HONORS CONTEMPORARY ISSUES SYLLABUS 2015-2016

Instructor: Carole Thomas

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Course Description:

Students will use inquiry skills to examine the issues that impact the contemporary world. Included in the course will be analysis of the historical, cultural, economic, social, political, and geographic factors that have raised certain issues to levels of concern in our nation and around the globe. Students will engage in research and problem solving in order to better understand and assess significant current issues and their values and responsibilities as citizens.

**Content, Lesson Plans, Activities, and Assessments:**

* Daily, in and out of class assignments, and activities will be counted as daily grades equally with end of unit or summative assessments such as projects or pen and paper tests. Assessment tools will also include check lists, rubrics, and International Baccalaureate criteria.
* The majority of our course work will be conducted in the classroom, using technology, and often in group format. Plan to use text, research, field work, non-fiction primary and secondary sources, documentaries, video, and film for accomplishing content success, activities, and assessments.
* A timeline based on state standards and in an IB MYP format will be gone over in class and available electronically. In addition, you will be given a weekly format detailing assignments, testing, and information for completing all work as well as in compliance with state standards and IB MYP requirements. This will be flexible according to addition or reduction along with time constraints.
* **Grading** is evaluated at 50% daily and 50% test work per quarter and re-evaluated at the end of each semester with 40% daily, 40% tests, and 20% semester exam.
* **Make up work** for excused absence is to be completed within five days in order to receive full credit for missed work and tests. After this allotted time, 70% credit is used to evaluate work. Projects or extensive work assigned before absence may not always fall in this category and a proper due date will be given in order to avoid a late grade. Habitual unpreparedness will result in detention after school, and work left in locker will result in a late grade. Always come forward and assume responsibility in asking for missed work and checking Power School for assignments and grades.
* **UPFRONT/NY Times** periodicals are used for activities and assessments in addition to other news sources, research, text and documentaries and videos.

**Daily Expectations and Class Policies:**

* Mutual respect is expected along with a good attitude. Controversial issues often evoke emotion and the ability to discuss rationally with respect using a sound knowledge base is a valuable skill and an important responsibility of citizenship.
* Sometimes, you may be given permission to use your personal technology for lesson purposes due to efficiency; we have access to iPads, Kindles, Nexus, and Chrome Books. Ear buds are not part of research and not to be used unless they are lesson involved. Otherwise, devices are to be turned off and out of sight. Inappropriate use will result in collection and school procedures followed.
* Designated work for submission or continuation is due when class starts.
* ONLY blue, black pens or pencils are to be used for classwork. Computer generated print is to be used on some assignments and tests. RED pens are never to be used for any assignment and work will not be accepted.
* Book bags are not allowed in class.
* Well-mannered gum chewing and drinking bottled water is allowed.
* Snacks allowed before class begins if disposed of properly.

**Summation:**

Contemporary Issues is not a proselytizing endeavor. It is about letting students identify and prove their own values through knowledge, literacy, and exploration – finding their voice. Projects, collaboration, media, research, and inquiry skills are cornerstones of our class.