



Mr. Mitchell's Social Studies Class

The Phoenix Team 2010-2011
Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Welcome to the 8th grade! This is the second year of our looping team and then all are on to the high school. With a lot of hard work and perseverance, you will all succeed. Push yourself. Please read the following carefully, sign at the bottom of this page, and return it to me.

1. **Curriculum:** We will start off the year finishing the current events part of the East Asia Unit on North and South Korea ([Conflict & Cooperation Project](#)). All classes will follow the 8th grade [World History](#) curriculum for the remainder of this year. The units of study will include: [Ancient Greece](#), [Ancient Rome](#), [Europe After the Fall of the Roman Empire](#), [The Rise of Islam](#), [Empires and Kingdoms of Sub-Saharan Africa](#), and [Civilizations of the Ancient Americas](#). Some lessons might be abbreviated or elaborated upon depending upon class understanding and time. The goal of our curriculum is for students to understand the past in order to better understand the present. Our department [Thematic Essential Questions](#) will continue to be the focus of all lessons.
2. **Composition Notebooks:** Each student will be required to keep a detailed notebook that will include responses to various prompts, questions, notes, etc. covered in class. These responses and content included in this notebook will be graded and will help to serve as an ongoing assessment of each student's progress.
3. **Current Events Connection:** All students will be required to find current articles in newspapers, magazines, online news sources, etc. that connect to the Thematic Essential Questions. See the department [Current Events](#) webpage online for tools and handouts.
4. **Portfolios:** All students will be required to keep a working portfolio of their work in class. I will provide a file cabinet and folders for this purpose. Their work will be compiled according to evidence of their understanding of the Thematic Essential Questions in our Social Studies curriculum.
5. **Textbooks:** The class will use two textbooks this year: Prentice Hall's World Explorer The Ancient World and Medieval Times to Today. The texts are available online and linked throughout corresponding to the online curriculum (see me for the password). I have a class set as well and will issue one to any student who has difficulty accessing the Internet at home.

6. **Email/Contact Me:** [trmitchell31@yahoo.com] The best way to contact me is through email. My Yahoo! Account is much more dependable than my school account. Call the school at 822-9426 to reach me by phone and leave a message (I do not have a phone in the classroom). Given I check email everyday and on my cell phone, I will get back to you as soon as possible.
7. **Student Email:** All students need to have a web-based email account (One that they can check and use at both school and at home). This is very important in saving work to work on at home and then at school the next day. Most importantly, many students email me with various clarifying questions on work from home. Contact me if you are unsure what is safe for your child.
8. **Projects/Evaluation:** All students will participate in class and group projects during the year. It is essential that students learn to work with each other effectively, yet understand that all students will receive an individual grade. I use teacher, peer, and self-evaluations to best determine individual contributions.
9. **Class and Department Website:** While some assignments cannot be posted online as they are implemented in class, substitutions will be posted in case a student cannot attend school that day. All student handouts and texts can be accessed on the website. See me for passwords to protected documents and pages.
10. **Weekly Agenda:** The class schedule will be posted here at the beginning of each week. This is subject to change given student understanding.
11. **Trimester Assignment List:** All assignments covered and graded for the trimester will be listed here.
12. **Grades:** All grades are posted online. These are updated regularly. Each student is assigned a number. Please check on your child's progress frequently. (Contact me for the username and password)

Please sign below indicating you have read and understand the class syllabus above.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

I look forward to a successful year of working together,

Ted Mitchell – Phoenix Team Social Studies