

POSSIBLE IMPACT OF DISTANCE-LEARNING

MR. BYERS' CLASSES SPRING 2021 SEMESTER

The Spring 2021 semester will be in a very different learning environment than is “normal” for high school. We BEGIN with remote-learning, and then (apparently) transition to a hybrid format. Yet, given circumstances, it is not clear how we may END the semester. Therefore, we must prepare for a range of learning issues. With this in mind, I have attempted to anticipate some questions and concerns you might have as we begin.

Impact on the types of **ASSIGNMENTS**:

- ❑ Since not all previously “normal” assignments can be done as effectively in a remote-learning format, we will be developing “work-arounds”. This will be new for all of us...so please be patient.
- ❑ The course syllabus lists several categories of assignments. Due to the unusual conditions and availability of resources, it is possible that not all of the categories will be assigned during both marking-periods. If we have in-person education, significant resources are available which could impact some assignments.

Impact on **GRADES**:

- ❑ On the course syllabus is a chart titled “Grade Distribution”. That does NOT mean the number of assignments will be proportional to the weight for each grade. In other words, a grading weight of 40% does not mean that 40% of all the assignments will be in that category. Some assignments have greater proportional impact.
- ❑ Be aware too that if NO assignments are given in a particular category, the computerized grading system will proportionally “adjust” the other categories to make up the difference.

Impact on class **PARTICIPATION**:

- ❑ Initial plans call for a specific 55-minute “time-window” for in-person or on-line contact sessions for each specific class. A “time-window” is reserved so that each class/period has a conflict-free time for testing or other critical activities (live lectures, Zoom meetings, etc.).
- ❑ Daily attendance WILL be taken (either in-person or through ZOOM). You WILL be accountable for attendance as well as academic performance. This may require you to have your camera ON to show your attendance.
- ❑ You should consider the assigned “time-window” a REQUIREMENT. You should be prepared (with class materials and have completed pre-class work) and be on-line for each class at the assigned “time-window”.
- ❑ Aside from the specific “time-window”, you will CERTAINLY also use other time to complete class work and preparation. In other words, school is NOT just that “time-window”. After all, this is high school!

Impact on **TESTING** and **QUIZZES**:

- ❑ Most of the accountable assignments (for a grade!) will be given in the specific “time-window” for each class. This is not really an optional requirement in the sense that you take it when you wish!
- ❑ It will be YOUR responsibility to contact Mr. Byers in the event of a real and actual emergency. Be aware that you will need to “earn” credibility...just like in real life. In other words, you cannot expect anyone to believe that an endless of crises are legitimate. Be responsible for your own education. After all, it really is YOURS! That is what being an adult is all about — taking responsibility.

IMPORTANT

Due to changes in the high school environment, be sure to carefully read the HANDOUT entitled: Possible impact of Distance-Learning.

INTRODUCTION:

This is an Honors-level course. It has the most serious requirements and expectations of the 9th grade courses offered by the Social Studies Department. At the same time, this class is also worth **4.5** grade-points rather than the traditional **4.0**. You should realize that this requires a correspondingly greater expected academic effort. Honors classes demand prioritization above athletics, artistic events, and outside employment...and even your "social life". While this is generally true of all classes, it will be even more obvious in this particular class. **HINT:** *Whether or not this class is "hard" depends on if you DO (or DON'T do) your class work promptly and effectively!*

TYPES of ASSIGNMENTS:

(1) Homework and Reading:

Social Studies, by its very nature, involves a high level of reading and writing. Specific assignments (18-36 pages per chapter) will be assigned IN ADVANCE of in-class discussion and study. UNIT PACKETS (with chapter-worksheets) will guide you through the reading and help you focus on the most important material. This reading and directed study is the ESSENTIAL FOUNDATION for in-class discussion and study. You will also learn ways to take notes and retain the information that you learn. These skills are essential in order to prepare for college. You should make it a priority to stay up-to-date in your reading! (As a caution: there has been a DIRECT historical connection by the effort-level on this pre-class work and the resulting Unit Exam scores!)

