

# Experiences in Social Studies

## Course Syllabus

**Instructor: Mr. O'Connor**

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### **Course Overview and Purpose:**

Experiences in Social Studies is an integrated study of the social sciences. This course is divided into three sections introducing students to the following disciplines in social studies: government, geography, and consumer economics. Students will engage in research as part of the course. The primary purpose of this course is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good of a culturally diverse, democratic society. The United States and Illinois Constitution tests will be given in this course. Passing these tests is required by the State of Illinois. This course also satisfies the state requirement for consumer economics instruction.

### **Course Resources**

#### **Texts:**

- Baerwald, Thomas J. and Fraser, Celeste. World Geography: Building A Global Perspective. Needham, Massachusetts: Prentice Hall, 2000.
- Sansone, Stephen C., and Wood, Ethel. American Government: A Complete Course book. Wilmington, Massachusetts: Great Source Education Group, 2000.
- Bingham, Mindy. And Stryker, Sandy. Career Choices. Santa Barbara, California: Academic Innovations, 2009
- Lowe, Ross. et al. Consumer Education & Economics. Chicago, Illinois: McGraw Hill, 2003

### **Course Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to use a systematic approach to the study of the social sciences
2. Demonstrate a knowledge of the basic concepts of social sciences and how these help to interpret human behavior
3. Apply the skills and knowledge gained in the study of social sciences to decision-making in life situations.
4. Analyze the comparative political and economic systems with an emphasis on the political and economic systems of the United States
5. Demonstrate a knowledge of world geography with an emphasis on that of the United States
6. Analyze trends, personalities, and movements shaping the history of the world, the United States, and Illinois

### **Literacy Goals**

1. Connecting the text to personal experience
2. Connecting the text to world knowledge
3. Analyzing responses to texts
4. Reflect on self as a reader constructing meaning from texts
5. Reflect on the requirements of the reading task and strategies for completing the reading task
6. Writing to discover and learn
7. Research design
8. Evaluating and citing sources

### **Numeracy Goals**

1. Use measurement systems, understand measurement attributes, and identify appropriate units of measurement in real and abstract situations.
2. Make observations and investigate conjectures about numerical situations. They evaluate the validity of the reasoning of arguments about numerical situations.
3. Collecting and interpreting data

### **Instructional Philosophy**

I believe in a learning environment that gives students a voice. In my class, students will be asked to use critical-thinking and problem-solving skills within the framework of the social sciences. I believe that every student can achieve in my classroom and all parties, myself included, will become better students of the world.

### **Course Outline**

#### **First Semester—Career Choices and Consumer Economics**

- Unit 1—Who Am I?
  - Chapters 1 & 2 (C.C. Book)
- Unit 2—What Do I Want?
  - Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 (C.C.)
- Unit 3—How Do I Get It?
  - Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 (C.C.)
- Unit 4—Protecting Your Money
  - Chapters 13 & 14 (C. E. Book)

#### **Third Quarter—American Government**

- Unit 1—American Revolution
  - Chapter 2
- Unit 2—Constitution and Federalism
  - Chapters 3 & 4
- Unit 3—Branches of Government
  - Chapters 10, 11, & 13

#### **Fourth Quarter—Geography**

- Unit 1—Geography Skills
  - Chapters 1 & 3
- Unit 2—Mexico & Central America
  - Chapters 10, 11, & 12
- Unit 3—Africa
  - Chapters 25, 26, & 27
- Unit 4—Asia
  - Chapter 29

### **Major Projects**

- Journal/Notebook: Students will maintain an Experiences in Social Studies journal throughout the course of the school year. Student in-class activities and reflections will be compiled in order to solidify the connections across the social sciences.
- Persuasive Essay: Students will conduct research on a topic and synthesize a persuasive essay that shows thorough research and critical-thinking skills.
- Resume/ Interview: Students will construct a resume in applying for their dream job in the future. They will utilize this resume in performing a mock interview in class.
- Budgeting Life Choices: Students will make financial decisions based on a monthly wage. Included in the decision-making process will be rent/mortgage, utilities, transportation, insurance, food, clothing, entertainment, childcare, and investment/savings.

- Annotated Timeline: Students will create an annotated timeline depicting events from the American Revolution.
- Travel Brochure: Students will construct a travel brochure for a specific nation outlining characteristics of that nation.
- Weekly Writing Prompts: Students will be writing on a weekly basis in response to a prompt that will be issued at the start of every week. The prompts will appear and be answered on Turnitin.com

### **Grading**

The grade will be computed using total points accrued/ total points possible. A wide variety of assessment methods will be used to formulate the grade. Homework, tests, quizzes, projects, writing assignments, timed readings, and the notebook will all be part of the grade.

### **The grading scale is as follows:**

90%	100%	A
80%	89%	B
70%	79%	C
60%	69%	D
59% and below		F

### **Semester Grade is calculated as follows:**

1st Quarter	40%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	40%
Final Exam	20%

### **GRADES -PLAGIARISM POLICY**

Plagiarism is dishonest and should be avoided in all course work. Research papers are a very important part of the English curriculum. There is a research component at each level of the curriculum. At the senior level, it is one of the graduation requirements. A student must complete a research paper (literary analysis) with at least a “C” in order to pass second-semester English. Thus, it is critical that students submit work that is according to the specifications and guidelines for research and is not plagiarized. Students who plagiarize any one part of the research assignment will receive a “0” for the entire assignment and will have no opportunity to make up the work. This will result in an “F” in second-semester English and will disqualify a child from meeting graduation requirements and participating in the graduation ceremony. Plagiarism includes:

- a. Failure to give credit to the appropriate source for the material that is directly copied quoted or paraphrased (including homework).
- b. Use of other’s work as one’s own.
- c. Use of other’s ideas as one’s own.

Because it is a serious offense and will be treated as such by the faculty, students should avoid all forms of plagiarism in written and oral work. Students will receive no credit for plagiarized work and no makeup privilege (Taken from School Policy handbook, 2007).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Period: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Return by \_\_\_\_\_

**Student / Parent Agreement:**

I \_\_\_\_\_, have read the Course Syllabus for Experiences in Social Studies and understand the course expectations, grading policy, and other important information.

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_