8th Grade United States History  
Course Syllabus  
Instructor: Mr. Schaefer

Location: Room 104 Karns Middle School  
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Course Description
This social studies course will explore how the history of the United States of America can help in expanding students’ knowledge of social studies concepts. These concepts include, but are not limited to, Culture, Economics, Geography, Governance and Civics, History, and Individual and Group Interactions. The history of the United States will be covered and discussed in detail from European exploration and colonization, The Revolutionary War, formation of government, westward expansion and Manifest Destiny, slavery and states’ rights, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and through the westward expansion of the United States during the late 1800’s. Instruction throughout this course will adhere to the Tennessee State Standards for 8th grade social studies: https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/std_ss_gr_8.pdf

Instruction and Pacing
Instructional lessons are designed to promote student engagement and participation. Students are expected to come to class prepared to learn, participate, and demonstrate mastery. US History will be covered in ten different modules as outlined by Knox County Schools. A school-wide assessment is given at the end of each module.

Module I: Colonialism (1600-1750) 15% of time – Students will understand the social, political, and economic reasons for the movement of people from Europe to the Americas. They will also describe the impact of colonization by Europeans on American Native Americans and on the development of the land that eventually became the United States of America.

Module II: Development of a New Nation (1720-1787) 14% of time – Students will understand the major events preceding the founding of the nation and relate their significance to the development of American constitutional democracy.

Module III: The Constitution and Foundation of the American Political System (1777-1789) 10% of time – Students will analyze the political principles underlying the Constitution, compare the enumerated and implied powers of the federal government, and understand the foundation of the American political system and the ways in which citizens participate.

Module IV: Growth of the Young Nation (1789-1849) 5% of time – Students will analyze the aspirations and ideals of the people of the new nation.

Module V: The United States’ Role on the World Stage (1789-1849) 3% of time – Students will analyze United States foreign policy in the early Republic.

Module VI: The Sectionalism of the American North, South, and West (1800-1850) 18% of time – Students will analyze the paths of the American people in the three regions of the United States from 1800 to the mid-1800’s and the challenges they faced as they became increasingly sectionalized.

Module VII: Slavery in America (1800-1850) 8% of time – Students will analyze the growth of slavery and the resulting controversies.

Module VIII: The Civil War and its Causes (1830-1865) 10% of time – Students will analyze the multiple causes, key events, and the complex consequences of the Civil War.

Module XI: Reconstruction (1865-1877) 9% of time – Students will analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction.

Module X: Westward Expansion after the Civil War (1865-1890) 8% of time – Students will analyze the social, political, and economic transformation of America as a result of westward expansion.

Student Expectations: Students are expected to be present and on time to class. Students are also expected to abide by all Knox County rules and to follow classroom routines and procedures. There will be disciplinary consequences for not following expectations.

Materials needed: 3 ring binder (1”-2” w/a clear front pocket on the cover), notebook paper, 5 dividers, pencils and pens. Highlighters and colored pencils are optional but recommended (I usually have some extras students can use). Students will also be expected to supply all needed materials (poster board, glue, construction paper, etc.) for projects from time to time during the year.
Assessment:
Grades are a reflection of the student’s ability to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and analysis of specific state standards. A standards-based grading approach is adhered to in this class. The grade is determined by a combination of various assessments. Total points earned are divided by the total points possible. Throughout the modules, many formative assessments will be utilized, however, only summative assessments will be recorded for a grade. All student grades will be posted in a timely manner. Social Studies TCAP Achievement assessments will count towards 15% of student’s grade.
** Honors Classes will have a county-wide mid-term assessment that will count as 10% of the student’s first semester grade.

Make-up and late work: Assignments are accepted with no grade deduction after an excused absent. It is the student’s responsibility to check the make-up work table and get their make-up assignments. If they have questions they need to come see me (on their own time, not during class) to receive assignment details and due dates. Late assignments are accepted, but points are deducted—typically 10% of the originally value per school day.

Intervention: Tutoring and alternative assignments will be available after schools to assist struggling students or students requesting reinforcement or intervention. Again, please contact me if you feel you are in need of these services.

Plagiarism is a form of stealing and academic fraud. Students who are found guilty of plagiarism will have the option of either redoing the assignment within a specified time period and accepting a grade letter drop or taking a zero on the assignment. Parents should be involved in making the decision.

