

# **Senior Current Issues - Syllabus**

## **Guidelines for Mr. Wood's 2014/15 Senior Current Issues Course**

This course provides a three fold concentration for graduating seniors. #1 we survey cultures, societies, and geographical regions of the world. In the process we will look closely at the Middle East and Africa. Teams of two will research the history of one African nation for a semester, and follow it in regards to the current news and take on specific assignments that will broaden their awareness of the country and the continent. These groups will share their knowledge with the rest of the class. Time permitting we will do the same thing with nations of the Middle East in the second semester.

A second focus of the course will be to study current domestic and international events in the news. Since these events are by their very nature "Current Issues" we have the luxury in our studies to choose incidents that are current, and at the same time compelling. Consequently, we (you and I together) have the opportunity to shape the curriculum. We will supplement our studies with independent film, documentaries, and assigned readings to help students better appreciate the diversity of world cultures and immediacy of current events. *Special note: some of the movies will be R-rated and controversial by their subject selection; they will however remain pertinent to our focus of study and consequently useful for learning. If any parent or student is uncomfortable with such a situation, please contact Mr. Wood as soon as possible.*

Finally and maybe most significantly, in Part III, students will be asked to look at their life after high school. The major focus here will be to concentrate on searching for colleges, apprenticeships, and scholarships. Students will be encouraged to organize themselves in all aspects of post high school education. We will set up college visits and spend a substantial amount of class time working on scholarship searches. We also lay out five and ten year plan goals in an effort to help seniors leave Oakridge on a positive footing.

By looking within and setting short and long term goals, and by taking an in-depth view at the world around us, it is my hope that this course will help to prepare Oakridge Students for success in an interdependent global society.

### **HOMEWORK - 25%**

Homework assignments will vary in Senior Current Issues between the study of individual events as well as ongoing issues. Some of these topics will be a short study; others will deal with in-depth longer term issues. The main criteria for determining whether your assignment will be categorized for grading purposes as a "Project" or "Homework" will be the amount of time dedicated to that topic. Any topic that is addressed, discussed, and provided homework assignments for within a one week time window - will be classified for grading purposes as "Homework." Continuing long-term assignments will fall under "Projects."

### **QUIZZES & TESTS - 25%**

Pop quizzes on topics for discussion are always fair game in a Current Events class. The focus of quizzes and tests in this course will revolve around the changing subject area of "Current Events." Larger tests which will be more identified with "Projects", may serve as a test grade and /or a Common Assessment. You will be informed ahead of time in which category specific tests fall for grading purposes. Finally, every Marking Period will include one regional map test of the world. It is important that you know the geography of our planet.

## **PROJECTS- 25%**

For each semester we will work on two major projects. Semester I will include a semester long study on "Exploring Africa." "College Scholarship" searches qualify for Project status as well. Other projects, "Blog Creation" is one such item, may surface from time to time, depending on your interest and my evolving plans.

## **COMMON ASSESSMENTS - 25%**

The Africa and Middle East map tests will double as common assessments. Make sure to know these continents inside and out. For the most part Common Assessments will be determined by the "Current Issues" that we come across the amount of time spent studying each.

## **A FINAL THOUGHT ON 2014/15 CURRICULUM**

We have the opportunity each year in SCI to shape the curriculum. With that in mind all of the above may change - and you all have the power to change it. In this highly structured "teach to the test" ACT/MEAP dominated world of study - being able to go where the winds takes us - is a pretty cool opportunity. You dig in to what you want to learn. So, get involved. Shape your senior year. That, or don't sit around and whine about it.

## **OHS Handbook Proficiency Policy for passing Senior Current Issues**

- 1 - A student must average 60% on two Marking Periods (40% & 40% of final grade) and Final Exam (20%).
- 2 - All students must take the final exam.
- 2 - A student must average 60% on all Common Assessments.
- 3 - Student must satisfy the high school attendance policy.

## **Units of Instruction for Semester Study**

Each semester unit of Senior Current Issues contains individual, national, international components. These separate components will be addressed regularly throughout the semester - and will adjust according to events in the news.

We will work primarily on current issues best surveyed off of the net. We will also watch and discuss several independent films with international themes. The direction of this course may also be altered as events of the world unfold and as students deem it necessary to move in the appropriate direction.