



Special Topics in Social Studies

2020-2021

Ms. Merritt

Welcome back to another exciting school year! I hope you had a fun and enjoyable summer and are ready to embark on a new learning adventure.

You and I are teammates in this endeavor. I want you to be successful, and I am willing to do my part to achieve this goal. However, you are at a point in your scholastic career where *you* are primarily responsible for your own learning, achievement, and excellence. With this realization in mind, let's begin the year by examining some of the expectations and procedures that will help you be successful this year.

Instructor

Ms. Merritt

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Room 207

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Wolfe City High School

Conference: 8th Period

Course Topics

This class is a unique undertaking. Rather than provide a survey of new information, it builds upon students' preexisting knowledge as they investigate and make connections through conceptual topics. Much like an honors course, it is intended to provide students with

opportunities to challenge themselves, to explore topics of greater depth and complexity, and to prepare meaningfully for higher education.

Texts

A variety of text materials will be used in the course, including current events publications, news articles, primary and secondary source materials, and essays. Students should be prepared to meaningfully engage with any reading material that is assigned.

Course Units (may include the following)

- Democracy and the Republic: The U.S. Constitution
- Cities Past, Present, and Future
- Devolution: The Most Significant Trend of the Last One Hundred Years?
- Democracy in Action: The 2020 Election
- Adversaries or Allies of Convenience: Russia and China
- Introduction to Modernity: The Legacy of the American Civil War
- Genealogy Experience: Your Family History
- Pandemics Past, Present, and Future
- And . . . ? (Student choice may be an option for some course units.)

Grading Policy

Each nine weeks' grade will come primarily from test/project grades. There will be few daily grades, and the overall number of grades may be small in comparison to other classes or to what you expect. This practice is consistent with the practice of most higher education environments. In addition, retests will not be allowed, nor will late work be accepted for credit.

Office Hours

Tutorials, or “office hours,” are available, generally after school (with notice) or by appointment. If you are unable to attend tutorials during the regular time, it will be your responsibility to directly schedule with the teacher an alternative tutorial time. If you require assistance beyond what can be provided during normal class times (e.g., questions regarding make-up assignments), please see me during office hours.

What to Expect from Class

- Social studies knowledge and skills are important components of a quality education. This class will provide you with valuable resources that you will need for higher education and the “real world.”
- Just as you use social studies skills in areas outside of class, be prepared to use other disciplines in this class, as well. “Subjects” are artificial distinctions that do not exist naturally in the world. One of the goals of this course is that you will learn to see connections that are not readily apparent. In doing so, you will become more of a critical thinker.
- Be prepared to read, write, and work in this class. Mastering new information and skills usually requires effort, and keeping existing skills sharp requires practice.
- Acquiring the tools necessary to become a good citizen is an integral part of a high-school education. You should expect to learn about the world around you (now and as it was in the past), contribute to class discussions, support well-reasoned arguments with facts, and *think critically*.
- This class is intended to mirror as closely as is possible in high school the focus and intent of post-secondary social studies courses. Therefore, students should expect to be challenged, to practice skills necessary for future academic success, and to cultivate the body of knowledge expected of a well-educated person.

Expect to read, write, work, and think in this course!

Classroom Rules

1. **Show respect for others and for yourself with your words and actions.** You are in high school, and I expect that you not only know the proper way to treat others but that you will do so. Respectful behavior includes refraining from using inappropriate language. Foul language results in consequences. I expect every one of my students to conduct themselves with integrity at all times. *In short, treat others as you want to be treated!*
2. **Bring all needed materials to class.** This includes homework, textbooks, handouts and other papers, notes, and appropriate writing implements. Be sure that you have wide-ruled notebook paper and a pen *every* day. To be successful, you must be prepared. Failure to prepare is not conducive to success and is unacceptable in this class.
3. **Use blue or black ink ONLY.** You may not use pencil or another color of ink on assignments, quizzes, or written tests unless you have been given permission to do so. Failure to use blue or black ink on an assignment will result in a point deduction. (The exception will be test days, on which a pencil generally will be used.) In addition, the submission of work that appears unprofessional may result in a point deduction. “Unprofessional” appearance includes such things as turning in papers that have ragged spiral edges, are dirty or torn, etc.
4. **Please stay on the outside of my desk area.** You are welcome to approach me, but I prefer that students do not go behind my desk. Please do not open file or storage cabinets without permission, and please leave everything on the bookcase alone unless you have permission to access those items.
5. **Follow all school rules.** This includes the cell phone policy! Any phone and/or other prohibited electronic/communication devices will be confiscated and given to the office. Please do not ask for a warning; this **is** your warning.

In addition to these rules, you should be familiar with some of the more common procedures in our classroom. Understanding and following these procedures will help us to achieve our goals this year.

Tardies

- The school tardy policy will be followed. You can be tardy to class *once* each nine weeks without consequence. You will receive a discipline referral for all subsequent tardies, with the second tardy resulting in a detention.
- Do not be late!

