

SOCIAL STUDIES

WORLD HISTORY: MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN TIMES

SYLLABUS

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Mission Statement:

Social studies education is vital at the middle school grade levels for students to learn and hone the skills needed to become critical thinkers. Utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, the social studies curriculum will educate students on how to view issues from different perspectives of society and will reflect a consciousness of current world events. By adopting this global perspective, the courses will promote an understanding of the world, human interaction, cultural diversity, cultural heritage and equip students with the knowledge and understanding of the past, essential for explaining the present and planning for the future.

Commencing in the sixth grade and continuing through the seventh grade, students will acquire the historical, cultural and political understanding of the foundation and growth of Western, African and Eastern civilizations. Through research and writing assignments, interactive learning exercises, debates, and presentations, students will obtain a solid grasp of these societies so that they may better interpret and analyze the historical and cultural underpinnings of our current global environment.

During the eighth grade year, students will apply their analytical skills to studying the formative history of the United States. Students will study the concepts of freedom, liberty, citizenship and democracy in order to understand the foundations, principles and people that have contributed to United States history. The course will include an in-depth study of the American Revolution, and the development of the United States under the Constitution. The course will also address the study of American civics, including the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, participation and representation. Note taking, essay writing, research and debate skills will be honed in this course in order to provide students with the skills necessary for a successful transition to high school.

Required Materials:

History Alive! Textbook
Bibliobase Reader
Pocket Folder

Spiral Notebook
Yellow highlighter

Class Overview:

Moving forward from the height of the Roman Empire, this course explores some of the most critical moments in history. Beginning with the development of Christianity and the fall of the Roman Empire, the focus of the class will turn toward Western Civilization. From the birth

of feudalism to the Crusades, students will learn how the patterns of development established by the ancient civilizations studied in sixth grade evolved following the Dark Ages. By comparing the cultures and history of the European nations to those in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, student will learn how geography and religious ideas can shape civilizations. In studying the Renaissance, the class will focus on the depth and scope of the growth of European civilizations in their art, culture, religion and government. The course will conclude with an examination of the beginnings of the ages of enlightenment and expansion when many of the foundations of political thought were born upon which the United States was based.

This class will be demanding and students should be prepared to work hard. Through essays, projects, group presentation, quizzes and examinations, students will be required not only to demonstrate their ability to learn the materials, but also to analyze and apply the concepts to the global political and historical environment of the twenty-first century.

Grading:

Your grade in this course will be calculated based upon the following:

First Trimester

20%	Projects/Essays/In-Class
25%	Tests
35%	Homework
5%	Quizzes
15%	Participation

Second Trimester

20%	Mid-Year Examination (January 26 & 28, 2010)
15%	Projects/Essays/In-Class
25%	Homework
20%	Tests
5%	Quizzes
15%	Participation

Third Trimester

20%	Final Examination (May 25 & 26, 2010)
20%	Tests
25%	Homework
15%	Projects/Essays/In-Class
5%	Quizzes
15%	Participation

Homework Policy:

Homework is the part of school over which you have the greatest control and which influences your success most. At 20% to 30% of your grade (depending on the trimester), turning in all of your homework in a neat and proper manner will have a significant positive impact on your overall trimester grade. All work submitted is expected to be neat, properly formatted and indicate a sincere effort to complete the assignment.

Please be advised that late homework WILL NOT be accepted and the student will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. Furthermore, all homework must be placed in the "In-Box" on the bookcase *before* the bell rings. Completed assignments which are not placed in the in-box before the bell rings will be considered late and not accepted.

Tests and Study Sheets & Proper Headings on Assignments:

Every student is expected to maintain a pocket folder or binder containing all of the study sheets and tests for each half-year in neat, reverse-chronological order (in other words the most recent material on top). Notes are to be kept in a separate spiral notebook. All work is required

to have your name, date and class period in the top right hand corner, and in the case of homework, the chapter and page numbers, where applicable. Assignments with improper headings or on incorrect paper size will receive a ten-point deduction.