Plagiarism is defined as “presenting someone else’s ideas, research, or opinion as your own without proper documentation, even if it has been rephrased.” It includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Copying verbatim all or part of another’s written work;
2. Using phrases, figures, or illustrations without citing the source;
3. Paraphrasing ideas, conclusions, or research without citing the source;
4. Using all or part of a literary plot, poem, or film without attributing the work to its creator.”

Resources:
2. Holt, United States History: Beginnings to 1877
4. Center for Civic Education, We the People: The Citizen & The Constitution
5. Primary source documents from various sources (The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution, etc.)
6. TCAP Coach, 8th Grade Social Studies.
8. Videos: The Native Americans (Turner), The Revolution (History Channel), Biography Benjamin Franklin (A&E), Founding Fathers (History Channel), The Shakers (PBS), The Congress (PBS), America: The Story of Us (History Channel), The Presidents (History Channel), The Abolitionists (PBS), A More Perfect Union: America Becomes a Nation (BYU; 1989), The New World: Nightmare in Jamestown (National Geographic), Lewis and Clark: Great Journey West (National Geographic), The Civil War (Ken Burns; PBS), Crash Course U.S. History (John Green), How the States Got Their Shapes (History Channel) Andrew Jackson: Good, Evil, and the Presidency (PBS). Discovery Ed and PBS online videos as they pertain to the curriculum.

Fees: There are no additional fees for this course other than the standard KMS student fees.

Parent-Teacher communication: Parents and guardians, please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns. My email address is chris.schaefef@knoxschools.org, and this the best way to contact me. If you prefer to speak by phone please contact the KMS office at 539-7732. If I am unavailable I will return your call as soon as possible. Another way in which I am able to communicate with the student and parent is through Aspen/Parent Portal (online gradebook). In order to give timely feedback, I will attempt to update grades at least once a week. Please use this valuable resource to monitor your student’s progress throughout the year. I am dedicated to the safety and academic success of your child and looking forward to a great year.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Knox County Social Studies department is to teach the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable students to become responsible, active citizens in a diverse, global society. My personal mission is to help students appreciate US History and understand how history impacts their world today. I also want to effectively prepare students for high school and college while encouraging them to become life-long learners.
Religion Standards:

8.1 Explain the primary motivations for English colonization of the New World, including the rise of the middle class (joint stock companies), the need to move surplus population, and the search for religious freedom.

8.3 Explain the founding of the Plymouth Colony, including the Separatists, William Bradford, Mayflower, Mayflower Compact, and Squanto.

8.4 Analyze the reasons for the settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the events and the key figures of the colonies, including:

- Non separatists/Puritans
- John Winthrop
- Theocracy
- Town meetings
- Anne Hutchison and Roger Williams – Rhode Island
- Thomas Hooker – Connecticut
- Salem Witch Trials

8.6 Analyze the founding of Pennsylvania as a haven for Quakers and the tolerance that drew many different groups to the colony.

8.8 Describe the location and reasons for French exploration and settlements in North America, including the Huguenots.

8.9 Cite textual evidence analyzing examples of both cooperation and conflict between American Indians and colonists, including agriculture, trade, cultural exchanges, and military alliances and conflicts.

8.11 Describe the significance of and the leaders of the First Great Awakening, and the growth in religious toleration and free exercise of religion.

8.13 Analyze the ideas that significantly impacted the development of colonial self-government by citing textual evidence and examining multiple perspectives using excerpts from the following documents:

- The Maryland Toleration Act, 1649

8.15 Compare the government structures and economic base and cultural traditions of New France and the English colonies.

8.33 Describe the principles embedded in the Constitution, including the purposes of government listed in the Preamble, separation of powers, check and balances, the amendment process, federalism, and recognition of and protections of individual rights in the Bill of Rights.

8.34 Write an opinion piece arguing for the importance of a particular right as it impacts individuals and/or groups, using evidence from the Bill of Rights and contemporary informational text.

8.41 Explain the major events of Thomas Jefferson’s presidency, including his election in 1800, Louisiana Purchase, the defeat of the Barbary pirates, and the Embargo Act.
8.48 Analyze the 19th century reforms influenced by the 2nd Great Awakening such as the Temperance Movement, Prison Reform, Mental Health Reform, and education, including tent meetings, establishment of new churches, Horace Mann, Dorothea Dix, and temperance societies.

8.58 Describe the concept of Manifest Destiny and its impact on the developing character of the American nation, including the purpose, challenges and economic incentives for westward expansion.

8.60 Analyze the reasons, outcome and legacy of groups moving west including the mountain men/trail blazers, Mormons, missionaries, settlers, and the impact of the Oregon Trail and John C. Fremont.