

American History I Syllabus

Northwest School of the Arts

Mr. Vitale

Course Overview: American History introduces our nation's historical legacy and requires comprehensive reading and writing skills and an ability to finish daily homework. This course covers United States history between 1491 and 1877. Course material is taught chronologically as set out by the NC standard course of study, available at the NC DPI website.

Course Schedule: (Pacing includes testing)

UNIT 1—European Exploration, Columbian Exchange	(10 Days)
UNIT 1A--The settlement of the 13 English Colonies	(10 Days)
UNIT 2—The American Revolution	(10 Days)
UNIT 3—The Young Republic (Critical Period)	(10 Days)
UNIT 4—Division, Expansion, and Reform	(15 Days)
UNIT 5—Manifest Destiny	(12 Days)
UNIT 6—A House Divided- The Civil War and its aftermath	(19 Days)
UNIT 7—The American West	(4 Days)

TEXTBOOK: We will use a variety of sources including the following textbooks:

The Americans, McDougal Little, (subject to update)
Creating America, A History of the United States, McDougal Little

It is the student's responsibility to complete the assigned readings. Seriously. Read the assignments.

Required Materials:

Materials: Students are required to have a (1+ inch), **3-ring binder** exclusively for this class. "*Exclusively*" means you don't cram you math and English assignments into your HISTORY notebook. To keep you honest, there will be spot notebook checks. This means you shouldn't leave it under your desk when the bell rings in your race for the door. If I have to hand deliver it to you in another class, its going to be awkward, I promise!!!

Formal and Informal Grading:

Formal – 70% There will be lots of formal grades every 9 weeks. Expect unannounced quizzes on required readings. Assignments can be treated as a test grade depending on their complexity.

Informal – 30% If formal grades = 70%, that probably means informal grades count for 30%. Informal includes homework, classwork, and student involvement. Class participation is assessed through student comments, helpfulness, behavior, preparation, on-task behavior and how much you have upset the teacher that day.

Extra credit is rare, but it does exist. Like Leprechauns, rainbows and honest politicians.

REMEMBER-THERE IS ALWAYS HOMEWORK!!! Your homework misses you when you don't pay attention to it. It cries when its left alone. It's very sad when it's trapped in a bookbag. Don't make me report you for leaving your homework in a hot car with the windows rolled up.

Attendance and Make-up Work

- 1) Students are allowed 10 absences per year. Missing more than 40 minutes is considered an absence. (CMS Policy)

Grading Policy

The long awaited grading scale is as follows:

90-100 A 80-89 B 70-79 C 60-69 D 59 or Lower F

Late Work Policy:

- 1) Students are expected to turn in all work when due. Students will be allowed a maximum of (5) days for an EXCUSED absence and points will be deducted. It is the **student's obligation** to approach the teacher immediately when they

return because teachers are forgetful and protected by CMS policy from having to hunt you down to complete missing work. (CMS Policy).

- 2) Students with UNEXCUSED absences who do not turn in their assigned work will be penalized under CMS policy.
- 3) Students who miss a chapter/ unit test must make it up at a mutually acceptable time within a maximum of 5 days per CMS policy. That means you and I have to find a good time to do it. That's not going to happen while you're supposed to be in another teacher's class. Before or After school is best, even if it is inconvenient.
- 4) Grading is final at the close of each grading period. **Period!** Come to me early with concerns, requests, bribes, extra credit, etc.

Remember-Late assignments are penalized—no exceptions. See me **BEFORE AN ASSIGNMENT IS DUE** if you have a problem or concern about a due date. Definitely see me ahead of time if you are planning on being sick/injured so we can schedule the illness/injury ahead of time.

Cell Phone Policy:

Except for approved activities, don't pull out a cell phone in class. This is a **BIG DEAL** for me. It is especially true during tests or quizzes. While we encourage technology in the classroom at times, camera/texting/calls are strictly forbidden. Please do not do something stupid. Common sense goes a long way. There was a reason George Washington didn't have a cell phone.

Lecture and Discussion: Students will be responsible for taking notes of class discussion. Students will be expected to participate in class discussions so come prepared to share what you know.

Quizzes: Quizzes can be given with advance notice or at random. Some quizzes may not be counted at the teacher's discretion. Pre-quizzes will not be given because there is no such thing.

Activities/Projects:

Civil War Game: A former NWSA teacher developed a game designed to match students up against each other. The game will divide classes into either Union or Confederate soldiers where they will use their knowledge to score points against their opponents. A valuable prize awaits the winning team.

College Preparation Project: It is our hope all our students will be able to pursue educational or advanced employment opportunities after leaving Northwest. With this goal in mind, students must complete a college application during the winter break, complete with essay. The application will be graded and returned to the student for use during their senior year. Students will also complete a scholarship application during the Spring Break. Scholarships are easier to apply to than many families realize and may help pay for higher education.

Final Exam: At the completion of the course, all CMS students will take a state issued final exam (NCFE) given in June of 2018. The exam will consist of multiple choice with reading prompts. You will not be asked to write a novel about American History but if you paid attention in class, you could.

Videos and DVD's: Permission below will be required to take full advantage of videos, including "Movie Nights" and special showings. If you don't want to sit by yourself while the rest of the class is enjoying a movie excerpt, your parent can request you to finish an alternative assignment instead. Your guardian's signature below signifies your consent to classroom viewing of historically related content. Some possible selections include, but are not limited to:

- "The Century" with Peter Jennings. ABC News
- "First Invasion- The War of 1812". The History Channel
- "The American Revolution" parts 1 and 6. A&E
- "The Civil War" parts 1 and final episode. Ken Burns, PBS.
- Saving Private Ryan, Last of the Mohicans, The Patriot, and other excerpts.

Academic Honesty: All work must be your own. Any time you use another person's words, answers or ideas, you must give proper credit to that person by citing their work. I assume that you are all honest so resist the urge to copy your friend's wrong answer, thereby tipping me off that you have both cheated.

CLASS SCHEDULE: Classes meet daily and follow the CMS schedule. Please arrive on time. A student more than 40 minutes late is marked absent. If a student misses more than 10 classes/academic year, he/she cannot pass under North Carolina law without remediation. My experience is that students who miss class are the ones most likely to fail, much like the antelope straggling behind the herd is most likely to wind up in a nature documentary. Going on vacation or waking up late are not excused absences unless you have an amazing relationship with Dr. Lockhart.

By signing, student and parent agree to abide by the expectations set forth above.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Student Name: (Please Print) _____ Date _____

Student Signature: _____