

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

COURSE OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS

MR. WHITE

GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of Guilford High School is to focus on learning in a rigorous academic learning community that is safe and respectful.”

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING FOR THIS COURSE

Contemporary Issues is a course that deals with modern issues and topics in a variety of areas. Within the context of the class, you will investigate modern topics through a critical lens and interpret the effect those problems pose to an individual as well as society as a whole. The goal of the course is to gain not only factual knowledge of what is taking place, but to gather, analyze, and reconcile information in a scholarly manner. This academic exploration will involve researching contradictory data from a variety of sources and transforming your ideas into clear and logical thought.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Expressing oneself using “Accountable Talk” (verbal and written contributions to course)
- Independently developing a position and supporting it with content based evidence
- Identifying and evaluating different perspectives/points of view
- Detecting bias in visual and print materials
- Assessing different interpretations of history to weigh the credibility & reliability of sources
- Reading critically in order to recognize the difference between evidence and opinion
- Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information
- Analyzing primary and secondary sources to draw conclusions
- Incorporating research, analytical, organizational, & written skills to develop research projects
- Organizing for Success (all students will be required to have a **3 Ring Binder** that is devoted solely to this course)
- Time management for long term assignments
- Making appropriate use of Turnitin.com

SUGGESTED ONLINE RESOURCES

- *Christian Science Monitor*
- *New York Times*
- *Washington Post*
- *New Haven Register*
- *Hartford Courant*
- **most of the pages above can be accessed directly through My Homepage.*
- *Television/radio news programs*

GRADING

The following types of graded activities will represent a portion of each student’s overall grade based upon the percentage associated with each activity.

50% - Summative Assessments (*refers to any type of assignment or assessment which concludes a task, unit of learning, or the development of a particular skill*)

30% - Formative Assessments (*refers to any type of assignment or assessment which is occurring during the ongoing learning process or understanding material or grasping a skill*)

20% - Student Investment in Learning - (*Participation, Critical & Reflective Thought, Habits of Learning, Attitude & Effort*)

Assignments will **NOT** be accepted late unless the student has an excused absence from school on the date the assignment was due. It is the students’ responsibility to be aware of their assignments regardless of absence. In extenuating circumstances it is recommended that the student arrange a meeting with me in order to develop a solution or plan that will maintain the integrity of the course, while accommodating the student’s extenuating needs.

STUDENT EXPECTATION

There will be one major expectation for our class. That EXPECTATION is RESPECT; respect for oneself, one's teacher, and one's classmates. Students who are respectful arrive to class on time and are prepared to learn. During class be mindful of others. For example, one person should speak at a time, please refrain from interrupting the speech of another. Use hall passes appropriately, and avoid actions which disrupt the learning process. In an environment that seeks to foster intellectual pursuit and the development of scholars, disrespect will not be tolerated.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The best and most efficient way to contact Mr. White is via email at whiteb@guilford.k12.ct.us. The grade book for this course is available at PowerSchool. Please allow sufficient time for updates. Additionally, please visit my website at www.guilford.k12.ct.us/sites/whiteb. By accessing my webpage, you will find course information, assignment due dates, basic lesson plans, handouts, and other valuable information.

Please return signed form to Mr. White: (DON NOT CUT THE PAGE)

Student's Name _____ Parent/Guardian's Name _____

Parent / Guardian's Signature _____

Student's Signature
