled in part by a surge in **migration** from regions that had not been heavily represented in earlier migrations, especially **Latin America** and Asia.
 - B. The **new migrants** affected U.S. culture in many ways and supplied the economy with an important labor force, but they also became the focus of intense political, economic, and cultural debates.
 - C. **Demographic changes** intensified debates about **gender roles, family structures, and racial and national identity**.
Illustrative Examples: Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, Don't Ask, Don't Tell debate

Thematic Learning Objectives

ID-6 Analyze how migration patterns to, and migration within, the United States have influenced the growth of racial and ethnic identities and conflicts over ethnic assimilation and distinctiveness.

ID-7 Analyze how changes in class identity and gender roles have related to economic, social, and cultural transformations since the late 19th century.

PEO-2 Explain how changes in the numbers and sources of international migrants in the 19th and 20th centuries altered the ethnic and social makeup of the U.S. population.

PEO-3 Analyze the causes and effects of major internal migration patterns such as urbanization, suburbanization, westward movement, and the Great Migration in the 19th and 20th centuries.

PEO-7 Explain how and why debates over immigration to the United States have changed since the turn of the 20th century.