

Housel Middle School

August 2017

8th Grade Honors / Mr. Smith

Dear Parents:

Hello. My name is Mr. Dean Smith, and I will be one of your child's teachers this year. I would like to take this opportunity to let you know how happy I am to have your child in my class. I am dedicated to making this a busy, productive, and fun year! I have some exciting standards based projects and activities planned for the classroom including historical simulations and debates. Social Studies offers some exciting historical and Constitutional arguments that we will explore. This year, I plan to enrich my class instruction by providing my students the opportunity to use technology to express their understanding of key academic concepts in original multimedia projects. As part of this technology integration, I intend to run a modified version of a flipped classroom with my students. A flipped classroom is an instructional model in which the typical lecture and homework elements of a course are reversed. Short video lectures are viewed at home while in-class time is devoted to exercises, projects, or discussions. Please see my "Flipped Classroom letter" for more details.

Frequent Communication:

I will be communicating with you about my classroom plans, your child's progress, and other activities as they arise. Parent communications is very important and, as such, I intend to use remind.com and my classroom website as the principal tools for weekly communication with you. I use my Internet web site for posting classroom activities, handouts, and weekly learning targets. If you have access to the Internet, please bookmark www.smithclass.com and visit frequently. I will provide information on Remind.Com which offers teacher to parent/student text communications. I plan to use this tool to send reminders of online projects, homework, and tests via text to students and parents. This is an optional tool that you may want to join. However, there may be text charges with your cell provider. I am happy to communicate with you via district email. You will need to fill out a form in the office to receive personalized student updates. Please do not think I am rude, but I will not communicate with students via Facebook nor other social networking sites. You can also contact me during my plan period by phone.

Expected Classroom Materials:

As you know, students at Housel will need a three ring binder with dividers for each class to help keep them organized. Your child will need to purchase a **spiral or composition notebook** that will be used for their history class notes and responsive journals. Your child will also need to have **pens (black or blue and red), college ruled paper, and colored pencils**. We use the red pen at the start of class **each** day as we review our Cornell Notes.

Curriculum and Grading:

I hope your child will enjoy our exploration of history this year. My 6th graders will discover ancient and classical history and 7th graders will look at the first one hundred years of US History. My 8th graders will study Washington's unique geography, diverse Native cultures, early pioneer life, 20th century state history, and local/state/federal government. I did want to remind you that students in Washington State are required to take **and pass** Washington State History as a **graduation requirement**. Eighth (8th) grade students will earn a semester grade for the fall semester of Washington State History. Each unit in will focus on the U.S or Washington State Constitution with an emphasis on how the unit shows the conflict between individual rights and the common good. Our class theme is **"What is the Common Good?"**

Tests and assessments will be **eighty-five** percent of the term grade. Students will be allowed to take a test retake regardless of their original grade on the assigned retake day or at lunch if available. Grades may be improved to 90% (A-.)

The following grading scale will be used:

90-100% = A (This is considered exceeding standard)

80-89.99% = B (This is considered meeting standard)

70-79.99% = C (This is considered approaching standard)

60-69.99% = D (This is considered well below standard)

0-59.99% = F (This is considered well below standard and will only occur if students do not put enough effort into retakes and/or homework assignments)

- Retakes will be entered in the grade book as a second column showing points improved from the original grade. Testers who do not improve will have a zero entered in the retake column.
- **The first retake must be done within two weeks of the original test.** Retakes are done during lunch.
- Class research projects, NHD Research projects, and the CBA, which is required by the state of Washington, will also be a weighted as a test but cannot be retaken.
- Students will receive an **"X"** in their agenda for late assignments and the grade will be lowered 20% per day late.

What are the keys to my child being successful in this class?

- Come to class each day. Get and complete make-up work if absent.
- Be engaged and participate in class discussions. This includes asking questions.
- Take Cornell Notes and review them regularly.
- Complete all homework assignments on time.
- Study for and retake tests to get to standard if necessary.

Expectations:**Open Door 8th Grade Students and Honors Students in 8th Grade****8th Grade Open Door / Honors**

- Students in 8th grade Honors will integrate public speaking opportunities such as; historic lectures, debates, panel discussions and reenactments. This block offers curriculum support from primary and secondary historic literature sources. Students will expand on more complex writing and communication skills which will include; comparison/contrast essay, personal opinion essay, speech and debate development. Students will apply their studies and higher level thinking skills by producing and completing projects emphasizing National History Day competitions. Students from Housel Middle School will apply to participate in both regional and state level competitions that will incorporate communications and technology skills.

- **Fall 2016 Semester: Honors - Washington State History**
 - Open Door / Honors Block: This class will integrate literature, primary and secondary historic sources, and civics of the Pacific Northwest in general and Washington State specifically. Students will use writing, artistic, and technology skills to compliment classroom discussions, debates, and essays in a multiple intelligence setting. Historic exploration along with independent study and research will be the emphasis.

- **Spring 2017 Semester: Honors – 20th Century History - Current World Affairs**
 - Open Door / Honors Block: This class will integrate literature, primary and secondary historic sources, and civics of the United States and World. The class will look at the history of the Twentieth Century and the causes of many of today's current world problems. The roots of terrorism and other world problems will be examined as the students are provided the opportunity to consider the relevance of these issues with Washington and United States History. Students will use writing, artistic, and technology skills to compliment classroom discussions, debates, and essays. Individual evaluation of class subject matter will be encouraged in order to develop the students own self concept of the world around them and how it impacts them and their future personally.

