

Current Events Syllabus

North Pointe Prep---Academic Year 2020/2021

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE is to examine the social and political issues of the moment. We will use news programs, written journalistic pieces, websites, and documentaries. During this course we will try to go beyond the surface stories in order to identify the causes/origins of the issues we're looking at.

MATERIALS

- You need a binder/notebook/folder to keep notes, handouts, readings, etc..
- You need pens and pencils. Please make certain that you don't have to keep borrowing them from other people.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

Due to the health precautions being taken by all the Pointe Schools during this season (and possibly longer), we need to set some basic protocols for online class behavior. Essentially, we are taking most of the policies that would apply to on-campus behavior, dress-code, and etc..., and applying those policies to the online "classroom," to the extent that it is practical and desirable. There may be some small flexibility on some policies, but the spirit of respectful engagement still prevails.

When logged into your online class, you are expected to...

- **SHOW UP!** Be in the Zoom meeting ON TIME. We need to see your faces for at least a couple minutes every day. We are taking attendance on a daily basis. This is required by the State of Arizona. If you show up late, you will be marked Tardy. If you log-in during the last several minutes of class, you will be marked Absent for the period, just as if you walked into my classroom in the last two minutes with no explanation. **Once we have taken attendance, you may turn off the video on your screen, if you are uncomfortable being on display for the whole class period. You are still expected to be present for class. I will call on you occasionally, just to verify that you are still there.**
- **WEAR CLOTHES.** They can be your pajamas. They can be unwashed or mismatched. But you must wear clothes. You clearly don't need to wear shoes and socks, but you must wear something to cover the top, as well as something to cover the bottom. (Some of you may say to yourselves, "But Mr. Hernandez, nobody's going to see if I don't wear pants, so why does it matter?" To which I respond, "You may need to suddenly stand. Then, if you are participating on-screen during class, everybody else will get a clear shot of your "private zone." Would you come onto campus wearing just a shirt and underpants? The correct answer is "No," so wear clothes in the Google classrooms.")
- **BE PATIENT.** This online stuff is new to most of us. Much preparation has gone into this unnerving experience, but things will go wrong. Be patient with your classmates and with yourselves. Be patient with me. We will all get there together.
- **STAY OFF YOUR PHONE.** You need to focus on the lesson/discussion going on in class. Keep the phone away. There will be times when I tell you to use it for a little piece of research, but unless otherwise instructed, **STAY OFF YOUR PHONE.** Don't be rude.
- **STAY HYDRATED.** This is a brand new learning experience. Your brain needs a certain amount of water just to function properly. Keep your brain watered. You are certainly welcome to drink water, coffee, tea, lemonade, whatever, during class time. You're at home. I'm not going to try to control what you drink at home. You may also eat **QUIETLY.** If your food and drink somehow become a distraction, I will mute you and turn off your video. It should not be difficult to keep yourself nourished without making some kinda noisy spectacle out of it.
- **BE FLEXIBLE.** We will figure out some kind of rhythm to all this, but changes will be made to suit the circumstances, so be prepared to occasionally shift gears.

On a daily basis, I expect you to...

- Be on time.
- Respect yourself and others.
- Be prepared.
- Do your best work.
- Maintain an environment for learning.
- Keep a positive attitude.
- Take responsibility.
- Dress appropriately.
- Use your time wisely.

Students are expected to be in class every day. Please refer to the Student Handbook concerning the school's attendance policies. Unexcused absences and absences due to out-of-school suspension will receive scores of zero on any assignments or assessments due on that day. In-school suspensions will allow for teacher discretion with regard to acceptance of coursework and ability to make up quizzes and tests. In the event of excused absences, it is the student's responsibility to acquire missing materials and assignments from the instructor. The missing work must be made up in a timely fashion. Excessive absences can result in loss of credit for the course. (Please refer to your Student Handbook regarding the details of this policy.)

Tardiness is not acceptable. Tardiness disrupts your academic performance and the academic performance of your classmates. The first offense will result in a warning. Second and subsequent offenses may result in referral for in-school suspension. Habitual tardiness will result in administrative action, including suspension and/or loss of credit for the course. Do not be tardy.

Leaving the classroom is permitted only for use of the restroom or to respond to calls from the 4A Center or the front office. Leaving for the restroom requires teacher notification, traveling with the restroom pass, leaving your phone on the instructor's desk, and signing out in the student logbook.

You are expected to pay attention in class. This means paying attention during lessons and lectures, paying attention to your fellow classmates when they are speaking, paying attention to whatever reading or research you are doing in class, and paying attention to your own learning. Do not become a distraction to yourself and others. Make certain you are able to keep your notes and assignments current by paying careful attention to what's going on in class.

Students are expected to have their cell phones turned off or silenced during class time.

