

# Contemporary Studies

FROM THE END OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TO THE PRESENT

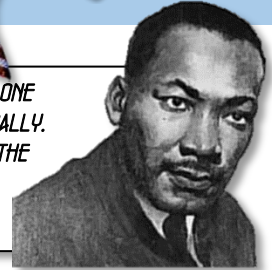


# Syllabus

**Instructor:** Mr. Erskine  
**Grade:** 11<sup>th</sup>  
**Room:** C131

"THE FUNCTION OF EDUCATION IS TO TEACH ONE TO THINK INTENSIVELY AND TO THINK CRITICALLY. INTELLIGENCE PLUS CHARACTER – THAT IS THE GOAL OF TRUE EDUCATION."

**Martin Luther King Jr.**



## Course Description & Rationale:

11<sup>th</sup> Grade Contemporary Studies is an investigation into the geographic, social, political, economic, cultural, and technological factors that shaped the United States from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and into the early 21<sup>st</sup>. The study of significant events and people will be organized chronologically and somewhat thematically to enable students to track trends and themes that link the past and current global affairs. Some major overarching developments that will be examined include the geographical and political expansion of the United States through diplomacy and war, the emergence of the United States as a global superpower, the evolution and clash of American values, customs, and political ideals, the struggles between liberty and equality, the cultural changes and challenges brought by new technologies, immigrations, and ideas, and how all of these things fit together to help us better understand our present challenges.

Periodically there will be reading, writing, and project based activities in this class to hone students' content knowledge, critical thinking skills, note-taking skills, debate and communication skills, essay writing skills, interpretative skills, and geographical and historiographical understandings.

In all I hope this course will help students *see* the relevance of what has happened before them, *develop* the skills and knowledge necessary to become active members of society, *understand* how the past informs and shapes their present, and *become aware* that through learning history we can better understand the world around us and who we are as human beings.

## Textbook & Website:

- ❖ Danzer, Gerald A., Larry S. Krieger, Luis E. Wilsion, Nancy Woloch, and Jorge J. Klor de Alva. Holt McDougal. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Student ed. N.p.: Holt McDougal, 2012
- ❖ You will be using my website throughout the entire year to get class assignments, review materials, and do makeup work. Learn it, love it, live it, let it become a part of you: [www.mreshistory.weebly.com](http://www.mreshistory.weebly.com)

## Essential Materials:

- ❖ **Writing Utensils & Paper:** You should always have a pen or pencil (or both) and paper on hand each day you arrive to class. Don't expect to get a free handouts from the teacher *every* day!
- ❖ **Class Binder:** You need to have a binder specifically for this class. Why? *First*, you will be doing assignments that will be graded regularly. Rather than lose track keep all work in one place and then there is no problem in finding it! *Second*, you will be building a portfolio of select classwork and projects throughout the year that will be graded cumulatively. *Third*, the binder can serve as a reference source for tests, exams and personal growth.
- ❖ **Netbooks:** You will be using your netbooks in this class to do group work, unit projects, research, online activities, and to download assignments onto for homework use.

## Important Policies:

- ❖ **Grading Scale:** This class' grading scale is in alignment with the grading scale of Greenbrier County Schools: A (100%-93%), B (92%-85%), C (84%-75%), D (74%-65%), F (64%-0%). The grades in this class however are point based, each having different amounts based off their difficulty. Points range from 10s-50s for assignments while tests, quizzes & projects are 60s-120s in range.

