

Social Studies 7
Course Syllabus 2017-2018

Introduction

Welcome to 7th grade social studies! This year we will cover two different topics, medieval history through Western exploration and Washington State History through the present, yet use both contexts to develop core ideas and understandings of past societies and how they operate. Our class will focus on the more general concepts of civics and government, economics and trade, geography and the impacts of natural elements, and history, and in learning about each, we will learn, perhaps even more important than the information itself, methods of researching documents and artifacts to draw conclusions. In short, we will learn to be historians to foster abilities applicable for future inquiry.

Academics:

The first half of our class will focus on the history of medieval Europe and other non-western societies' achievements during the same period. Roughly, we will begin by reviewing some of the major themes of ancient Greek and Roman societies and follow history through the exploration of the New World. We will study the founding and growth of African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Latin American states through the medieval period.

In our second half of class, we will transition to looking at Washington State history and the history of the American West. In order to supply context, I foresee some time being spent to talk about European exploration of the New World and colonial America but only for about a week. Then, we will dive deep into our own surroundings, its stories, and the city we live in investigating topics including American Indian history and treaty rights, exploration and the territorial period—especially the role of trapping, homesteaders, and missionaries in shaping our state. Lastly, we will investigate the civics of our statehood, and its application in our contemporary society and how our state has grown to be an economic and energy powerhouse, and see how our landscape has changed.

Our units will be assessed based on the standards of determined by Washington State: civics, economics, geography, and history. We will learn to investigate curiosities and issues in order to form positions and accurate narratives based on primary and secondary sources. Often, the standards listed above will be assessed using tests, while social studies skills for analysis will be assessed using written assignments.

Grading

As you know, seventh grade is the year in which your grades matter for high school application, so their new found importance should be approached with seriousness and dedication. You should check the online gradebook about once a week. Make it part of your routine to look into missing work and grades you find to be unsatisfactory, and follow up with me to discuss possible reassessment opportunities and strategies for doing better on future assignments.

My class will use two gradebooks: a letter grade book and a standards gradebook. The standards gradebook will be used to track progress of your skills and knowledge according to the ASB standards descriptions responding to the Common Core State Standards. Grades for daily assignments and exercises will be recorded here. The letter gradebook will record grades for assessments on a percentage basis. Reassessments will often be permitted, but these opportunities will be during windows I define.

Missing Work

In my class, I keep a “Notes” book in which you will find handouts from each day within it. In the front pocket, you will find extra copies of worksheets, notes, and handouts. You must self-advocate and check in to find what you missed. If you are confused about the assignments or the skills taught to complete them, see me. Simply, I will not set aside, seek out, and explain to you individually to explain what you missed; that’s a student job. On most occasions, if you email me about a future absence, I will be able to provide the work in advance.

Reassessment Policy

My class will follow middle school protocol for reassessment as outlined in the school handbook:

In order to reassess, the following is required:

- Evidence of effort put into preparation for initial assessment (i.e. completed study guides, notecards, practice problems)
- Students must initiate request for reassessment.
- Evidence of effort put into preparation for reassessment
- Time scheduled based on teacher availability
- Not all assessments have the option to reassess so your best effort should be put into initial assessment

Academic Honesty Policy

My class will follow middle school protocol for academic honesty as outlined in the school handbook:

If a student chooses to engage in behaviors that are academically dishonest (cheating, copying, etc.), he or she chooses to be responsible for the following:

- Completing the assignment or assessment again
- Completing a Time Away form, signed by parents
- Meeting with the teacher, parents, and principal
- Having the incident noted in his/her report card comments

If a student repeats the behavior, he/she is responsible for the following:

- In-school suspension
- Meeting with the teacher, parents, and principal
- Zero credit on the assignment or assessment

- Having the incident noted in his/her report card comments
- Having the suspension noted on his/her cumulative record

Discipline and Behavior

My disciplinary policy is fairly simple: I'll respect you as a seventh grader as long as you respect your peers and me. I dislike learning environments which require a stuffy, authoritarian, and boring regime in order to maintain order, and I don't intend on creating one this year. In order to learn effectively, we must engage material from a variety of angles, and in order to engage material as such, we must rely on each other. Thus, mutual respect is the cornerstone of this process. Given that my basic expectations are met, my thoughts are that I should be able to treat you the age you present yourself as.

There are a few disciplinary expectations you are absolutely required to follow:

1. Follow instructions—if I ask you to do something, do so quickly and efficiently, within reason.
2. Be mindful of the classroom environment—quiet voices and controlled movements are essential to creating an effective learning environment.
3. Listen attentively to everyone, including me and your peers. Show people you care by practicing effective communication strategies, like eye contact, free hands, and good posture.
4. Respect other people and their property—put things back, clean up messes, do not take other people's materials without asking. If you have a concern or disagreement, voice it effectively through calm discussion.
5. Be honest—do not lie or cheat.

In order to best avoid disciplinary action, it is best just to follow these rules. Resistance to these few expectations are likely to waste class time and spoil our rapport. I prefer to engage students with mutual respect, but I will not sacrifice my authority in the classroom

Conclusion

These are the expectations for the year and for my class. Striving to meet them are in your best interest two fold. Firstly, it will lead to a much easier transition into seventh grade and a promising, continuing student-teacher relationship throughout the year. Ask some eighth graders—it'll be easier this way. Secondly, you have the opportunity to learn a great deal, and while I completely understand that each day of middle school is not welcomed with a bright smile, with your professionalism and maturity, we can have a successful class that is not only fun but also intensely engaging.

Please share this syllabus with your parents or guardians and ask them to sign below your name to confirm you understand agree to the expectations of the class. Return it signed tomorrow.

I look forward to a fun year!

Mr. Hostetter

I understand the academic and behavior expectations and responsibilities of the class.

Student Name (Printed)

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date