**8th Grade Social Sciences Syllabus**

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**Course Overview:**

The Social Sciences are not simply the study of wars and dead people on a timeline. Together, we will explore and interact with the concepts of government, history, economics, and geography to better understand the world we live in and how it came to be. We will work collaboratively while examining both the positive and negative events of the past and present with the ultimate goal of using this knowledge to inform our own ideas and choices. We will take positions on difficult topics and support them with evidence while still listening to and considering opposing viewpoints.

At the end of this course, students will have increased their ability to **think critically and civically**. By better understanding the factors that have influenced and continue to influence our world—as well as how to analyze this information—students will be better prepared to become thoughtful decision-makers as they continue to grow and engage in civic life.

**Materials:**

In addition to standard school materials, students will need space in a **three-ring binder for Social Sciences and two dividers**. This will hold notes/handouts and reference documents for Social Sciences and will be used every day.

**Grading:**

Grades will be assigned based on the points **earned** for satisfactory completion of work including but not limited to: Warm Ups, Classwork, Homework, Quizzes, Tests, and Projects.

**Homework:**

Students will occasionally be required to complete assignments outside of class time to successfully achieve our learning goals. This may include reflecting on the material covered in class, researching or reading to prepare for a class activity, and/or any work from class that was not completed in the class time provided. **All work should be done completely and neatly.**

**Late Work:**

Any late work turned in within a week of the due date will receive a **50% deduction in credit**. Any late work not turned in by that deadline will receive no credit.

**Extra Credit:**

I do not assign extra credit.

**Guidelines and Principles for Discipline**

Rules in my classroom are few. I believe that all students are different and that all actions and reactions are very personal in nature. Effective discipline involves a few overriding principles rather than a long list of specific rules. Situations are dealt with as they arise with the focus on enabling the student to grow and learn from his or her actions.

**Guidelines for Student Behavior**

1. **Be respectful.** Some ways to be respectful include:
   * Following directions.
   * Listening to others and giving your attention.
   * Using appropriate language for the school environment.
   * Keeping your personal space and not encroaching on others’.
2. **Be responsible.** Some ways to be responsible include:
   * Arriving on time to class.
   * Coming prepared with your supplies and having your ready desk.
   * Staying on task.
   * Doing your best and getting help when you need it.

I will operate with the following principles as my guide:

* I will react without anger or haste to problems.
* I will provide consequences that are not punitive but that allow the student to experience the result of a poor choice, enabling him/her to make better choices in the future.
* I will proceed in all situations with the best interests of the student foremost in my mind—academic, social, and emotional well-being will be fostered.
* I will guide students toward personal responsibility and the decision-making skills they will need to function in life.
* I will arrange consequences for problems in such a way that the student will not be humiliated or demeaned.
* Equal is not always fair. Consequences will be designed to fit the problems of the individual students, and they may be different when the problems appear to be the same.
* I will make every effort to ensure that, in each situation, the student(s) involved understand why they are involved in consequences.
* If I at any time act or react in a way that a student *truly* feels is unjust, that student need only quietly say to me, “I’m not sure that’s fair.” I will arrange a private conference during which the student can express to me why he/she feels my actions were not fair. This may or may not change my course of action. I am always open to calm, rational discussion of any matter.

**Expectations:**

I expect all students to take pride in all areas of their work. All assignments should reflect that pride by being turned in on time, neat, well-organized, and with a proper heading. Unfortunately, if I cannot read an assignment because it is too sloppy, I may not be able to properly grade it. You may meet with me any time before or after school to see or discuss your grade. If you ever have any concerns, please share them with me. Share this syllabus with your parent/guardian. Your signatures below will reflect your understandings of these expectations.

Student Name:

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Student Signature:

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Parent/Guardian Signature:

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