Virginia Fitzgerald 2017-2018

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Course Outline - 8th grade American History

**Text**

*America: History of Our Nation – Beginnings Through 1914 -*  issued to students and available online (link on website)

**Units of Study**

Based on the State of Michigan’s Grade Level Content Expectations for 8th grade social studies and linking to 10th grade American History and A.P. U.S. History

* Review and extension of 5th grade Colonial and Revolutionary America studies, focusing on -
  + Regions of the colonies - geographic, social, economic, and demographic characteristics
  + Political and intellectual transformations that lead to the declaring of and fight for independence
* New Nation
  + Creating New Governments
* Expansion and Reform –
  + Challenges faced by the emerging nation
  + Regional and economic growth
  + Reform movements
* Civil War and Reconstruction
  + The coming of the war
  + The war itself
  + Reconstruction

**Goals**

Students will

* become familiar with the settings of major events through narratives and visuals.
* examine biographical information to understand how events affected people and how individuals influence events.
* examine both primary and secondary resources and understand the difference between the two types of resources.
* examine major decisions: identifying and analyzing factors that influenced them, discussing alternate courses that might have been possible, exploring their relationship to the core democratic values, and analyzing the costs and the benefits.
* examine the movement of goods, people, and ideas into and out of the United States and between regions within the United States to come to an understanding of how and why the movement occurred.
* become familiar with the connections between the U.S. and other world regions and to understand the causes and consequences of those connections.
* describe the essential beliefs and ideas that led to the Declaration of Independence and to the Constitution and became the foundation for our civic life, politics and government.
* understand the ideas of the rule of law and limited government and see how these ideals protect individual rights and serve the common good.
* become familiar with the principles, goals and purposes of our government as set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution and explain how the government as created by the Constitution meets those goals as well as problems that have been encountered in reaching these goals.
* describe the delegation of powers to the government within the Constitution.
* explain how the powers of government are limited by the Constitution and how the Constitution is maintained as the supreme law of the land.
* identify and describe disparities between the ideal of equality and the practices of the United States from 1763 and 1877.
* examine influences on markets, supply and demand, and prices.
* describe how entrepreneurs were encouraged by incentives and profits to take risks.
* describe the roles of economic institutions within the U.S. economic system: corporations, businesses, households, labor unions, financial institutions, and the government.
* describe the role of the government in regulating commerce.
* develop skills in organizing, interpreting, and analyzing information about the United States from maps, graphs, charts, tables, pictographs and primary and secondary readings.
* compose informational and persuasive constructed responses expressing an understanding of and an opinion on public policy issues.
* understand how culture and experiences may shape a person’s position on an issue.

The course will strive to balance disciplinary content knowledge, processes, and skills to form a foundation for high school social studies coursework.

Historical thinking skills will be specifically named and applied throughout our studies:

* context - connecting something to its time and place in history
* causation - identifying why something happened and what its impact was
* periodization - identifying the characteristics of a time period and the turning points that led to new periods
* comparison
* continuity and change - examining what remained the same and what changed over a given period of time
* synthesis - making connections and comparisons with other aspects of our knowledge

Specific skill areas will be emphasized to support students in improving these skills:

* Note-taking - the Identification of Main ideas and Supporting Details in a Reading and Recognition of the Structure of that Reading, the creation of Materials for Study
* Discussion
* Primary and Secondary Source Analysis - sourcing, contextualizing, and corroborating
* Creation and Analysis of Non-written Displays of Information - e.g. data displays, maps, class presentations
* Writing - composing well-structured, clear, detailed, and accurate responses to prompts concerning topics concerning topics our class activities should have prepared them to handle
* Preparing for and Taking Information-based Tests and Quizzes

