

MR WOOD'S

Classroom Philosophy, Rules & Expectations 2015/16

Office Hours: I will be available Monday thru Thursday from 3:00 to 4:00 (in room 112) or by appointment for student or parent, for any problems that might arise in this course or classroom.

**The Buddha came down from the mountain,
The wise man asked, "Are you a god?"
"Are you a man?"
The Buddha said, "I am Awake."**

In the end, this is what it's all about. Are we really awake to the events of this world? Do we get it; our role in the world, out on the street with our friends, at home with our families, or sitting at these desks at Oakridge High School? Are we really awake? You and me? If we are, then the obvious next step, "Is what do we plan to do about it?" What role will we play in making this a better planet? How do we insure that we take on the responsibilities that being a citizen in the richest country on the face of the planet in the history of the world, entails. What does that mean to you and to me?

For me it means that I provide an environment in this classroom where everybody has the opportunity to succeed. I'll do my best to present a curriculum where you are inspired to seek the truth, wherever that route may lead. I will make sure that you are intellectually challenged. I intend to force you to stretch your parameters – to think past the limits of how you thought before, to foster discussion and to provide you assignments that will force you to bring your thinking, whatever the course, into the real world. I will also be available every night after school and by phone and by email, to help insure that if you really want to succeed, you have that chance.

Your responsibility also stretches beyond your individual needs. The key to learning is to question; the success of your search depends on how well you listen. For that to happen, everybody in this classroom must feel free to share his or her opinion without inhibition. However, that "freedom of expression" comes at a cost. You absolutely must respect all others rights to think and to share whatever they feel necessary to explore the issues of the day. This kind of inquiry takes not only a value for the rigors of education, but also for one another's belief systems. Our studies will force you to roll up your sleeves and dig in, sometimes into uncharted waters. You'll have to keep an open mind and understand that our goal is not to work towards any test but to grow academically and intellectually. That takes scholarly sweat and emotional discipline. In the process, we will not waste time on drama that leads in any other direction. If you cannot adhere to guidelines that allow such learning possible, your behavior here will not be welcomed; nor will any such detrimental actions be tolerated.

Finally, each of us must take our studies outside of this classroom and carry our wakefulness into action. Because we live in a nation that has such an influence in all corners of the globe, we have a responsibility to learn all that we can about the world. We have an obligation to seek the truth and to act on it. In this nation, with free public education, you can go and be and do whatever you truly desire. Don't take that opportunity lightly. Most teens living in the world today go to bed at night hungry. Many live under the constant watch of death and disease and war. They don't have all the wonderful opportunities and great responsibilities that await you.

Welcome. Our task is vital. The possibilities are endless. And the time is definitely now.

As-Salam Alaykum

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR ROOM 112

1 - BE PREPARED...

This means have paper and pen. You may use pencil for note taking - however work turned in for a grade should be done in *INK*. It is much easier for me to read, as well as more efficient for you in keeping your notes over an extended period of time. Assignments done in pencil lose a grade. Typed work goes up 5%. We will use my school blog (thebuddhasaidiamawake.com) and *google docs* for various assignments. If you have home Internet access problems, let me know and be prepared to work after school or at lunch on some of the web-based assignments. I will provide extra time for you if needed.

2 – SEPARATE SPIRAL NOTEBOOK - All students will be required to carry a spiral bound notebook (or three ringed binder) used only for this particular Social Studies class. By limiting you to a single notebook, your ability to stay organized will improve, as will your chances for success. You must have this notebook with you everyday in class. I will check on a semi-regular basis, for a grade, whether or not you have your notebook with you in the classroom.

3 - RESPECT FOR OTHERS...

Listening is key to learning; for you and for me. I anticipate that you will conduct yourself with maturity in this classroom, that you will raise your hand before expressing yourself, and that you will focus your attention, both verbal and non verbal, on the individual who has the floor. If not, I will separate you from the classroom with ensuing consequences. Those consequences in order will be 1 - classroom detention. 2 – phone call home. 3 – office referral. If I believe the offense serious enough an office referral may be issues at anytime.

4 – ODD's & END's THAT MATTER...

- **Dismissal** - The bell does not dismiss you. That is my job. We will work through the bell in this class...I will let you know when it is time to go.
- **Tardies / Hall Passes** – Being on time in life is significant. Your fifth tardy (and each there after per semester) will result in an office referral. You get three hall passes per semester. You must have your passbook to go...release will be at the discretion of the teacher. I do not allow you to take a tardy to go to your locker.
- **Please and Thank you** – I use both. I hope for the same from each of you. Telling anybody to “Shut up” for whatever reason is not an option.
- **Cheating** – I will not try to determine who copied who. If I find it happening, from paper to paper or student from Internet, each student will earn a zero. Parents will be notified. Office will be notified. Second time in the same course will result in a zero point failure for the course.
- **Cell phones and such** – Unless requested for an assignment please leave your phone in your locker. Texting in class violates school policy and removes you from the moment. If your are on your cell during class you'll receive an office referral. If you carry your cell, please set it to airplane mode. If it inadvertently rings, just turn it off...that's not a problem for me, if it doesn't become a habitual situation. If you'd like to bring a laptop to work on, you may do so and store it in my classroom during the class day.

