**Introduction to Social Science**

Syllabus

Mr. Sutton

Room #858

**Course Description**:

The Introduction to Social Science course is designed to accomplish several key objectives for the incoming high school student. These objectives include the development and mastery of fundamental academic skills such as: reading comprehension, note-taking and study skills, research, using and creating charts, graphs, and maps, writing academic research papers, test-taking strategies, planning, organizing, and prioritizing for success. Students of this course will gain proficiency in these skills through their study of world geography, cultures, current events, and related contemporary history. It is fitting that geography be the focus of a course titled *Introduction to Social Studies* because it is the foundation of all other fields in the Social Sciences. A strong understanding of geography creates the basis of understanding for history, economics, civics, art, humanities, literature, and many other areas of study. Therefore, the final key objective of this course is to provide the student with ability to objectively and critically observe and understand the interplay between the many forces that continually shape our world.

**Main Course Content Objectives:**

*At the end of this course, the student will be able to:*

* Identify and understand key ideas in the course readings
* Research information and correctly organize an academic research paper
* Effectively use, interpret, and create charts, graphs, and maps
* Correctly identify key physical and political geographic features worldwide
* Identify and describe different systems of government and economy
* Predict the impact and outcomes of physical, social, and political changes on human systems (Understand the nature of cause and effect changes on cultures, societies, nature, etc…)
* Apply contemporary historical knowledge and information to current social and political problems/situations (Use recent history to understand what’s happening in a particular area)

**Course Materials**:

Primary Text:

Richard G. Boehm, *World Geography* (New York: Glencoe, 2005)

Supplemental Text:

Gerard J. Pelisson, *Mastering Social Studies Skills 2nd Edition* (New York: Amsco, 1996)

Sean Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens,* (New York: Simon & Schuster,

1998)

Supplemental Reading:

*UpFront Magazine, The New York Times,* (New York: Scholastic, bimonthly)

**Class Calendar**

**Unit 1**: Student Skills Overview and Training

1 week **(This material is acquired this week and reinforced in all activities that follow)**

* Using the Textbook and other materials
* Note-taking (Cornel notes )
* Reading for Information Strategies (5W’s and H)
* Study and Test-taking Strategies
* Planning : Organizing and Prioritizing (agenda planners)
* Seven Habits: **Every Friday, bring your 7 Habits book for weekly activity/lesson.**

**Unit 2**: Geography 101

4 weeks

* Geography and its Practical Uses
* Maps, Charts, and Graphs (the tools of the trade)
* The Earth in Planetary Terms (What makes Earth ideal for life?)
* Climate
* The Human World (human systems: government, economy, religion, society etc…)

**\* The following units will each be guided by these main points:**

* What makes this region a region?
* Physical Geography’s effect/impact on human systems and development
* Political Geography (Nations, States, Nation-States, disputed territories etc…)
* Regional Cultural Study, Contemporary History, and Current Events

**Unit 3**: North Africa, Southwest Asia, and Central Asia

3 weeks

**Case Study Topic/s**: “Terrorism/Fundamentalism’s roots”, “Palestinian-Israeli Conflict,”

“Saudi Arabian Social Norms”

**Unit 4**: Africa South of the Sahara

3 weeks

**Case Study Topic/s**: “Child Soldiers,” “AIDS epidemic,” “African Rhythms and Dance”

**Unit 5**: Europe (West and East)

4 weeks

**Case Study Topic/s**: “Development of the EU,” “Cultural Identity vs Civil Rights”

**Unit 6**: Russia

2 weeks

**Case Study Topic/s**: “The Putin Regime; return to Communism?,”

“Life in post-communist Russia”

**Unit 7**: South Asia

2 weeks

**Case Study Topic/s**: “Population Explosion,” “The Caste Dilemma,” “Mirco-loans”

**Unit 8**: East Asia

2 weeks

**Case Study Topic/s**: “Chinas Emerging Middle Class,” “Education in China,”

“The Hermit Kingdom”

**Unit 9**: Southeast Asia

2 weeks

**Case Study Topic/s**: “What’s Up with Myanmar?,” “Religion in Indonesia,” “Vietnam Today”

**Unit 10**: Australia, Oceania, and Antarctica

2 week

**Case Study Topic/s**: “Reconciling with the Aborigines,” “Australia’s Growing Asian Community”

**Unit 11**: Latin America

2 weeks

**Case Study Topic/s**: “Preserving the Amazon,” “Latin Rhythms and Dance”

**Unit 12:** Mexico

1week

**Case Study Topic/s:** “Political Geography of Mexico”, “Economic Geography of Mexico”

**Unit 13**: Canada

1 week

**Case Study Topic/s**: “The Nation of Quebec?”

**Unit 14**: United States

3 weeks

**Case Study Topic/s**: “America’s Role in Global Affairs,” “Does our Nation’s Power rely on our Physical Geography?,” “How Free is our Press?”

**Grading Procedure**:

This course is a “Total Points” course meaning that there are no “weighted” assignments. Each assignment (in-class activity, homework, quiz, test, research paper, group project etc…) is assigned a point value according to level of difficulty and time commitment. At the end of the quarter, the total value of all of the assignments combined (regardless of assignment type) is pooled. The student’s letter grade is assessed according to that student’s percentage of points earned compared to the total number of points made available that quarter.

**Classroom Expectations** (Conduct):

* Be on time... no excuses. (In your seat at the bell.)
* Be prepared and ready to learn: Have everything you need for class, including homework, ready to go when the bell rings.
* Listen to directions and instructions carefully, **THEN** raise your hand if you have questions or comments.
* Respect other students’ right to learn. (Stay in your seat, focused and on-task. Make no distractions to others. Ex: talking out of turn)
* Respect our learning environment. (If it isn’t yours, don’t touch it. If it’s a mess, clean it up)
* Food, candy, and gum are not permitted, however, drinks in a screw-top container are allowed (subject to revocation).
* If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms see the nurse right away. It is very important to keep your hands clean and take precautions to safeguard yourself.
* Do your very best EVERY day. Your destiny is in your hands.