**Grading**

* Five specific qualities need for success in each of the above skill areas will be identified and taught to students. This list of qualities will be given to students and their parents.
* All graded work will be within one of the stated skill areas and will always be evaluated on those five qualities, thus students will know what to work on in a given area to improve.
* Every example of work will be graded on a 10 point scale:
  + 10 - mastery/above and beyond - all qualities shown
  + 9 - excellent - 4 of the 5 qualities shown
  + 8 - good - 3 of the 5 qualities shown
  + 7 - basic - 2 of the 5 qualities shown
  + 6 - below basic expectations - 1 of the 5 qualities shown
  + 5 - not currently demonstrating this skill - no qualities shown
* Grades will be posted on Synergy with a name that indicates which skill area was focused on and the topic of study being addressed by the work. A rubric with the specific qualities for that skill area and the above-noted scale will be attached as a document to each grade. Students will always be given a rubric with individualized comments when the work is returned.
* Though the program will be averaging grades, students will be able to show growth in a skill area. If they have improved in a skill area, mastering a quality of that skill that they had not in a previous assignment, they may fill out a form and submit both pieces of work. Then only the higher grade will affect their overall grade in the class. Thus if a student is improving in a skill area, achieving a greater number of the sought after qualities than he at first did, this growth will be acknowledged. If the number of qualities demonstrated in a skill area fluctuates, the average will be used.
* Students will not retest or redo the same work for a higher grade, though they may do so for their own goals, as students can improve their grade by focusing on achieving the qualities needed in future work.
* If a grade is blank in Synergy, it means the work was collected but not yet graded; an NHI will appear if work was not handed in.

**Late Work**

* Timeliness of work will be considered a given quality of all work, as a student who takes twice as long or more to complete what other students completed in the assigned time could obviously produce work of greater quality.
* Late work will be accepted and assessed on the above scale with one point removed for the greater amount of time taken.
* I collect work directly from each student individually standing right at the front of a short two or three person row. I add a student's name to a list of work not turned in right as I stand there if it is not passed forward. I keep a list posted on the board for students, including the names of students who were absent when something was collected. I use this list to ask students about missing work personally for 3 days after. An NHI (Not Handed In) is posted in a timely manner so students and parents can use Synergy to check for missing work.
* Though grades are emailed home on Thursdays, students and parents with students who often struggle with getting work in on time should check daily by signing onto Synergy themselves.
* Late work should be handed in directly to me only, and the student should watch me check their name off the list.
* Assignments are posted on the website daily with materials necessary for the completion of the assignment and due dates made clear. Extra hard copies of materials are always available in class.
* Absent students are given the required time for make-ups, as stated by district policy.
* Work that is handed in excessively late, far past the our study of the topic and after ample opportunity for notification of the work being out, will be given no more than a 7 out of 10.

**Suggested Supplies**

* ***ring-binder*** with pockets - The pockets help until the student can sort papers into the rings. There is a three-hole punch on the room and many handouts will be already punched. I will be supporting keeping materials in order as we go through a unit and doing a quick table of contents for materials as a way of keeping track of expected areas of developing knowledge and skill.
* ***lined loose-leaf paper***
* ***pencil***s - I have excellent hand-held sharpeners in the room. I get mine from the art store for $1.50. It makes a great point and is quiet. Students could also buy one and thus have to buy plastic, throw-away pencils and always have the ability to sharpen their own in the pencil pouch!
* ***red checking pens***
* **ultra-fine Sharpies**
* **a thick Sharpie**
* **double-stick tape or glue**
* **a good eraser that won’t smear**
* **colored pencils (NOT markers)**
* **index cards**
* **a paper grocery bag for covering their book**
* **Kleenex to donate to the class**

These are just suggested.

Rochester Schools must supply all necessary supplies for curricular course work if a student is unable. This does not mean that a student should show up with nothing. Students should let me or a counselor know if they have any problem with supplies before supplies are needed. The necessary supplies will be provided based on the need shown, then the student will bring them to class daily as do the other students.

It is important for students to bring their supplies to class either way for three reasons:

* Bringing their supplies builds responsibility.
* Students who come to class without supplies disrupt our ability to move into work while we get them set up, either asking me to stop and get them the needed materials or taking them from other students.
* The district gives teachers a limited budget to stock the room with supplies for all the school hours of the year, so supplies taken by students take away from that budget or the budget of the teacher herself or the other students.