

Mr. Shinski

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United States History and Government - NYS Regents Class

“Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total; of all those acts, will be written the history of this generation.”

-Robert Kennedy

Overview:

Welcome to 11th grade United States History and Government. I know some of you may be asking why you're studying American History again, and it is a valid question! My answer is two fold - A) You have to. B) There is an infinite amount of perspectives and content in the subject and at this point it is time to focus in on the development of government in the US. If you're interested in going to college most programs will require you to take history classes - many of these are concentrated and a whole semester may be dedicated to one war, one presidency, or they may be a "survey" course like this that spans many years. Doing well in this class can make your life much easier down the road! I also want each of you to study history as if you were living in the moment and to form your own opinions of the events and people that helped shape it. We will be following the NYS Standards, Common Core Standards (ELA), and the NYS Common Core ELA Shifts throughout the year and building on to our academic skill sets!

Target Skills to Develop:

Writing - Expository writing, creating claims, justifying statements with factual evidence from texts.

Reading - Critical analysis, text coding and annotating.

Social studies literacy elements - Maps, tables, charts, graphs, diagrams

Character - The mental and moral qualities of an individual. Tolerance and empathy will be developed through our study of human history including tragedies and great acts of kindness and sacrifice.

Methods of Instruction:

Throughout this year we will be exploring social studies through many forms. Social studies is a multi-media experience and I intend to utilize a vast array of literature, video, and audio on multiple platforms including but not limited to online tools, SMART lessons, and good old fashioned books! I do my best to keep the class entertaining and lively and hope you will all be active participants in the classroom!

Collaboration is key! Have fun but be responsible too!

Expect each day to run the full period.

Key Classroom Policies:

- 1) Be respectful of *everyone* in the classroom (peers, aides, substitutes, guests, administrators, myself, and yourself as well)
- 2) Come prepared and on time. Class begins and ends with the bell schedule.
- 3) Go to the restroom between periods. You may sign out but if data shows you're leaving "often" I will be *forced* to investigate the issue further.
- 4) Don't cheat! It's just not worth it. If you're honestly struggling, let me know, *we will get through it together!*

Attendance and Make Up Work:

Students that are absent should do their best to contact me using the class website, email, or phone (call the school!) in effort to find out what assignments they are missing and where they can find the course materials.

Graded Components:

The grading system used will follow the same schedule as noted in your student handbook as determined by the district.

The class will be graded on a 0-100 scale and assignments are weighted as shown below:

Exams: 25%

Papers: 30%

Projects: 20%

Homework: 25%

Cell Phone Policy:

No cell phones in class unless otherwise noted. Sorry, but there has been a *very obvious* correlation between cell phone use and achievement in this classroom.

Academic Integrity:

Any plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance to the school handbook. Please see me if you have any questions about academic dishonesty including plagiarism.

Test Policy:

A *student recommended* policy; 80% of homework assignments must be completed before being eligible to take a test. Taking a test late will continue to be penalized at 15% to preserve its validity.

Required and Recommended Materials:

- 2.5" binder, D-Ring -Black/Blue Pens
- Binder dividers with labels -Index Cards
- Loose leaf paper (college or wide ruled)
- Pencils (#2 and colored if you'd like your own set)
- 2 Pocket folder

Final Thoughts:

Social studies is way more than just remembering names, facts, and events. History is a cumulative story and it is important to remember some voices get lost. Hopefully we are able to find the lost perspectives and explore them while contributing to our own piece of the puzzle. Consider the following:

- How do inventions and new technology affect the world today?
- How have ideas changed over time?
- What does history reveal about social interactions between individuals and groups?
- Are civil liberties really guaranteed?
- How are people connected to the past?
- What legacy should today's humans leave for the future?
- How have people strived for and achieved social justice and change?
- How do perspectives of historical events differ between individuals, groups, regions, and periods of time?