

American History I

Steven Barbour

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Google Classroom Join Code: 9jbct5

Tutoring Hours: T & Th 3:30 - 4:30 and by appointment

Let me take a few moments to introduce myself. My name is Steven Barbour. I am a native of Fayetteville, NC and I am excited to begin my first year at Terry Sanford High School. I hold a BA from the American University and a MA from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. I am a seventeen-year teaching veteran. I previously taught at Socastee High School in Myrtle Beach, SC and South View High School in Hope Mills. If you would like to know more about me, please feel free to read the brief autobiography I posted in Google Classroom.

I would like to begin by directing your attention to the contact information at the top of the letter. I want to maintain an open line of communication for any questions or concerns you may have about the course. We will also be utilizing Google Classroom for this course. The join code is at the top of this letter as well. This website can be an excellent way to monitor future assignments. The PowerSchool parent module can let you know performance on past assignments. I will reserve private communication channels like email and telephone for items that need immediate and personal attention. If I did not meet your parents at the Open House, I look forward to meeting your family in person at parent conferences.

Course Summary: The American History I course begins with European Exploration in the first quarter of study and moves through the early colonial period to the American Revolution, through Expansionism to the Civil War and, finally, to Reconstruction. American History I is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal with the complex history of our country. The course prepares students for the successful passing of the North Carolina End-of-Course Exam which will count for 20% of your final average. I fully expect every student to pass the EOC Exam. In this pursuit, the acquisition of factual knowledge is the beginning of the process, not the end. Students will learn to interpret and evaluate the relative significance of primary and secondary source material, as well as to present their evidence and conclusions clearly to a variety of writing prompts.

"EVERY PERSON OF LEARNING IS FINALLY HIS OWN TEACHER." THOMAS PAINE

Grading System: Your grade on each progress report and report card will be based on the school's stipulated standard categories:

40% Tests/Projects 30% Quizzes 30% Classwork/Homework.

PowerSchool enables me to have a simple and transparent point-based grading system. Your grade for each category (Tests/Projects, Quizzes & Classwork/Homework) will be a simple percentage of points earned out of the total possible points for that grade category. The amount of points available each grading period will vary. For example: You may take 10 quizzes before first report card. One quiz may be worth 20 points. Another may be worth 35. If you added all ten of the quizzes together the grand total of possible points may be 270. Your "Quizzes" grade would simply be what percentage of those 270 points you earned. The same approach will be applied to Tests/Projects and Classwork/Homework.

The relative importance of each assignment will be reflected by the amount of points available to be earned. The idealist in me likes this system because it takes the your attention away from the "grade" and focuses it on how much of the information in each assignment is correct. You are not to lose focus on the importance of smaller point assignments versus larger tests worth significantly more points. All assignments are efforts designed to prepare you for the EOC exam, so they are all important. You are responsible for retaining all returned work so as to justify the grades posted on the PowerSchool Parent Module and to serve as a study materials for the EOC exam.

"EDUCATED MEN ARE AS MUCH SUPERIOR TO UNEDUCATED MEN AS THE LIVING ARE TO THE DEAD." ARISTOTLE

Notebook & Starter Activities: You will be required to keep a notebook of your work in this course. All hand-written assignments and printed material should be kept in your notebook. Every day, you will have a starter activity posted on the website in Google Forms. You may use your notes to answer these question. Yes, they count towards a weekly grade. Since all starter assignments are available on this website, being absent is not a valid reason for starter omissions. Notes will be collected after each unit test.

"IN THE BEGINNER'S MIND THERE ARE MANY POSSIBILITIES, BUT IN THE EXPERT'S THERE ARE FEW." SHUNRYU SUZUKI

Homework/Reading: Any class work not completed in during the school day is to be considered homework. Additionally, you are going to have reading from a variety of sources. It cannot be stressed enough; reading is homework and must be completed on time. There will be an emphasis on analysis of factual information; you must use the information rather than just recall it. All assignments, whether completed at home or in class, is considered essential for preparation for the NC EOC Exam. Therefore, late work will be accepted with an appropriate penalty.

"GRASP THE SUBJECT, THE WORDS WILL FOLLOW." CATO

Quizzes: Frequent multiple-choice quizzes will be given to ensure you have understood the course content before moving to the next subject. Questions will be modeled on NC EOC Exam items. These quizzes will vary in length but most will be from 10 to 15 questions.

