

September 11, 2017

Foreign Exchange Student - Invitation for 2017/18

If you are a foreign exchange student in Mr. Wood's Senior Current Issues, Government, or Economics course the following pertains to you.

Welcome,

First of all, I am delighted to have you in my classroom. I admire that you have had the courage to leave your home country, to come here for a school year and to join us. If you have questions or concerns, that I can answer to help make this transition and experience a positive one for you, my door is always open.

Secondly, I hope within your comfort zone, to access your experience and your knowledge of the world to help awaken Oakridge students to life outside of Muskegon. Wolf Lake is not a particularly diverse community. It's a friendly place, which I'm sure that you are getting to know about first hand. And while it is a great place to grow up, Oakridge students are not exposed to things that you have been. One of the great advantages of this Exchange Program is that Oakridge students can learn first hand from you about the world. We've come to appreciate and depend on the input of our foreign students to learn about the world outside of this little bubble.

Please let me know if you are uncomfortable, for whatever reason, in sharing your experiences in the classroom. Otherwise I'll probably be calling on you often to share your life with us.

In regard to your assignments, I understand that things might be a bit overwhelming at first. Because of that, I allow my exchange students to set their own due dates for early assignments. You all are working on a second language, with new friends and family, and in a foreign environment. I am fine with you communicating, early in the school year, an alternate due date on assignments. When you get your assignment in any of my three classes - size it up - and if you don't think that you will be able to complete it in the amount of time provided, then stay after class and propose an alternate due date. I will most likely accept the proposal - within reason - for full credit. What I do not want to get into, is you beginning the assignment, not finishing it and asking for more time after the fact. That tends to encourage poor planning on your part. I am sure after awhile that you will have gotten to a place where you'll be able to handle the workload just fine. Until then, please consider this option.

Also, I would like to invite you to participate in a couple of excursions that I lead. Close Up! Every year for a week in May, I take a dozen Oakridge students to Washington D.C. to participate in Close UP. The Close Up Program is the best thing I've ever come across that combines travel and fun and learning. Then it serves it all up on a platter that is appealing to high school kids. We spend a week in D.C. with high school students from all over the globe. You make friends, you learn about US and world politics, you have fun, and you experience our nation's capital. D.C. is a great city - the program is cool. You will love both. Please go to my blog to learn more about Close Up and stay tuned for September organizational meetings. We have had lots of foreign exchange students participate in the Program. All absences for Close Up are excused and school related.

Each year I take my Senior Current Issues students to Chicago two times - at Christmastime and in May. We carpool to Indiana, hop the train, and spend a Saturday in a wonderful city. I love Chicago anytime of the year; at Christmas its particularly exciting. Senior Current Issues students get first crack at our open seats...and if we have room we fill up with the rest of the foreign exchange students / first my classes and then the rest.

Finally, I encourage you all to provide my classroom materials and blog information to your host parents at Oakridge and to your family back in the home country. If anybody has questions, they are welcome to contact me on the blog, or by phone, or at bobwoodmsu@gmail.com.

Have a great time this year as an Oakridge Eagle.

Sincerely,

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