(2) Person/Event Papers:

During this course, you will do several Person/Event Papers. You will have some research time in the Library, as well as some in-class time, to work on these assignments. Suggested pre-approved topics, step-by-step guidelines for the papers, and instructions/expectations will be provided in class. However, you will certainly have out-of-class work in order to complete these projects. Due dates for all major assignments will be given far enough in advance for you to be able to complete them...so long as you do NOT procrastinate!

(3) "120 Seconds of History" Student Presentations:

Students will choose (in consultation with Mr. Byers) a topic of their own interest to research and study. Then, students will make a 120-second oral/visual presentation to the class on their topic. Students will have the opportunity to indulge their own personal historical interests! There is no written requirement due with this project. However, these assignments require just as much (but a different type of) preparation as for a P/E Paper. Library research time for these assignments will be scheduled as well.

(4) Quizzes:

This category covers the remaining wide range of "grade-able" assignments including both in-class assessments and out-of-class assignments.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

50%

Quizzes

Video quizzes, "pop quizzes", on-line assignments, **MAGI-QUIZZES**, etc..

30%

Unit Exams

Approximately three **UNIT EXAMS** each marking-period with 20-45 questions.

20%

Projects

Person/Event Papers and "120 Seconds of History" presentations

- ❑ In-class/on-line videos usually include an attached **QUIZ**. Students are allowed, permitted, and even encouraged to take notes during the video, and will be allowed to use the notes DURING the **QUIZ**. So, by taking decent notes, the student can virtually guarantee a high **QUIZ** score.
- ❑ There are also **MAGI-QUIZZES** taken from the **MAGI**-Monday vocabulary material during the semester. A separate handout will explain this assignment.
- ❑ Mr. Byers also reserves the right to give a "pop-**QUIZ**" from time to time. He is known to permit students to use their notes during **QUIZZES** and sometimes even during **UNIT EXAMS**. So...be sure to keep your notes up-to-date, in order, and handy. You never know when they might suddenly become VERY valuable!

(5) Unit Exams:

What...you thought that Mr. Byers forgot about these? They usually cover 3-6 chapters and take most of an entire class period to complete. Unit Exams usually include some mini-essay/short-answer, but they tend to be primarily multiple-choice.

DETERMINATION of FINAL CLASS GRADE:

Your effort level has a significant impact on your final class grade. The first marking period grade counts 40% towards your overall course grade, and the second marking period is worth 40%. Additionally, each World History class has the NC-FINAL EXAM. It counts 20% towards your final course grade. The creator or even the actual existence of any Final Exam is not known at the point this was written, but we will assume it is comprehensive and centered on the Common Core expectations, the focus of all material taught throughout the semester.

— MR. MARK E. BYERS

Some THOUGHTS for success:

Do the **READING** ... get the **GRADE**.

Do **NOT** do the **READING** ...

... do **NOT** get the **GRADE**.

Do **NOT** be upset by the results you didn't get with the work that you **DID NOT** do.

It's easier to **KEEP** up ... than it is to **CATCH** up!

NOTES TO PARENTS:

❑ Frequent contact amongst teacher-student-parent is **ESSENTIAL** to the overall success of the student. Parents should check Grades-on-Line frequently and they are **ENCOURAGED** to e-mail (mark_byers@abss.k12.nc.us) with any questions.

❑ If we are in-person, printed **PROGRESS NOTES** will be sent home with the student at regular intervals. They can be **SIGNED** and **RETURNED** for some extra-credit to confirm that parents are aware of their child's current academic status.

❑ The **OVERWHELMING** reason for any student to do poorly in this course is quite simple: the student does **NOT** do the pre-class reading for the assignments and does not engage in the in-class expansion.

❑ Students should **PROMPTLY** arrange for make-ups on missed assessments due to absences, mid-day checkouts, etc.. This is the **STUDENT'S** obligation. As I tell my students, "You are **NOT** in Middle School any more!"