Unplanned, Excused Absences:

If you are absent for an excused reason, it is your responsibility to talk with me in order to (1) turn-in your make-up homework and (2) make-up any tests which were missed. Missed assignments and tests will be turned in or made-up during the Monday study hall. Please be aware that students making-up exams in study hall will have only fifty-five minutes to take the test. Pop quizzes and scheduled quizzes cannot be made-up, but will not be counted for or against your grade. **REMEMBER, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND OUT WHAT WAS MISSED AND TO TALK WITH ME ABOUT MAKING-UP THE WORK. I WILL NOT BE REMINDING YOU OF THESE RESPONSIBILITIES.**

Planned Absences:

Some absences will be planned (i.e., vacation, club sports tournaments, church trips, etc.). You are responsible for turning-in all work which will be due during your absence *before* you leave. Similarly, all tests which will be given during your absence must be taken *prior* to leaving. Therefore, it is in your best interest to let me know in advance as soon as you know that you will be absent so that I can provide you with the list of assignments that you will need to complete. Students who leave on a planned trip and do not complete assignments and take tests prior to departure will receive zeros on all such homework and exams.

Class Participation:

Every member of the class is expected to be a positive participant, and demonstrate that he or she is prepared and has thought about the topic we will be discussing. Increasingly, participation is becoming a more important grade component for the high schools RHLS graduates are attending. Active participation in class is also becoming a criteria for admission into these high schools' honors classes. As a result, the middle school teachers will be increasing the importance and value of participation in all of our classes. In my class, participation will constitute 15% of the trimester grade, and a weekly tally will be kept to track a student's daily participation. Students who participate on a daily basis can expect to receive the full 15% value, while those participating on average 2-3 times a week can expect to receive between 7%-9%.

Credit for participation will not be dependent on answering questions correctly, but on substantively contributing to overall class discussion through comments and questions. Every single student has something valuable to add to the learning process, and a student's willingness to become an active part of that process will be rewarded to a greater extent. Therefore, the student who scores perfectly on all aspects of the class but does not participate will not be able to receive an "A" in the course.

I do recognize, however, that sometimes schedules and other life events can interrupt or prevent a student from fully preparing for class lecture. As a result, each trimester students shall have two (2) free passes from participating in class. *Prior to the beginning of class*, give me a note which simply states you do not wish to participate (you do not need to provide me the details why).

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty, such as cheating, copying, plagiarizing or taking credit for another person's work, regardless of how small the assignment, will result in the student receiving no credit for the assignment and my recommendation that the middle school faculty write no high school letters of recommendation for the student.

Communication:

I believe that it is best when you, your parents, and I are all working together for your success. An open-line of communication is therefore essential for all of us to have a positive relationship. In order to foster this relationship, I have provided the class website, my email address, and fax number. I also welcome students to meet individually with me whenever they like. However, this line of communication must also run between you and your parents. I expect you to keep track of each of your grades and to inform your parents of your progress.

As middle school students, I also expect *you* to communicate with me about problems that you may be having in class. I invite you to come in for help anytime, but I want *you* to ask for help using your own initiative and not mine or your parents. If you are absent, you need to ask me for the assignments – not your parents. If you need help with a topic or have questions, you need to ask me the questions – not your parents. Obviously, if you have made such an effort, and after talking with me you still do not feel that your concerns have been adequately resolved, then you should by all means request that your parent contact me; I will gladly discuss the situation with him or her.

You are the person both your parents and I are trying to help be successful, and you are in the best position to keep communication about your progress flowing to both your parents and to me. Although students sometimes feel intimidated or shy away from meeting with a teacher individually after class, good students learn that meeting periodically with their instructors is beneficial to them and helps make them more successful. Whether there is an assignment you are unclear about, a question about your grade or you just want to continue an interesting discussion cut short by the bell, establishing an effective working relationship with your teachers can only help you get more out of class.

You can expect a stimulating and challenging course, and to be treated in a respectful manner at all times. Whenever there is anything I can do to help you be more successful in my class, you need to let me know. Also, if you have any special needs, I encourage you to discuss them with me as early in the school year as possible, and I will attempt to help you in every way I can.