- ❖ **Extra Credit:** Will not be given upon request but *only by the teacher's discretion* and will *never be given out to individual students!* Do not ask for it if you are not going to do the regular credit!
- ❖ **Attendance:** A key to doing well in school is to be there! Be present at all costs unless you have a reasonable excuse. Consider:
  - **Skipping:** If you are caught skipping you will be written up.
  - **Tardy:** If you are consistently, repetitively tardy, you will be written up (*3 tardies is a referral*)
  - **Excused Absence:** If you are sick, out for a personal or family issue, or involved in a school extracurricular activity then *you are responsible* to inform the teacher and get any assignments necessary ASAP before you leave or upon returning.
- ❖ **Homework:** Homework is not every night, but this does not mean “no homework.” Readings, assignments, notes, projects and the like *can and will* be given out and can increase or decrease depending on the material covered!
- ❖ **Makeup Work:** Sometimes you have to miss school. If you do, make sure it is a legitimate reason and make the effort to take responsibility. Consider the following:
  - **Excepted Absences:** If you miss class-time for extra-curricular activities, vacations, or field-trips YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE to get your work and make it up!
  - **Unexpected Absences:** If you miss class due to sickness, family issues or the like YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE to get your work made up when you have returned to school!
  - **Tests, Quizzes, Assignment Due Dates:** If you miss a quiz, test or assignment due date YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE to makeup it up when you have returned to class!
- ❖ **Late Work:** When an assignment is due it is to be turned in upon that specified due date! If you are late in turning in work there will be a reduction in grade letter for each day the assignment is late. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> days the assignment is a ZERO.
- ❖ **Cheating/Plagiarism:** There is literally no legitimate excuse for cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment. Do your own work and do not parasite off the work of others. *If you are caught you will receive an automatic ZERO and a discipline referral.*
- ❖ **Cellphones/Electronics:** Any and all cellphones and/or electronic devices (i.e. iPods, iPads, MP3's, Tablets, Gameboys) WILL NOT be permitted except by the teachers discretion. If you are caught with an electronic there will be disciplinary action taken at the teacher's discretion in compliance with school policy (confiscation of cellphone/electronic devices is an option).

## Classroom

### Rights & Responsibilities

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>You have a RIGHT to be safe</b></p> <p><b>You have a RIGHT to speak</b></p> <p><b>You have a RIGHT to property</b></p> <p><b>You have a RIGHT to respect</b></p> <p><b>You have a RIGHT to be yourself</b></p> <p><b>You have a RIGHT to learn</b></p> | <p><b>You have a RESPONSIBILITY to make it safe</b></p> <p><b>You have a RESPONSIBILITY to listen</b></p> <p><b>You have a RESPONSIBILITY to use it properly</b></p> <p><b>You have a RESPONSIBILITY to show respect</b></p> <p><b>You have a RESPONSIBILITY to control yourself</b></p> <p><b>You have a RESPONSIBILITY to allow others to learn</b></p> |
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# Syllabus

Signature Page

**Contact Information:**

Email: [merskine@k12.wv.us](mailto:merskine@k12.wv.us)

Planning: 8<sup>th</sup> Period

Students Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class:     U.S. Studies I     U.S. Studies II     World Studies     U.S. Studies Honors    Period: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the syllabus and understand the course rationale, needed materials, important policies (grading scale, attendance, make-up work, late-work, home-work, cheating/plagiarism, cellphones/electronics) and class rights & responsibilities. This signature form is in effect the entire 2017-2018 school year. Parent/Guardian and student will be notified of any updates to the course syllabus.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Student Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent/Guardian Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent/Guardian Name (second if applicable)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

Does your child have the ability to access the internet at home/close to a library?     YES     NO

The best way to contact parent/guardian is:     email     cell phone     home phone

The best time to contact parent/guardian is: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Home #: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

I want to take a moment tell you that I am honored to be working with your child this year. I have high expectations for all my students and strive to show care, commitment and excitement for the subjects and students I teach. I do not take education lightly and hopefully neither do you. It is a solemn responsibility and privilege to instill the essential knowledge and skills in students that is necessary for them to becoming lifelong learners and better human beings who can think critically and understand the world rationally.

I ask you to help me in maintaining within your child the high expectations, care, responsibility, and commitment necessary for them to succeed and grow in their educational life. As the old adage goes, "It takes a village to raise a child." I am honored I can be part of that process with your child. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the school (304) 647-6464 or by email at [merskine@k12.wv.us](mailto:merskine@k12.wv.us) if you have any questions or concerns during the year.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Erskine