"The most virtuous works the histories show us are rather admired than imitated... I can do no other than marvel and grieve." – Niccoló Machiavelli

Mr. Lee
U.S. History I – Room 224
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Course Syllabus, 2016-17

Course Description and Objectives

The first year of U.S. history is designed to give students an overview of the first half of U.S. history, beginning with the settling of the North American continent and continuing through the Civil War period. Students will also be introduced to the IB history program and begin developing the historiography skills needed to succeed at the IB level, which include but are not limited to:

1. document analysis (Paper One);
2. persuasive writing (Paper Two);
3. and historical research (Internal Assessment).

Students will also develop note-taking and organization skills that are not IB-specific, but are nonetheless essential to the study of history.

Core Beliefs

Our study of history will be guided by a set of core beliefs:

1. The study of history helps us to understand the world in which we live by helping us see patterns of how human societies behave and change, and helps us develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring individuals who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.
2. We can never know "what really happened," but that does not mean we cannot work toward knowing truth. We can continue to develop a more accurate and unbiased understanding of the past through the study of multiple accounts and primary source documents, such as narratives, treatises, and speeches.
3. There is a difference between fact and opinion, and the ability to understand the difference is crucial to the study of history.

Essential and Theory of Knowledge Questions

1. What is history? How is history preserved and studied? Who determines what history is? Why is a deep understanding of history important? Can we create a perfect historical record?
2. How can we build a government that is strong enough to protect our interests, but not so strong that it is tyrannical? How do we see this tension in the early republic? ...the Age of Jackson? ...Lincoln's presidency?

Class Materials

All students are expected to be prepared for class each day with the following materials:

1. 1.5-inch three-ring binder
2. five dividers
3. loose leaf paper
4. pencil or pen in blue or black ink
5. highlighter

Our primary textbook for this course will be *The Americans*, published by McDougal Littell. We will also make use of excerpts from Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* and Larry Schweikart and Michael Allen's *A Patriot's History of the United States*. Textbook readings, documents, and other supplemental resources will be made available through Google Drive. In addition to using Google Drive, Google Classroom (www.classroom.google.com) will be used as an online assignment log and should be consulted should questions about homework or readings ever arise. My class webpage (www.sturgiswesthistory.weebly.com) will also be used to make maps, charts, and other resources available.

Evaluation

It is Sturgis Charter School's policy to determine a student's final grade based on their quarter grades (20% each quarter), a midterm exam (10%), and a final exam (10%). Within each quarter, approximately one-third of all assessments and assignments will evaluate a student's progress in developing document analysis, persuasive writing, and historical research skills. Each quarter will be roughly determined in the following way:

Classroom participation and preparation	5%
Homework	10%
Tests/Quizzes	50%
Essays/Papers/Projects	35%
Total	*100%*

A student's percentage grade approximates his or her mastery of IB skills, and so their final grade will not be a simple calculation of these categories, but a comprehensive evaluation of a student's progress and abilities. I will entertain requests to make up any assignment up until the day of that unit's test. It is the student's responsibility to see me if he or she would like an opportunity to do so. Remember, *I always count progress.* I am more interested in helping you become the student you can be than in grading you based on the student you were.

Classroom Rules and Etiquette - "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." - James Madison

All students are expected to abide by the following rules:

1. Above all else, have respect for your peers, the learning environment, and yourself and what you are capable of.
2. Attendance is vital to learning. You *must* be in the classroom if you are to learn!
3. Food, drink, and gum will not be permitted in the classroom.
1. Electronic devices should only ever support, not undermine, learning. Inappropriate use of an electronic device will result in its confiscation until next class meeting.
4. Any late assignment will be docked one letter grade for each day of lateness (A to a B). With any assignment, it is better to turn it in late than never at all. Assignments submitted late to Google Classroom must be accompanied with an email to receive credit.
5. The student is responsible for seeing me on their own time in the case of absences. If you miss an assignment, you will have the number of days you were absent plus three days to make up that assignment. If you miss a test or quiz, I expect you to see me the day you return to schedule a time to make up the assessment.
6. There is no tolerance for plagiarism, whether the source is a textbook or another classmate.
7. Please complete all written assignments in blue or black ink.
8. You are responsible for all books borrowed. Please consult with me before taking anything off of my bookshelf.

Pledge

If a student will have trouble adhering to any extent with the standards prescribed by this syllabus, it is his or her responsibility to see me about it. Adjustments will be made on a case by case basis. To help you achieve your goals, I pledge to return all shorter assignments (homeworks, charts, etc.) within a week and longer assignments (essays, exams, projects) within two weeks.

This year, I am available for extra help during Blocks C, F, and G, after school on Tuesday, and at other times by appointment. My office is in Room 216.

I understand my responsibilities as stipulated in this syllabus and pledge to do my very best in this course.

Name: Date:

Signed: