

Friends Academy

Seventh Grade Social Studies: Modern World Cultures

Mr. Hernandez, Room 206

Course Description: This seventh grade course is focused on the cultures and peoples of the world. We begin the year diving right into what it means to be a community ourselves - what makes our culture, and then proceed into an in-depth look at how Immigration shapes our world and our country. We will acquire a deep knowledge of the Environment, World Religions, the ancient and modern Mayan people and many more important subjects as we move throughout the year. We will focus on education and democracy late in the year as a look at World Cultures hopefully allows us to turn inward and observe ourselves.

We have partnered with the organization Facing History and Ourselves to develop curriculum as well as to research and maintain best practices to ensure the best possible Humanities education for our students. Facing History and Ourselves emphasizes the role of the learner, the individual, in understanding any topic with the end goal of empowering students to understand why and how education is relevant and actionable.

A major focus of this year's study will also tie in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - both for our community as well as a look at how various cultures and communities around the world deals with these issues.

Of primary focus in this class are the academic skills needed for further academic exploration. We will work on note taking and organization, oral presentation, and research paper writing as well as completing projects within a group. We will work hand in hand with the English department to create a truly cross-disciplinary set of knowledge.

An important goal for the year is to help students begin to contemplate our study of world cultures as "true social scientists." I hope each student will find a part of themselves in the people, cultures, beliefs and values we will study this year. Rather than be passive receivers of information, students will explore the world through a variety of sources and learn to make their own conclusions by thinking critically about issues facing the world community. This will be a student-centered class. I also hope to inspire students to individually explore their ideas, share thoughts and opinions with confidence, and always strive to do their best work.

Materials: Geography Alive! TCI 2011

Geography Alive!: Interactive Student Workbook TCI 2011

Students should always be prepared with note paper, pen/pencil and the previous night's homework. Students will need internet access and will need their Chromebooks in class and charged every day.

Classroom Policy: While expected to follow the general behavior policy for the school, we are also in the process of learning how to talk and listen to each other. This emphasis on "Civic Discourse" will be upfront on our minds all year long as we learn to discuss subjects on which people disagree, while remaining open to hearing and respecting other points of view. Each class will also be creating its own set of student-created norms which will guide us through the year.

Assessment Methods: Engagement with the materials and creative, evaluative thinking are integral to our work this year. Students will be expected to express both factual knowledge and integration of their own ideas in a number of ways. We will also use various activities to develop map reading skills, oral presentations, and basic study techniques. An emphasis will be placed on students to develop their writing skills through essays, as well as through other writing activities. Students will also be expected to demonstrate their listening and speaking skills through Socratic Seminars.

Students will be evaluated based on their performance in these areas which may often depend on their class participation and behavior. Active listening and verbal contributions are both important keys to success in this course in all areas.

Grading Policy: Assignments are worth points depending on the breadth or depth of the material covered. The number of points will also be made clear to the students when the work is assigned. A student's points will be divided by the total possible points during a grading period to determine the grade. In addition, classroom participation and behavior may be reflected in the student's overall grade. Additional questions assigned throughout the quarter will offer opportunities for extra credit and retakes.

Extra Help: Any student can raise comprehension and grades by seeking extra help.. I will gladly arrange for times to meet with students. 15 minutes of extra help time is in each student's schedule Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 11:10 to 11:25. I can also meet with students before or after school, but please request an appointment to make sure I can be there on that specific day.

Homework and Late Work: Homework will be assigned to prepare students for classroom activities, supplement and reinforce classroom work, provide students with skill practice, or provide time to work on long-term projects. Unless otherwise announced, homework will be due on the day following the day it was assigned.

Written papers, essays, short stories, etc. will be allowed to be redone at full credit. If students wish to redo an assignment, they must work out a schedule with me and keep to it. Mastery is the goal here.

Academic Integrity: In keeping with the academic honesty policy, the work that any student brings to class should be his or her own, irrespective of whether it is being collected or graded. Academic Integrity is a very important subject to me and I hope I will be able to teach my students how vital it is.

Finally, if you have any concerns about progress, assignments, or the course itself, please feel free to talk with me. Feel free to email me at: paul_hernandez@fa.org

Thank you.