

SOCIAL STUDIES 7-9



The class web site provides **extensive** information about the class, the research behind my teaching practices, and course content in video and audio format.

JonesHistory.net



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**SOCIAL STUDIES
7-9
MR. JONES**



2010-2011

SOCIAL STUDIES GRADES 7—9



The Social Studies 7-9 program has this chief aim in mind: to maximize the quantity and quality of what students know about Social Studies. By quantity, I mean how much students know about the subject. By quality, I mean they ought to be able to be thoughtful and analytical about what they know.

To that end, the most effective set of methods I can apply as the teacher fall under the heading of “differentiated instruction”.

This method creates a class radically different from the class we adults experienced as students. A study of current research in education and brain development along with an examination of my teaching practice have forced me to abandon some of the common practices found in many public schools today.

This brochure only addresses the main elements of how the class is organized.

Students are welcome to record class sessions in audio or video. Parents are welcome to sit in on classes.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions and do visit the class web site where extensive information about the course, the research behind it, as well as class content can be found.

WHAT THEY LEARN

Grades 7 and 8 address US History. Selecting what to learn and what to leave out is tough. NY State has made most selections for us in two ways: (1) by providing a detailed outline of what students are to learn and (2) by providing a state-wide testing system. The backbone of each class is the list of things to learn from the NYS curriculum and testing. There are **two** forms of this list for each topic: the “Standard Questions” and the “Basic Proficiency Statements”. Students use any variety of sources to research the answers to the standard questions **or** may settle on learning just the basics (just what NYS tests). The basic proficiency quizzes are only worth a maximum score of 67. All of this is on the class web site under “Review Materials”.

THERE IS NO SINGLE TEXTBOOK

I have abandoned the practice of providing a single, standard textbook in my classes because (1) 20%-30% of 7th graders in any given year cannot read a Middle School level textbook independently; (2) Students only advance in their reading ability when they read things within their reading level; (3) Standard textbooks do not adequately reflect the NYS curriculum.



Lessons are available online in video formats, including m4v format for iPod

Instead, there are three sets of textbooks available in class: a “basic”, a middle school level, and a more advanced high school level. Students using textbooks for their information sources are guided

toward that which they can read.

Under special circumstances, a textbook may be lent to families for home. Otherwise, **students are not issued textbooks.**

Besides text sources, students can access lessons in video format from the class web site. College-level audio lectures as well as advanced reading materials are available to advanced students who desire a challenge.

HOMEWORK IS RARE

Research on homework confirms my experience: it does little or nothing to advance student achievement until high school. Regular formal homework assignments do not begin until 9th grade. 7th graders will only on rare occasion have homework and it is unlikely all students would have the same assignments on a given night.

TESTING

65% of the grade is from scores on “high order tasks”. These include a monthly essay test, short answer examination, and listening test. 35% of the grade is from scores on “low order tasks”. These include quizzes for each topic.

Short-response format heavily dominates the testing in this class. Quizzes can be taken on a flexible schedule and study for quizzes is done largely in class.

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