

# Northland Preparatory Academy

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Syllabus 2019-2020

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**Course Title:** A Beginner's Guide: Ancient Civilizations and How to Be a Historian

### Course Description:

Welcome to 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies! This is a world history course that gives students an overview of the world's ancient civilizations, going from its earliest cultures through the Enlightenment. Additionally, we will spend a short time each class period discussing current events around the world. My goal of this year is not to simply "teach" students history – it's to teach them how to *do* history and *be* a historian. History is more than an endless list of dates and names; rather, it's an investigative process. In this course, students will become history detectives, working to uncover the secrets of the past by using the historical thinking process (asking questions, analyzing sources, collecting evidence, and drawing conclusions). This may sound daunting, but developing these critical thinking and problem-solving skills will help them both in my classroom and the world beyond. This course will be taught using a combination of teaching methods, including lecture and note taking, class discussions, research, projects, class activities, and individual and group work. I hope to both challenge and inspire students to become mini-historians, enjoy discovering the past, and make connections from the past to what's happening in the world today!

### Course Timeline:

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

- 1) The Historical Process
  - What's History?
  - How to be a Historian
  - The Historical Thinking Process
  - Using Sources
- 2) Geography
  - Common vocabulary
  - Using a map
  - Time zones
- 3) Mesopotamia
  - Early civilizations
  - SPICE (Social, Political, Interaction with Environment, Cultural, Economic)

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter

- 4) India
  - Caste System
  - Major Religions (Hinduism and Buddhism)
  - SPICE (Social, Political, Interaction with Environment, Cultural, Economic)
- 5) Egypt
  - Inventions
  - Dynasties
  - SPICE

**3rd Quarter**

- 6) China
  - Dynasties
  - Philosophies (Daoism, Confucianism)
  - SPICE (Social, Political, Interaction with Environment, Cultural, Economic)
- 7) Greece
  - Famous People
  - Science and Technology
  - SPICE
- 8) Rome
  - Major Emperors/Caesars
  - SPICE

**4<sup>th</sup> Quarter**

- 9) Europe
  - Middle Ages
  - Crusades
  - Renaissance
  - Enlightenment
  - SPICE (Social, Political, Interaction with Environment, Cultural, Economic)
- 10) Age of Exploration
  - Explores
  - Inventions
  - Geography
  - SPICE

\*Invention Convention

**Rules:** Along with the rules and regulations put in place by NPA (see student's agenda)

- 1) Respect others and yourself.
- 2) Engage and participate in class.
- 3) Be prepared and on time.
- 4) Grow from your mistakes.
- 5) Trust – I'll show students they can trust me and I expect them to show me I can trust them.

**Class Expectations:**

Success of each student is the main goal. Success means that each student learns the material and works to the best of their ability, which doesn't necessarily mean the highest grade in the class. Success is measured by how hard they work, what they learned, and if what they achieved was their best work. To be successful, students should come to class every day prepared to give 100%, as should I, as their teacher. This starts with being on time, having their class materials, having homework completed, and being ready to participate during class time.

All the teachers at NPA want their students to succeed, and so we ask our students, and teach them how, to advocate for themselves. Middle school is a great time for students to learn how to ask for help and communicate with their teachers about difficulties on homework, making up work missed while out sick, etc. The only person that can improve a student's performance is the individual student. My job is to coach, guide, and support students, along with teaching them strategies on how to assess and improve their own work. These strategies will be introduced and reinforced throughout my lessons this year. These are crucial skills to help our middle school students excel in high school and later in college.

