Honors MERIT Social Studies Syllabus ~ 7th Grade

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The aim of this course is to enable students to become independent thinkers with respect to geography, economy, government, and history of the global community. This course will refine and extend concepts learned in the 6th grade curriculum specifically in the areas of Southwest Asia, Africa, and South/East Asia. Students will not memorize facts and dates, but they will explore and connect global concepts to the world around them. Students will learn “why” and “how”. They will be encouraged to create their own opinions based on the information they are presented. Additionally, students will be expected to connect this information to current events around their city, state, country, and world. Most importantly, students will begin to see they an important part in a global community and will impact the world around them.

Students in Honors will be encouraged to explore leadership roles as citizens. In addition to basic standards, students will explore humanitarian issues and the process of democratic rule and law making. It is my hope to help students participate in these type of “mock” situations.

Throughout the year, it is also our intention to explore the content of this class using different means of sharing information and through the reading of content related literature. When possible, guest speakers and field trips will be taken to deepen student understanding of learning standards. Technology will also be used in this course and encouraged at home. Student classrooms are equipped with computers and may be used with teacher permission during homeroom, bus loads, and class time per teacher discretion. Students will also participate in **History Day** - a project of their choosing which focuses on the National History Day theme**.** Further information on this can be found at [http://nhd.org/AnnualTheme.htm a](http://nhd.org/AnnualTheme.htm%20%20a)nd http://nhd.org/images/uploads/2010rulebook.pdf.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND COMPETENCIES**

1. To use a variety of maps to locate geographical and historical information.

2. To understand how geographical features impact the development of society.

3. To explain how environmental issues impact the global community.

4. To recognize the basic components of culture and the differences between various cultural groups.

5. To recognize key ethnic groups of the focus area and the diversity among these groups.

6. To compare and contrast major religions and systems of beliefs of the area and their influence on history and current events.

7. To describe the fundamental principles of government systems and the effect of these government systems on societies.

8. To explain the relationship between literacy rate and standard of living.

9. To understand and describe various factors that influence literacy rate and its relationship to government and economics.

10. To understand economic systems, economic factors, and the importance of these on the development of societies and their connection to governments.

11. To describe fundamental historically significant events of the area of focus leading to the 21st century global community.

12. To understand the U.S. role in the global community in the past, present, and future.

13. To interpret graphs, charts, and other means of displaying information that illustrate trends in historical contexts.

14. To identify conclusions about world historical events using primary and secondary sources.

15. To draw inferences from resources and cite ample reasons explaining various viewpoints in historical contexts.

16. To create student awareness of their role in the global community.

17. To create greater student awareness of current events impacting their world.

**Course Requirements:**

Students will

* Maintain a Social Studies notebook with daily notes, vocabulary, study guides, writing assignments, assessments, and research.
* Complete a project as assigned by the teacher in a timely manner following guidelines provided by the teacher and enter a project in the National History Day competition.

**Homework Expectation:**

Students will:

* Homework assignments will be assigned randomly during the week and the homework should be turned in on the teacher assigned due date.
* If a homework assignment is not completed the student will be assigned an after school detention; after the third failure to complete the homework assignment in a nine weeks the parents will be requested to come in for a conference.

**Behavioral Expectations:**

Students will:

* Attend class with all supplies needed for the class: notebook, notebook paper, pencil, red pen, index cards, and colored pencils.
* Enter the classroom quietly, sharpen pencil as needed, be seated, be prepared for class to begin.
* Follow classroom expectations as posted and all behavioral expectations of the school as outlined in the student handbook.

**7th GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES UNITS**

Each area of study is divided into four areas of focus:

1. Geographical Factors (*maps, physical features, environmental issues, ethnic groups, religions, literacy*)
2. Economics
3. Government
4. Historical Understanding

*Honors students will deepen their learning by exploring beyond the basic standards in these areas. The topics of study will be determined by a combination of teacher selection, student interests, and current global events.*

We will study three areas of the world throughout the year in the following order:

1. Southwest Asia (Middle East) ~ 1st and 2nd Nine weeks
2. Africa~ 2nd and 3rd Nine weeks
3. South/East Asia~ 3rd and 4th Nine weeks

We will also spend a considerable amount of time exploring the U.S. connections to these areas. In addition, your student will learn to interpret political cartoons, venture into current events of the day, and explore the qualities and skills of leadership.

*Projects will be assigned throughout the year in correspondence with the current learning focus.*

“There is nothing impossible to those willing to try.”- (356-323 BC) Alexander the Great.