

Ms. Best
Principles and Policies

My principles: Teaching and Learning History (in no particular order)

1. The key to success is engagement. I will not permit you to remain silent and disengaged. For starters- your head will not go down on the desk unless you are ill-very ill. If you are in a small class, ignore seats at the back of the room. They do not exist. I expect daily participation from ALL of you. You cannot hide in the back of the classroom.
2. You must be an active learner and learn to articulate, verbally and in writing, your thoughts. You do not truly know what you believe unless forced to explain your beliefs and ideas to others.
3. Writing is HARD WORK, but you must learn to write well and write often. No one listens to those who cannot articulate their thoughts.
4. The United States is a participatory democracy. You must pay attention to the world around you and form and articulated reasoned opinions about persons, events, and issues. One of the purposes of history is to help you become a good citizen. This nation needs you now more than ever; an unformed citizen is nearly useless.
5. To submit work other than your own is unethical. The most important thing you own is your personal integrity, and once lost, it is very difficult to regain. All those who use the work of others or who give their work to others, even with the best intentions, are actually unethical. This will not be tolerated. Learn exactly what plagiarism is, and avoid it like the plague. Consider the ethics of all you do and say in this class.
6. Thomas Jefferson argued that, "A little rebellion now and then is a good thing." Realize the importance of having opinions and passions. Feel free to disagree with or others-but in a reasoned and well-mannered way.
7. History is not just a collection of disparate facts. It is instead a powerful narrative told by the weak and the powerful, and it is subject to interpretation and analysis. Always think about moving, throughout this year, from descriptive to analysis. "Why?" is often more important than "What?" although "So What?" is a great question to ask.
8. Content is the foundation of what we do, but only the foundation. We will develop the skills you need to examine themes and concepts that will help you make sense of the facts. My job is NOT to lecture to you daily, serving only as a deliverer of factual information. Your job is to come to class everyday with your history suitcase packed full of the information you need to make judgments about people, the events, and the ideas we encounter. In other words, you MUST do your assigned reading/video watching before walking into this room.

9. This room is the home of many ideas and many books and many opportunities. Be respectful of others and of this classroom. Show this in little ways like not showing off your artistic talent on your desk and not leaving trash for someone else to remove.
10. “Those who do not read are no better off than those who can’t.” Respect reading and learn what it can do for you. You are welcome and encouraged to borrow any books. Cherish the written word; it is very powerful.

And now for some specific policies and requirements:

1. You must have: a binder and paper/spiral notebook, colored pencils, colored markers, and plastic sleeves. You must have by the third day of class.
2. Arrive in the classroom BEFORE the bell rings. If you are not seated by the bell, then you are late.
3. I expect work submitted on time, except in cases of dire emergencies-such as if your forest green goldfish henry absconded (escaped) with your work and jogged to Samoa with it, whereby a purple saber-toothed tiger took it from the fish and used it to make red Thai curry to feed to Martians. This would be an unusual circumstance/emergency. Otherwise, get work in on time. I will accept late work but only up until the day of the test but with a 50% penalty.
4. Assignments labeled “due” on your schedules are to be completed before you enter the classroom. Exceptions may be made for major essay/take-home tests assignments; these may often be accepted until 3:00 on the due date. If absent, check the website and schedule for missed lessons and assignments. You are responsible for keeping up with the work.
5. Feel free to contact me through email before 9 P.M.
6. I do not give retakes of exams. On written essays, if you received less than a 70% you may rewrite to raise your grade to a maximum 80%. This must be done within 3 days after tests have been handed back. If you are absent the day of an exam-you are expected to take the exam during your class period the day you return. Those absent previous to test day will have two days for every day absent to make-up. Alternative tests are fair game for make-up tests.
7. We will use smart phones during class BUT I ask that you respect the allowances and not abuse this privilege. All phones will be placed on desk face down until we need to use them.
8. Headphones are to be removed BEFORE entering the classroom. This is a sanctuary of learning and a group-centered environment. There is a time and place for tuning out, but this is not once of them. When you enter the sanctuary you are demonstrating your preparedness and desire to learn and be engaged in a meaningful experience.
9. This is a difficult class that requires not only skills, but also desire and dedication to learn the material and engage with the material. Grades will be weighted as follow:

Tests and Quizzes	30%
Classwork	20%
Homework	20%
Participation	10%
Final Exam	20%