**The United States in the Modern World 1: Economic and Political Revolution**

**COURSE SUMMARY**

This course traces how economic and political revolution originated, spread, and reshaped the modern world from 1450 to 1865. Students will examine the American experience within the broader context of global transformation, exploring how multiple societies responded to similar pressures and why some responses had more lasting consequences than others. We'll analyze the development of political systems, economic networks, and social structures across different civilizations, investigating how environmental factors, demographic changes, and technological innovations created both opportunities and constraints. Through comparative analysis and contingency thinking, students will understand that historical outcomes were not inevitable and will develop sophisticated analytical skills for understanding complex historical change.

**I. MULTIPLE CENTERS OF CHANGE (1450-1600)**

*Competing Models of Political and Economic Organization*

**A. The 1450 World System**

* Ottoman, Chinese, and European expansion strategies
* Political structures and economic networks
* Environmental pressures and geographic constraints

**B. Demographic and Institutional Disruption**

* American demographic catastrophe and its global implications
* Comparative institutional adaptations across empires
* Silver flows and global economic integration

**C. Religious and Cultural Management**

* Protestant Reformation alongside Islamic empire policies
* Comparative approaches to diversity and integration
* Economic consequences of religious conflict

**II. REVOLUTIONARY IMPLEMENTATION (1600-1800)**

*New Ideas About Government, Economy, and Society*

**A. Economic Networks and Military Innovation**

* Global monetary systems and unintended consequences
* Technology-society interaction and military revolution
* Environmental constraints on political development

**B. Multiple Revolutionary Models**

* American Revolution within global context of political experimentation
* French Revolutionary explosion and Ottoman reform attempts
* Revolutionary contagion vs. independent development

**C. Independence and Democratic Transformation**

* Latin American liberation alongside European movements
* Industrial and democratic transformation patterns
* Comparative success and failure of revolutionary movements

**III. REVOLUTIONARY LIMITS AND LEGACY (1800-1865)**

*Global Impact and Internal Contradictions*

**A. Labor Systems and Economic Integration**

* Comparative approaches to slavery and unfree labor
* Global economic pressures creating conflicting responses
* Industrial development and social transformation

**B. Imperial Expansion and Constitutional Crisis**

* American continental expansion within global imperial competition
* Constitutional systems under pressure from global integration
* Domestic crisis created by international economic forces

**C. Civil War as Global Phenomenon**

* American Civil War reflecting and influencing global patterns
* Industrial warfare and social transformation
* Revolutionary transformation's ultimate contradictions and achievements

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS THROUGHOUT**

1. **Contingency and Choice:** What alternative outcomes were possible during key moments of change, and what factors made certain paths more likely than others?
2. **Parallel Transformation:** How did different societies respond to similar pressures, and why might some responses have had more lasting global consequences?
3. **Politics and Economics:** How do political systems and economic networks interact to create both stability and revolutionary change?
4. **Environment and Society:** What role do geographic factors, climate change, and demographic shifts play in shaping political and economic possibilities?
5. **Global Integration:** How do local developments connect to broader global patterns, and what are the unintended consequences of increasing interconnection?
6. **American Particularity:** What made the American experience distinctive within broader patterns of global change, and how contingent were these developments?