

American Studies/American Lit.

Instructor: Michael Wilson

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American Studies Unit II **"America Grows Up"** 1/7-2/8

During this unit we will examine how our nation grew from a fledgling new experiment into one of the world's most powerful nations. Along the road we will gain some historical perspective on what motivated our growth, how we dealt with other nations, and what impact all of this had on how we view ourselves today. This will involve an examination of both the physical and psychological development of our country. We will pay particular attention to our nation's "moral/ethical development." In addition to our forays into American History, we will also look at the development of important literary characters as they face some similar moral/ethical and developmental issues. We will examine the "coming of age novels," *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Always Running*, *Looking For Alaska*, *Caucasia*, and *Huckleberry Finn*. What do these texts say about growing up or about becoming a "grown up?" What do they say about being an American? These, among others, will be questions that we ask as we take this voyage down the river of American History.

Major Films: *Rebel Without A Cause*

Major Assignments: Lit. Circle Project, *Catcher in the Rye* Essay, and unit exam.