**Grading Breakdown:**

Grading is based on a 100-point scale with:

- 90-100 (A)
- 80-89 (B)
- 70-79 (C)
- 60-69 (D)

Grades will be made of seven components:

- Class Participation (10%)
- Classwork (20%)
- Homework (20%)
- Projects (10%)
- Quizzes (15%)
- Tests (15%)
- Semester Exam (10%)

**Participation:**

Discussions will be a regular part of class, and discussions will make up the bulk of students' participation grade. There will be a variety of discussion types: whole-class, group, partner, web-based, etc. I will encourage and expect students to participate in these discussions, whether that means contributing an idea, a piece of evidence, or asking a question. I do not expect students to be experts about ancient history, so our conversations won't be a time of them "showing off" or "proving" their knowledge. Instead, discussions are a time for me to informally evaluate student understanding of a topic and for them to spur on and aid in each other's historical investigations and discoveries. There is a high correlation between students who participate in discussions and students who learn the material and have higher grades, and vice versa.

**Classwork:**

There will be assigned classwork almost every day, and this will take a variety of forms. Graded classwork will include Cornell notes, worksheets to be done in class, participation during class activities, etc. Classwork not completed in class will then turn in to homework, and I will expect it to be turned in at the beginning of class the next day. I will aim to give students sufficient time in class to complete all classwork.

**Homework:**

It is likely that students will have homework almost every single night of the week for my class, though that doesn't mean that they'll be laboring for hours a night over history textbooks. At times, homework will be studying for an upcoming test or quiz, or completing a research worksheet, or preparing a presentation for their current event or a project. For most nights, I expect students to spend about 15-30 minutes on social studies homework, give or take.

**Projects:**

Throughout the year students are given the opportunity to use their creativity to make projects that show their understanding of course topics. These projects integrate knowledge from multiple course learning objectives and show students how to learn and do history from a different angle. Sometimes these projects will extend beyond social studies standards to include other 6<sup>th</sup> grade learning goals in writing, math, science, etc. Projects range from individual work to group work, and sometimes it will be left to the student to decide whether to work in a group or as an individual. Projects are both fun and time consuming, and students will usually be given a portion of class time to work on these projects. However, projects will almost never be completed entirely in class, so it is up to students to develop time management skills at home so they're not completing an entire project the night before it's due. Even so, projects are very rewarding for students and substantially aid in their learning of course material.

**Tests and Quizzes:**

Throughout a unit, quizzes will be given to check for each students' understanding of the material. Quizzes help me help students, as quizzes show me what I'm not teaching well or where students need help with study skills. There will also be a unit test at the end of each unit. In most cases these tests include multiple choice and short answer questions, along with a map portion. Tests are designed to assess both a conceptual understanding of the class material, as well as problem solving abilities. NPA students are expected to possess a high level of integrity and ethics; therefore, cheating will not be tolerated.

**Absences and Late Work:**

All work that is missed during an absence must be completed and turned in. If a student is absent during the week, it is expected that they will make up any assignments in a time frame equal to the number of days missed. For example, if a student misses two days of school, let's say Monday and Tuesday, then the work they missed would be due Friday. A student should look on the class webpage to find out what has been missed during an absent day, along with checking the absent folders in my classroom and asking all his/her teachers to fill out an absent/missing work form. Once work is made up, please turn it in to the teacher.

**Extra Help:**

Anyone that is having difficulty with anything in this course, including making up missed work, should see me as soon as possible. I want to help! I can schedule a time that is convenient to meet, and am available after school or before school on most days.

**Extra Credit:**

I periodically offer extra credit to students, but I won't have extra credit "on hand" whenever students need it or ask for it. All students will be aware of an extra credit opportunity and will have sufficient time to complete it.

**Bathroom Policy:**

Please use the restroom and drinking fountain during passing periods. Students will be able to use the restroom during class if need be, but will need to sign the sign-out sheet before leaving.

**Make-up Work/Retakes:**

Making up low-scoring work is not a regular option for all students, but will be determined on a case-by-case basis and with communication with parents.

Please have the following section initialed, signed, and returned to class by Wednesday, August 14, 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Student Initials) I have reviewed the syllabus, requirements, and policies of the course (including the NPA handbook), and agree to abide by them.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_