

8th Grade Social Studies

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ATA Room 138

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Communication

Contact times: Monday - Friday, from 8:00 to 8:40 and/or 3:40 to 4:00, unless otherwise occupied by meetings. My policy is to respond to all emails and phone calls within a 24-hour period (work days). Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions and/or concerns.

Curriculum

Social Studies is all about understanding human society. Students in this class will explore many facets of society, past and present, local and global in order to better understand human culture. In this class, students will be expected to read closely, question critically and make connections between ideas and concepts.

Students will also be practicing writing daily. I expect students to use formal response and to always cite evidence from the text when answering questions. We will also be taking regular Cornell notes from readings, videos and lecture.

The following topics will be highlighted during the year.

1. US History. We will be starting with early & colonial America and the events leading to the revolution and independence from England. Students will then examine the United States Constitution and the issues that helped shape the new Republic. We study Westward Expansion and the effects on Native Americans as well as other nations. We look at the causes and events that lead to the American Civil War, and the aftereffects of Reconstruction.
2. Current Events. We will also focus on current events throughout the year, using a combination of New York Times' UPFRONT magazine, CNN 10, and other sources.
3. Research Skills. It has never been more important for students to be able to effectively research and evaluate sources. Students will learn critical thinking and evaluation skills, and apply them to write a culminating research paper.

Homework

Homework will be a regular part of class, but it will generally consist of unfinished class work and various other assignments and projects which will directly relate to class work. If you are ever unsure as to whether or not there is homework, or when it is due, **CHECK THE CLASS BLOG!** (<http://atasuper8.blogspot.com>). The blog is updated regularly (my goal is weekly), and will include both class agendas as well as any homework assignments.

Grades

Grades are based on a basic point system. Points are earned by performance on projects, assignments, tests, quizzes, and homework. Besides tests and quizzes, I generally make assignments and projects worth

approximately 10 points per class day spent working on it. For example, a week-long project would be worth around 50 points.

Also, my class expectation is that students are on task and working to the best of their ability in class at all times. Therefore, missing assignments and projects that were worked on in class (not homework or tests), rather than zero, will be given an automatic score of 25%. Unexcused late work will be accepted with a penalty.

Group Work

There will be a considerable amount of group work and collaboration required for this class. Groups will be chosen in a variety of different ways, including teacher-choice, student-choice and random. For longer group projects, I will do my best to inform students of their groups in advance. If a student is unhappy with their placement, they are welcome to come to me at lunch or after school to request a change. If problems within the group arise, it is expected that students do their best to resolve the issue. If the issue is unresolvable, I will step in and decide the best plan of action.

Absences

In the event of an absence, students are responsible for getting assignments from either...

1. **Class Blog (atasuper8.blogspot.com)**
2. **The absence folder,**
3. **the teacher** (email is best, but before/after school, or during lunch works too. Please not during class!)

Being absent does not excuse you from an assignment! Work missed due to an absence will be accepted at full credit if turned in within one week of the absence. In the event of a long absence, the teacher will negotiate a due date for the work missed. In the event of planned absences, some make up work may be assigned upon return, as the pace of the class is not always 100% predictable.

Classroom Expectations

Students are expected to be safe, respectful and responsible at all times in this class. The following expectations are ***in addition to*** school-wide expectations.

Be Respectful	Be Responsible	Be Safe
~ Respect others' opinions, personal space and belongings ~ Respect the right of others to learn and work without disruption	~ Come to class on time and ready to learn (with all materials) ~ Clean up after yourself ~ Put forth your best effort on all activities	~ Move around the room calmly and quietly ~ Follow all technology rule ~ Push in your chairs

A Few Extras ...

1. No candy, junk food (including any food that makes your fingers greasy or turns them orange), soda, or energy drinks, and *all drinks must have screw on lids*.
 - a. Healthy snacks are allowed, but should **not be a distraction and should be kept away from technology**.
2. Toys, cell phones, headphones, and other distractions should remain in your locker.

Your first social studies assignment of the year! Please take this class outline home and share it with your parents/guardians. Once you've done that, please sign and print your name below, then have a parent/guardian sign. Turn in this sheet and keep the remainder of the outline in your binder.

I, _____ (student name), understand the expectations of this class. I have discussed this with my parent/guardian.

Student Signature Date Per #

I, _____ (parent/guardian name), have read through this syllabus with my child and understand the expectations of this class.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Parent/Guardian: What is the best way to reach you?

Email Phone (home or work?) Other _____

When is the best time of day to reach you?

Morning Mid-day Afternoon Early evening

Anything else you'd like me to know?