Make-up Work

- Make-up work is *your* responsibility! This means that it is your job to get your make-up assignments AND to turn these in on time.
 - In accordance with school policy, absent students receive one day to complete make-up work for every one day of school that they miss.
 - Do not expect to get credit for work from a one-day absence that is turned in five weeks after you return.
- Make-up assignments are posted in the make-up work binder on the table near the door. If the binder indicates that you need a handout or other document, please check the appropriate accordion folder on the table. When you return from an absence, you should check the make-up work binder to see what you missed. If you have questions or need further clarification, please ask me – AFTER you check the binder.
- This procedure applies to tests and quizzes, too. If the make-up work binder indicates that you missed a test or quiz, it is your responsibility to take the test in a timely manner. You must schedule a time to come before school or after school to take your test; you are responsible to make this appointment and to keep it.
 - Be sure that you make up tests and quizzes within the seven school days allotted by school policy.
- All make-up work must be turned in directly to the teacher. You must personally place your assignment in my hands in order to receive credit for it. Do NOT turn it in to the regular assignment tray unless directed to do so.
- Please let me know if you need assistance or if you have questions about make-up work.

Late Work

- Successful students complete and turn in their work on time. Therefore, late work will not be accepted.

- If for some reason you do not have your assignment in class on the day that it is due, you still may turn your paper in after school without penalty (unless informed otherwise). Please do not interrupt class to turn in assignments.

Academic Honesty

- Academic honesty is absolutely essential for your success in high school, higher education, and the workplace, but it is just as important in life. *Academic honesty is an issue of integrity*. Therefore, *no* academic dishonesty of any kind will be tolerated.
- What is academic dishonesty? Academic dishonesty occurs any time that you take credit for words, work, or ideas that are not your own. This includes cheating on tests and quizzes, copying another student's assignment, and plagiarism.
- Plagiarism occurs when you use text, including *one phrase* from another source without properly citing the source. Plagiarism also occurs when a student merely rephrases someone else's words or ideas without properly citing the original source. The violation does not have to be verbatim to constitute academic dishonesty.
- A student will receive a zero for any plagiarized or copied assignments or for any work that otherwise meets the definition of academic dishonesty. In addition, a referral will be issued and disciplinary measures will be taken against any student who commits a violation of the academic honesty policy.
- Remember that I cannot tell the difference between the work of a student who *copies* another student's assignment and the work of a student who *allows* a peer to copy his or her work. Both occurrences are equally dishonest, and both students will receive consequences for academic dishonesty.

Restroom Breaks / Leaving the Classroom During Class

- You have time between classes in which to use the restroom. Please do not ask to use the restroom, get a drink, retrieve something from another class, or otherwise leave after the bell rings.
- Every student will receive two hall/restroom passes each semester. If you absolutely must leave the classroom for a legitimate purpose during class, you may do so if you have your pass. *It is your responsibility to keep up with your passes!*

- You may redeem up to two unused restroom passes for extra points on your semester exam.

What to Expect During Class

- Successful students know the value of time. We have short class periods, and every minute counts. When you come into class, you will find on either the board or the projector screen a warm-up activity for you to complete. **You should come in and begin working BEFORE the bell rings.** *You may not wait until the tardy bell sounds to begin preparing for class.*
- The agenda for each day will be posted on the front board.
- The dates of upcoming tests and quizzes, assignment due dates, and other important information will be written on the back board. Presence on the board is considered fair notice. It is your responsibility to check the board every day.
- You should cultivate the habit of doing quality work. This means that you apply yourself fully to assignments, studying, and projects. You pay attention during class and participate in activities and discussions. You complete assignments that are **neat** and look professional; there are no ragged edges, doodlings, water damage, foreign substances, etc. on anything that is turned in for credit.
- Please stop talking and give your attention to any announcements that may be made during class.
- You may pack up to leave ten seconds before the dismissal bell unless otherwise directed. *Ten seconds* – you **may not** stop working five minutes before class ends. Doing so says to the teacher that you have completed your assignment and are ready to turn it in *as is*.
- Supplies:
 - You will need a folder, binder, or divided section of your notebook in which to keep social studies papers, notes, and assignments. You will be expected to keep these and other relevant papers and to bring these with you to class *every day*. It is your responsibility to maintain an organizational system that enables you to meet this requirement.
 - blue or black pens
 - a pencil (on test days)

- wide-ruled notebook paper (Please *do not* turn in papers with ragged edges or use college-ruled paper.)
- a spiral-bound notebook
- highlighter
- map pencils (or possibly fine-point crayons)

I believe that you are capable of achieving great things, and I am excited for you to uncover your full potential. It is my responsibility to assist you. Please do not hesitate to let me know if there is anything I can do to help you so that you can not only perform but *thrive* this year.

Now . . . let's have a great school year!!



Student

I have read the Special Topics in Social Studies syllabus. I understand it, and I agree to follow the requirements therein.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian

I have read and I understand the Special Topics in Social Studies Syllabus.

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date