



Introduction:

This elective course is designed to introduce students to the many issue we face in our nation and world today – and to have them leave the course with some more strongly held convictions, the ability to defend their thoughts and perhaps most importantly their minds opened to opposing perspectives and views. During our study of current issues we will also be focused on research, writing and sharing within the classroom. While there are a number of topics already planned for study and debate, the course is designed to allow for flexibility as the headlines of the day pull us in new and unexpected directions.

Resources:

As there is no textbook associated with the course, various sources will be used such as websites, magazines and newspapers. You should keep a well-organized notebook as it will become a valuable resource at test time. Students should bring a 3-ring binder to class daily -- I will provided all of the paper you may need. We will also be viewing news programs, documentaries and the like. Students are expected to take full advantage of these sources as ANY content used in the classroom should be considered “testable” material.

We will also be making use of a classroom blog hosted by **Edublog**. It can be found at currentissues2017.edublogs.org This website will allow the students in the class to share their current events research and interests with the rest of the class.

INTENDED TOPICS OF STUDY

American History?

How should America's past be remembered and celebrated?

Ethics and Morality and Human Rights

Prejudice and bigotry, refugees, aliens and immigrants, slaving, death penalty and prisons

Economic Development and Disparity

Developing world, foreign aid, foreign trade, world hunger

World War III

Threats to America and international stability

Technology in Our Lives

Genetic engineering, social media, artificial intelligence,

Healthcare and Advances in Medical Science

Nationalized healthcare, death and dying, stem cell research, human genome project

The Environment

Overpopulation, global warming, energy production, the ocean

The United States: The Last Super Power?

Will American hegemony continue? What might replace it?

Absenteeism and Makeup:

If a student has been *legally* absent from class, it is his/her responsibility to see me about work missed immediately upon returning to class. **You will be given as many days as you have missed to complete makeup work (tests, homework, reports).**

Small pop quizzes will not be made up; instead the following quiz grade will be doubled. When in doubt: Please refer to the District Policy concerning absences, tardiness and loss of credit. ALSO, **never hesitate to see me with any questions or special concerns.**

Classroom Expectations:

All classroom rules are based upon the concept of respect. Treat all with respect and you will receive it in return. Given the basis of respect as an expectation, the following rules (and many others not listed) can be arrived at...

- NO CELLPHONES MAY BE USED DURING INSTRUCTION WITHOUT MY SPECIFIC PERMISSION.
- Enter the classroom on time and have your textbook, notes, and a pen or pencil with you.
- Keep your hands to yourself.

Also... Some of the issues we will address will be contentious and controversial. Though students will be asked to consider issues from a variety of perspectives, they will not be asked to relinquish their own beliefs and convictions. Studying and understanding the merits and defects within various viewpoints will help students to better articulate their own positions. This means that as a class we will diverse opinions and respect them. Name calling, put downs and the like will not be accepted. *Listen when others are speaking and keep all rude or sarcastic comments to yourself.* In other words... **Treat others as you would like to be treated.**

Your Grade:

I adhere to the school grading policy as written in the student handbook. Your grade will be arrived at through the use of chapter and unit quizzes and tests (objective and essay), papers and other response essays, homework (varied forms), and projects (grouped, paired or otherwise).

All late homework will be worth 50% of its original value. Larger assignments (projects, essays, research assignments, etc.) will have one letter grade of value removed for each day beyond the due date. Students are encouraged to submit all late assignments and may do so at any point in the marking period. **Incomplete assignments are the number one reason for low grades in high school – don't become a statistic.**

Extra Credit:

From time to time extra credit opportunities may be offered – usually once per marking period. Take advantage of them. No student will be individually offered extra credit no matter how dire his or her need.

Communication:

Please see me with any academic or other classroom concern you have during the year. I can be found in Room 66 all morning and in the Library during periods 6-11 and 7. You may email me anytime at beneigh@freeport.k12.pa.us and you can expect a timely reply. I also make regular use of Remind for students in my classes and would encourage you to sign up if you are able by texting **@fhsci17** to the number **81010**. I plan to remind students about all assignments and tests and will occasionally encourage the viewing of a newscast or classroom-related content.