IM/HONORS U.S. HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

2026-2027

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Hi! I'm Mrs. Gerfen and this is my 22nd year at Sinaloa Middle School! I grew up in the SF Bay Area as the oldest of four kids. I earned my B.A. in History from Whittier College and my credential from CSU, Fullerton. I live in Simi Valley with my husband and our dog. In my spare time I enjoy reading, traveling, and spending time with my family – especially my 4 nieces & two nephews. However, my greatest passion in life is teaching history. History is the unseen fiber which connects us to each other and to the past. The study of history ties together math, science, language, literature, art, sports, music & more. I am so excited to share my passion for history with my students this year!



**Grades are earned (not given) by showing mastery of the CA State Standards & History Framework in the following ways:*

- ☆ Geography Activities
- ☆ Class Activities
- ☆ Inquiry-based projects
- ☆ Summative Unit Exams
- ☆ Oral Presentations
- ☆ Document Based Analysis
- ☆ Reading novels with historical connection

Course Overview

Educational standards describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject in each grade. In California, the State Board of Education decides on the standards for all students, from kindergarten through high school. Information regarding specific standards can be found at www.cde.ca.gov. The California Department of Education helps schools make sure that all students are meeting the standards. Students in 8th grade US History will learn about the founding of the United States through the development of our Constitutional government. They will also learn about the growth of the nation through the 1800s and the causes, course, and consequences of the American Civil War and reconstruction of the nation. Eighth grade concludes with lessons about post-Civil War America at the turn of the century.

This course is part of the International Mindedness program and is an Honors-level rigor course that uses the approaches to learning taught in Royal High School's International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma program as well as the skills inherent in Advanced Placement and College Prep courses. This course will emphasize a deeper understanding of and knowledge regarding the history of citizenship in the US. Students will identify the definition of citizenship, how that definition has changed through the development of the nation, and how citizens get involved in the development and course of their nation. Students will be exposed to the impact the development of America as a country has had on world affairs and America's place in the broader scope of history. Students will be given opportunities to participate in service learning through "citizen action" activities.

Grade Weights & Scale

Weights

Class Assignments = 15%
Progress Checks = 10%
Summative Exams = 20%
Written Response = 25%
Projects & Presentations = 30%



Scale

A = 90% - 100+%
B = 80% - 89.99%
C = 70% - 79.99%
D = 60 % - 69.99%
F = 0% - 59.99%

I do not round grades & I do not assign +/- grades

Supply List

- FOLDER (TO BE LEFT IN THE CLASSROOM)
- BLUE OR BLACK PENS
- PENCILS & ERASERS
- SPIRAL NOTEBOOK (TO TRAVEL DAILY BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL)
- WIRED HEADPHONES (NO AIRPODS)

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES:
*3"X5" NOTECARDS *RED/PINK PEN
*COLORED PENCILS

TEXTBOOK SHOULD BE COVERED & LEFT AT HOME



Please Notice This

Academic Dishonesty

Any type of academic dishonesty (cheating, forgery, bribery, plagiarism, copying, using work from a previous year, inappropriate/unapproved use of AI, etc) will not be tolerated in this class. Penalties for academic dishonesty include a drop in your citizenship grade, parent contact, and office referrals, and grade consequences. For further reference, more information on academic dishonesty can be found in the student handbook available on the Sinaloa School website.

Classroom Rules & Expectations

The SABER CODE is the foundation for behavior expectancies on this campus. This code, along with our standards for citizenship/ work habits, the school tardy policy, and the school discipline policy are included in the student handbook which can be found on the Sinaloa Middle School website.

*#1Rule = no talking when it is not your turn
*#1 Expectation – RESPECT – Students will demonstrate respect to the classroom, the teacher, the material, peers, and to themselves always
*Phones may not be visible in the classroom AT ALL
*No gum, food, beverages (except bottled water) allowed
*Hats, hoods, beanies, sunglasses, & gloves are NOT to be worn in the classroom
*No Bluetooth devices or air pods may be used in class
*Backpacks & large purses/bags are not allowed in this class



AERIES USAGE, GOOGLE CLASSROOM, & STUDENT GMAIL ACCOUNTS

- Students will be expected to access Aeries to track their grades in this class. Grades will (in general) be updated once a week by Monday morning. Students and parents should check Aeries once a week.
- Google Classroom will be a key method for tracking work and staying up-to-date on class happenings. Students should check Google Classroom daily.
- Email is an important tool for communication between students and their teachers. Students should be checking email daily and using emails as a way to communicate with teachers. When an email is sent, it will be responded to within 24 hours. Students should check their email for a response prior to checking in with the teacher.

Homework Policy

Nightly homework will not be given. However, students are expected to spend 20 minutes a night supporting their learning in history class. Activities that can/should be performed during this time include: studying, reading, working on projects, finishing late/missing work, reviewing notes, talking with family about what they learned.

Absent Work Policy

When a student has an excused absence, they have as many days to make up the work as days they were absent. Students with an unexcused absence are expected to turn in any assignments they missed the next class day. Students should check Google Classroom to stay up-to-date on work when they are absent. If a student misses a test, they are expected to schedule a make-up immediately upon their return to class.

Late Work Policy

Students have two weeks to turn in an assignment late and still receive credit. Long-term assignments like projects will lose credit based on the number of days late and the overall value of the assignment. Once an assignment is no longer eligible for credit, a mark of "X" will appear in Aeries and a grade of "0" will be earned.

Absence & Tardy Policies

- **School Tardy Policy:** On-time arrival at class is a component of school citizenship. At 3 tardies, parents will be notified. At 5 tardies, students will receive an "N" in Citizenship for the class. At 7 tardies, parents will again be notified. At 10 tardies, students will receive a "U" in citizenship for the class and a parent conference will be requested. At 11+ tardies, additional administrative consequences will be assigned.
- **Classroom Absence Policy:** If your student knows of their absence prior to its occurrence, please inform the teacher so that arrangements about class work can be made. For unexpected absences, check the episode calendar or Google Classroom. Students who are ill should stay home from school, as studies show that students who go to school sick perform less well, affect the overall classroom environment, and subject others to potential illnesses.

This International Mindedness/Honors classroom is a collaborative learning classroom. Students will work on various partner and group activities and receive participation credit. Because of this, daily attendance and active, cooperative participation is important.

CONSEQUENCES

- Parent Contact/Conference
- Removal from classroom
- Referral to AP or Counseling
- Lower Citizenship Grade
- Loss of Classroom privileges
- Invitation for parent to accompany student to class
- A disappointed teacher

REWARD & RECOGNITION

- Gerfendor Galleons (extra credit points)
- Reward Tickets
- Positive parent contact (notes, e-mails, calls)
- Participation in classroom games & activities
- Better knowledge & understanding of the material
- A happy teacher



Congratulations! You read through and made it to the end of Mrs. Gerfen's classroom management plan and policies. Students, if you are reading this with your parents, write me a quick note about what topic/event/person in Early American (before 1900) history you are most interested in learning about along with the phrase "History, the story of everything". This can be turned in for extra credit!!