Texting/gaming/Googling during class is unacceptable. There will be times when I will have you use your phones/devices for classwork, but when that is not the case KEEP YOUR PHONES PUT AWAY. If I see your phone being used outside of teacher-sanctioned research times, I will remind you of the policy. If you choose not to comply with my request, you will be referred to the 4A on account of your insubordination.

Academic discussions will be conducted in a respectful manner. When participating in classroom discussions, I expect you to be patient and respectful, and to speak to one another using a measured tone of voice. Even if the conversation is animated, that doesn't mean that we are supposed to be talking all over one another. Nobody is to be shut out of the conversation, and all are encouraged to actively participate to the best of their abilities. Rudeness and personal attacks will not be tolerated. This kind of behavior may incur a loss of credit for the day, and possibly a referral for administrative involvement. **Pull one another up. Don't cut one another down.**

Tutoring is mandatory if you are earning an "F," AND STRONGLY ENCOURAGED IF YOU ARE EARNING ANYTHING LESS THAN A "C" GRADE. Social Studies tutoring occurs from 2:35 to 3:30 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. Failure to report to or refusal to effectively participate in mandatory tutoring will be considered insubordination and subject to administrative action.

Students who fail a semester core course are required to participate in a North Pointe approved credit recovery program. Students who fail to participate in credit recovery will be subject to disciplinary action.

Once enrolled, North Pointe does not accept course credit from other high school or online institutions. The only remedy for making up a failing course credit is North Pointe credit recovery. All credit recovery must be approved by the school administration.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Parents may contact me using the contact information listed at the beginning of this syllabus. I am not available for face-to-face meetings. Email is the best mode of contact. Behavior and academic issues will warrant parent contact. Administration will intervene if issues remain unresolved.

SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT GRADING POLICY

Grading Philosophy: Grading in this course will reflect a student's achievement relative to the assigned coursework (i.e.: tests, quizzes, homework, class work, participation, group projects, etc.).

Course Grading: Each student will receive a letter grade upon completion of this course. This grade will correlate with the effort and achievement of individual students on class assessments and assignments. All assessments and assignments will be recorded in the online grading resource as "Total Points". All points, regardless of category (i.e.: tests/quizzes, classwork, homework), will be weighted equally for the calculation of the course grade.

Semester Grades: Per North Pointe policy, semester grades will be weighted as follows: *40% (Quarter 1/3) + 40% (Quarter 2/4) + 20% (Semester Final Exam) = Final Grade*

Grade Breakdown: The grade percentages that correlate with the actual letter grade are listed below.

Non-AP; Electives

Percentage	Letter Grade
90-100+%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
below 60%	F

Late work will not be accepted. Late work equals a grade of 0% for the assignment. Students are to effectively manage their time in order to complete their assignments. This is a real life, college- and work-related skill that you need to develop now. If a student develops the habit of not turning in work on time, communication with both the student and his/her parent/guardian will occur to resolve the issue. The clear exception here is if a student has an excused absence for illness, school-sanctioned function, etc... As per the Student Handbook, students are granted two days upon their return to make up class work, and must complete missed tests and quizzes immediately upon their return.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. *Dictionary.com* defines plagiarism as "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." You are expected to properly cite any information used in formal assignments. While many instances of plagiarism may be accidental, it is still not acceptable. If a student engages in plagiarism, there will be a hierarchy of consequences. The first occurrence will result in a grade of 0 on whatever assignment,

test, or project that contains the plagiarism. Further occurrences will result in administrative discipline including, but not limited to, in school suspension, out of school suspension, failure of the course, and expulsion. Please carefully prepare your work so you do not need to suffer the consequences of plagiarizing someone else's efforts.

Cheating will not be tolerated. Respect yourself enough to do your own work. Respect your classmates enough not to steal from them. Cheating on any exam, quiz, or assignment in this class will result in a grade of 0. No exceptions, no excuses (even if the person you cheated off of "let" you). Repeat offenders will be subject to administrative discipline including, but not limited to, in school suspension, out of school suspension, failure of the course, and expulsion.

Extra credit will be available at the discretion of your instructor. I don't do a lot of extra credit, but students are welcome to propose extra credit ideas, bearing in mind that not every proposal will be accepted.

Please note, your instructor reserves for himself the right to change the policies contained in this syllabus for the proper facilitation of this course.

PRELIMINARY COURSE OUTLINE

Each general topic, with its readings and discussions and notes, etc..., will be treated as an individual "unit." There will be unit quizzes and semester exams. This is a single semester course.

The outline below is a sample of the topics covered in previous sessions. Because this course is so driven by student interest and input, any pre-planned menu of topics will be subject to change.

August

White Nationalism in America

September

Pandemics Past, Present, and Future

October

*The Growth of Authoritarianism
In the Industrial Democracies*

November

*Public Perception of and Government Response to
the UFO/Extraterrestrial Phenomenon*

December

Artificial Intelligence and Transhumanism