"WE HAVE GUIDED MISSILES AND MISGUIDED MEN." MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Tests/Projects: Unit tests will be given at the end of each "era" as defined by NC Essential Standards. Tests will be longer than what some students are accustomed to taking, but each test will be designed to be completed in one 90-minute class period. Items will be modeled off of NC EOC Exam items, short answer prompts, and (eventually) essay questions. There will be one day of review activities prior to each unit test. There will be a variety of projects in this class. Some will be the individual efforts, while others will be with groups. The result of these projects will be counted as grades in this category.

"EDUCATION MAKES A PEOPLE EASY TO LEAD, BUT DIFFICULT TO DRIVE; EASY TO GOVERN, BUT IMPOSSIBLE TO ENSLAVE" LORD BROUGHAM

Participation: Meaningful participation will be required on a daily basis. Quietly observing class proceedings will not suffice for higher-level learning. Material will be covered in a variety of ways to include group projects, presentations, documentary analysis and independent research. The effectiveness of each method is contingent on your active engagement. This part of your grade will be determined by a self-assessment you will complete using a rubric and by my impression of your level of involvement. I will not use this component of your grade for compulsory "A's." You will need to earn this.

"EDUCATED MEN ARE AS MUCH SUPERIOR TO UNEDUCATED MEN AS THE LIVING ARE TO THE DEAD." ARISTOTLE

Tardies: Be on time to class. Please don't make me enforce Terry Sanford's tardy policy, because I will. Your homeroom teacher should have covered this. If you have any questions about the tardy policy please contact me. That's all I need to say about that.

"GOD CAN NOT ALTER THE PAST, BUT HISTORIANS CAN." SAMUEL BUTLER

Phones: I am new to Terry Sanford, but I quickly learned that this was a significant issue here in the past. That being said, I am a teacher that has fully embraced the use of technology in the classroom. Depending on the accessibility to devices (phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) we may be utilizing electronic devices to read material, take quizzes, conduct research and complete group projects. I consider phones to be both a potential tool and distraction. We are going to have to navigate the differences between the two. If I ask for phone to be put away, I see it as a distraction to the task at hand. If students are asked to bring out a phone, or tablet, I see it as a way to complete the task at hand. When you think of it, it is not that different than any type of reading material...even your history book. Students do not take it as a personal affront if I ask them to put a book away. Please do not take it as a personal affront if you are asked to put your phone away.

As with tardies, your homeroom teacher should have covered the phone policy. Mr. Hatch has afforded classroom teachers with some flexibility to implement warning steps prior to confiscation. When a phone is a distraction, I will ask the student to put it "away." "Away" means out of sight. If I find that the phone has become a distraction to the student within the same class period, I will ask the student to put it into the "phone bucket" for the rest of class. The phone will be returned at the end of class. Failure to surrender a phone will result in discipline referral. If a student lets their phone become a distraction for multiple days in a week, I will confiscate the phone and follow the FTS phone policy.

Discipline: I have two rules that dictate classroom behavior. Be nice. Be productive. I feel that if these two rules are followed, without exception, our class will have a enjoyable and effective learning environment. Now, I realize that there are many behaviors that can transgress those rules; there are simply too many to list here. If you are involved in a behavior that prohibits your kindness to others or your productivity, I will have to intervene. Here are the interventions at my disposal: verbal warning, individual consultation, calls to parents, detention, referrals to guidance and discipline referrals to FTS administration. I would prefer you to correct any inappropriate behavior. As you can see, we will enlist the help of others if inappropriate behavior continues.

"HISTORY IS A KIND OF SACRED WRITING, BECAUSE TRUTH IS ESSENTIAL TO IT." MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

Absences: You are expected to attend all classes. However, if you must miss a class, it will be your responsibility to get any reading or writing assignments the next day you are in school. Students who are absent on a quiz or test day will take the test on the first day they return to school. You must take all quizzes when you are in class, even if you were absent or on a field trip the prior class. Being absent the day before is not a valid reason to "get out" of taking a quiz or test. Exceptions will be made for an extended illness.

"THE ABSENT ARE LIKE CHILDREN, HELPLESS TO DEFEND THEMSELVES." CHARLES READE

"In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we have discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We have learned that piling up material goods can not fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose." Jimmy Carter, July 14, 1979

Preferred Contact Information

Parents, if you have new contact information OR if you have a strong preference as to the mode of contact, please indicate that here. Otherwise, I will use the information in PowerSchool.

Name: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Email: _____