If you are accessing your cell phone during a test (for any reason) you may earn a zero for that test and be referred to the office for violating school policy.

5 – REMEMBER OUR MISSION...

Life is difficult; even here in the first world challenges are numerous. In order to “make it” in today’s society – to raise a family, own a home and have career, you must have an education. Your experience in high school is vital to these ends. I take this mission seriously; my standards for you will be high. However, my role in this process and your parents’ influence on your outcomes are secondary to your individual efforts. In the end this education thing is up to YOU! That means everything in this classroom; the atmosphere, my lessons, your approach to learning, all of it is directed to providing each individual student an equal opportunity to excel. No individual’s personal agenda will be permitted to interfere with the opportunity of all to learn. I will insure a wide avenue to achievement for those who strive to succeed. Conversely, I will limit the interference of those who don’t respect their classmates. Remember when it comes to public education your right to self-expression stops when it interferes with your classmate’s right to learn. Listen. Be mindful. Be kind. Work. And stay AWAKE!

GRADES:

• BLOG WORK – AS A SECONDARY LINK

Several Assignments in this class will originate on my blog. Specific Guidelines are noted there. I will however originate these blog links online through google docs or schoology. Make sure to check the blog regularly for assignments, LP’s, extra credit, or just to discuss pertinent issues.

• LATE WORK

I do not accept late work! If you are in school and you have an assignment due – the due date is your responsibility...that is called accountability. You may turn in your assignment at the end of the day - two grades down. However, if the assignment is not in on the day it is due, you will receive zero credit. Excused absences have a two day grace period according to school rules - unexcused absences will not receive the extension, so make sure your parents get your excused absence turned into the attendance office promptly.

WAYS TO BUMP YOUR MARKING PERIOD GRADE:

+2% to +20% - Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.

At the front of the room in binders you will find 11 complete speeches and transcripts of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Evaluations from past students of the speeches are located in the binders as well. You may come in after school and listen to these speeches. You only need to listen and write a short evaluation to earn 2% per speech up to 20% extra credit for semester grade. This is a good deal – you earn a significant amount of extra credit for merely listening to the most inspiring orator of our time.

+5% Class Participation

- I keep track of A’s and F’s on the seating chart. In order to get an A all you have to do is raise your hand and volunteer the correct answer. You get an F if you talk out of turn, or interrupt when another student has the floor. A’s & F’s accumulate through out the Marking Period. If at the end of the Marking Period

you have at least 13 A's and a ratio of 3 to 1 A's to F's your grade goes up 5%. A's & F's cannot lower your MP grade unless you accumulate 13 F's. And if that's the case you will not be in the classroom, anyhow.

+Variable Extra Credit Opportunities

I am open to creative routes to Extra Credit. Don't expect to be provided any opportunity to merely save your grade at the end of the semester; that route isn't fair to those who monitor their grades for the entire year. This is not about grade saving; its about creative learning opportunities. If you have an idea that you'd like to run with – let me know, I am open to creative learning. For example, this summer in preparation for travels to Rwanda I read, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families*, written by Philip Gourevitch a correspondent for the New Yorker magazine. We will be using this book as required reading in my AMUN class at MCC. If you would like to read along with us – we could certainly work out an extra credit opportunity. Or come up with you own ideas...I am open to it, as long as the work is substantial and it isn't done in the last couple weeks of the semester to save a grade.

A Final Thought on grades...

A challenging education is significant for your success in today's world. In an effort to raise graduation rates, in the past few years public schools have significantly lowered their standards. In some classrooms today, you are provided chance after chance after chance to pass. After all of that you may run down to the counseling office and use E 20-20 to accomplish the credit. The only behavior being learned from such practice is that accountability does not exist in the real world.

And that is not true.

So, while I provide several credible ways in which to raise your grade, I will not hand you credit. You have the responsibility to earn that. Providing an environment where you don't have second and third and fourth chances, prepares you for the realities of life past high school. And while I want you to succeed in the classroom and beyond, I want that success to be real. In the end, I do a good job of bringing the real world into the classroom. I believe that my students receive an excellent education that prepares them well for college and beyond.

Your grade however, is a product totally of your design and the effort that you do or do not put into the classroom.

Finally, a couple of years ago a situation ensued that precipitated me requesting past students for letters of support. I was provided 125 letters from past students and parents – the purpose was not to place them in this introductory letter, however, I think if you read below you will have a better idea of who I am and what I expect of you in the classroom. Five are linked below.

Any questions please feel free to ask. Any comments please feel free to share.

Sincerely Bob Wood / bobwoodmsu@gmail.com / (616) 402-8668

- [Sarah Pennell](#) – OHS c/o 2013
- [Randy Lavassuer](#) – OHS c/o 2013
- [Cassy Vandermolten](#) – OHS c/o 2005
- [Elizabeth Kepner](#) – OHS c/o 2001
- [Gladys Mosher](#) – Parent of Angelina Mosher c/o 2010