

7th grade

SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE SYLLABUS



MR. HOWE

Welcome to Middle School, a new adventure in your academic journey. It might seem foreign at first, but you will soon get into the swing of things. Our Social Studies curriculum takes us on great journeys of exploration visiting the world's many wonderful civilizations of the medieval period. Please read this syllabus carefully & return the completed last page promptly. Save pages 1 through 3 for your records.

Course Overview

The course of study this year examines the social, cultural, and technological changes during the period C.E. 500-1789, the Medieval Era that falls between Ancient and Modern History. It begins with the fall of Rome and extends all the way into the Renaissance, the Age of Exploration, and the Enlightenment.

Instruction will largely be interactive with a strong focus on the multiple learning intelligences, cooperative interaction in group work, and spiraling curriculum as it applies in a historical context. The content will all be standards-based, and I have attached a copy of the 7th grade standards for your review.

Our district continues to use *History Alive!*, a text and program that truly engages students in learning. Your child will be an active participant, experiencing history through innovative teaching practices that include dramatic role playing, creative simulations, dynamic group projects, and writing from a historical perspective often with a persuasive focus.

As you can see by scanning those 7th-grade standards, your child will be learning about a number of sensitive and controversial topics. The course and materials have been designed to deal with these topics objectively, respectfully, and in accordance with standards set throughout the country.

Student Texts

The principal guide for 7th-grade Social Studies is *History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond*. It is a terrific book, free of distracting clutter and very reader friendly, one that many students find to be fun and exciting to read. It does, however, have little impact if it is not read. While we often work our way through its pages within class, it is the student's own personal experiences with the text that will drive his or her learning.

The secondary text is the *Interactive Student Notebook*, the workbook that correlates to the text. We will be actively engaged in the content of the workbook, particularly the Reading Notes sections that help establish the key ideas of each chapter. It is imperative that each student focus on providing complete, accurate responses to the questions or directions within the Reading Notes. These will help to build a solid understanding of the matter at hand and a sound foundation in preparation for unit exams.

Pink Sheets

At the beginning of each unit, students are distributed a series of Test Prep questions designed to guide them through that particular course of study. They are normally printed on pink paper, hence the title.

The sheets are aligned with the state standards and are meant to be self-directed, although there are often ample opportunities during class for the students to work on them. Many of the questions can be found—word for word—in their workbooks and on chapter quizzes; and, in these cases, the correct response is always provided.

The course curriculum is designed so that all of the students will be exposed to the information necessary to answer each one accurately. This, naturally, includes reading the text, completing all assigned notebook work, addressing homework as directed, and actively participating in any interactive lectures and note-taking when presented.

These test-prep sheets have been very well received by a number of our District's education specialists who have found them to be an effective, structured path to success. They might seem overwhelming at first glance; but, when chunked into smaller segments and spread out over the course of the unit, the questions can be easily attacked. Trying to answer and learn all of them in a single sitting right before the test, however, can be disastrous. I recommend that students transfer the questions to a 3x5 card, write the answers on the back--the *correct* answer works best--and using these as flash cards.

All questions on the unit tests will be pulled from the pink sheets.

Homework

Generally, homework is due the day after it is assigned.

- **Late work:** Unless you have a good excuse, all homework will be submitted on the date it is due in order to earn full credit. Most assignments will be worth 10 points. If late without a reasonable excuse, credit for the assignment will be reduced by half. On larger projects, scores will be reduced by one grade level for each week it is late (i.e. A to B, B to C, etc.). No late work will be accepted once that unit of study is completed. It will be up to the student to keep track of missing assignments.
- **Absences:** Work assigned during a student's absence is still expected to be turned in and counts as a zero on the overall grade until submitted. Once turned in, the student will receive full credit for the work.
- Students are required to **write the questions** on any homework based on questions. Homework missing the questions will not be accepted. It will still need to be turned in (for partial credit) at a later date with the questions included.
- **Students should hold on to copies of all corrected work returned to them.** Because of the vast amount of papers that cross my desk and the number of grades that get entered into the computer, mistakes can and do happen. Students can best protect their interests by keeping returned work should they ever need to resubmit it in defense of a given grade.
- **Please do not use light-colored Gel pens on homework.** They are next to impossible to read under artificial light late at night (when I tend to review most work).
- **Goldenrod Sheets:** The chapter study guides, goldenrod in color, are the students' resource for homework, with assignments coming largely from the Essential Questions, Key Terms, and Timeline segments of the study guides. The goldenrod conveniently includes those California State Standards that are addressed within that chapter of study.

Headings

All papers will be submitted with the proper heading, placed at the upper, right-hand corner of the paper. The heading will include the following in this order:

NAME (1st & Last)
DATE
TITLE (Lesson title if a text assignment)

Grading

Grading is on a 100-point scale: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 59 or below = F.

Posting

Grades will be posted periodically using SCUSD student ID codes. Do not forget your code and do not share it with anyone. Grades may be viewed regularly using Infinite Campus.

Late Work Revisited

Homework assignments count for a large part of your grade. As noted, all late work will receive deductions in overall scores. Still, a partial grade is significantly better in the long run than a zero. Late and missing work can quickly add up and severely impact your total grade in the class. I urge all students to not ignore missing assignments. Those partial grades can go a long way in repairing damaged grades.

Materials

1. A **Notebook**, with 8½" x 11" paper—**not a Composition Book**.
2. 8 ½" x 11" Loose-Leaf, Lined **Binder or Standard Copy/Computer Paper. Pencil or Pen**.
3. **Colored Pencils**. CRAYONS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN CLASS.
4. **Binder/Folder**. All Social Studies materials (homework, handouts, etc.) need to be kept in their own folder or binder section clearly reserved for Social Studies--and only Social Studies--work.
5. **Assignment Book**. Planners will be issued to all students. We expect them to be used.
6. **Scissors & a Ruler**.
7. **3x5 cards**...tons of them.

Class rules

1. Be in your seat and ready to work when the bell rings.
2. Bring all needed materials to class each day.
3. Be courteous in speech and behavior, and respectful of the teacher and classmates.
4. No food or drink in the classroom.
5. Take care in the handling of school property and equipment and the belongings of others.
6. Follow school rules and the directions of the teacher.
7. Complete all school work neatly and on time.
8. Come to class with a positive attitude.

Beginning of Class Period

Students are provided a 5-minute passing period between classes. This is ample time for you to use the rest room, get a drink of water, sharpen pencils, wash & shave, write home, etc. Students are expected to be in their seats when the second bell sounds. Unless otherwise noted, due work should be on the table, face-down and in front of you at the start of class.