- **Units of Study:**
 - Washington State:
 - Geography, Native Americans, Early statehood, Effects of the Great Depression and World War II in the Northwest, Contemporary political, social, and economic issues, and Federal/State/Local Government
 -
 - 20th Century History:
 - Constitutional Issues, "What is the Common Good?"
 - Immigration, Labor, WWI & WWII, and Cold War

National History Day

Taking a Stand in History

<http://nhd.org/contest-affiliates/annual-theme/>

It is a goal of 8th Grade Honors at HMS to participate in the Washington State History Day activities held each spring. All students are expected to attend this event. Students will be provided the opportunity to work as an individual or in teams (of 2-3 students) on a History Day Project. Students who work in teams must provide a project proposal and signed parental permission to work in the proposed group. Students must also provide Mr. Smith a work schedule with an active “to-do” list every Friday. There is a higher expectation of work for students in small groups. Students choosing to work on individual projects need a signed project proposal and will be assessed using the individual project assessment rubric. More information on Washington History Day projects and proposal due dates will be provided before students begin the project.

This year’s National History Day theme is Taking a Stand in History. Mrs. Hall and I will have more information on National History Day, or NHD, in the a few weeks. We usually begin researching NHD 2nd quarter.

Washington State History (Grading) 8th Grade Honors / Open Door

- **Common Assessments**

- The majority of the student grade each quarter will be based on common assessments given every two to three weeks. Students who do not perform to classroom standard on an assessment will be required to re-take the assessment. Students who fail to meet the standards they have set for themselves on an assessment will be allowed to re-take the assessment to a maximum of an A-.

- **Grade Percentage / Weighted Activities**

- Unit Assessments will be weighted 85% of the term grade.

Unit Assessments include:

1. Standardized 8th grade assessments that target selected instructional standards.
2. Group and Individual original performance and productions such as National History Day projects, debates, surveys, and digital projects including web quests, and editing/producing videos documentaries.
3. Classroom Based Assessments from the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Social Studies. For more information on the Social Studies CBAs, please go to the OSPI website at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WASL/socialstudies/default.aspx>.

- Class notes, journals, participation activities, and daily work will be weighted 15% of the term grade.
 - Extra credit will be worth a maximum of 10% of the daily work grade.
 - Some activities may be differentiated to support individual student instructional needs.
 - Some standardized assessments may also be differentiated to meet individual needs.
- **Please note** that students’ 1st and 2nd quarter Washington State History grades will be combined into an end of year semester grade. It is a Prosser High School graduation requirement.

Flipped Classroom / Technology in the Classroom

This year, I plan to **post one lesson** each week on my classroom website www.smithclass.com. **Students will be expected to watch and take Cornell Notes on the lesson outside of class** and to use one day a week in class using the classroom technology, working in small groups, illustrating maps and graphs, researching opinions, or preparing class notes. While I know that many students have direct access to computers and Internet at home, I also realize that many students do not. Some who do have weekend access, may have sports, clubs, or other activities at night that interfere with computer access. Because of this, I am offering 8th graders one day a week that they can sign up and spend their lunch in my "Internet Cafe" classroom. This time, once a week, will be available for all students to complete weekly flipped classroom homework, work on projects, or retake tests.

Other options for out of class computer access include the Prosser Branch of the Mid Columbia Library where sixteen computers are available for an hour a night for students and the Prosser Computer Sharing program. **I should note here that our first homework assignment of the year, due September 23rd, is for every student to get a library card.** The Compute Sharing program is a joint project of the Prosser School District and the Prosser United Methodist Church. In this program, restored and cleaned computers are checked out to students who do not have computer access at home. The Prosser School District Technology department has also linked www.everyoneon.org as a source for low cost Internet service.

As part of putting classroom instruction online, there may be times that I will record classes in order to review instruction and demonstrate successful small group activities for online viewing. While I will never use a student's last name, recorded classes may of course include video of students in class, their class work, and contain their first name. If you give your child permission to be recorded in such a lesson, please check the appropriate box below.

It is important to note here that in order to use my classroom computers, your child must have a district network account which includes a home and school license for Microsoft 365. In order to get this, your child must have a **signed Prosser School District Internet Use form** and must conform to district rules for appropriate use of the network. I will discuss these expectations further in class.

While I am very excited about the opportunity to enrich instruction with technology and to use the flipped model to give more time in class for review, discussion, and projects, I also understand that this new model will bring many additional challenges for students, parents, and teacher. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at school. My plan period is 10:40-11:20 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Housel's phone number is 509-786-1732.

Date: _____

Please keep this copy for home.

Child's First and Last Name: _____ Class Period: _____

- _____ Yes, my child **does** have a computer and Internet access available at home.
- _____ No, my child does **not** have computer and Internet access available at home.
- _____ Yes, I hereby **give** permission for Mr. Smith to post video, pictures, and/or audio of my child, her or his class work and small group activities, and first name on the class instructional website.
- _____ No, I **do not** give permission for Mr. Smith to post video, pictures, and/or audio of my child, her or his class work and small group activities, and first name on the class instructional website.

Parent Name: _____ Parent Signature: _____

I have included my classroom rules and consequences for you to look over. Please remember that if you have any questions, feel free to call me at school, 786-1732. The best time to reach me is 10:40-11:20 AM Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and/or Friday. Thank you for your time and interest in having a great school year. Sincerely,

Mr. Dean Smith

dean.smith@prosserschools.org

786-1732

National Board Certified Teacher

www.smithclass.com

Classroom Rules

1. **BE PREPARED:** It is each student's responsibility to attend class with notebooks, books, and all other appropriate materials.
2. **BE PUNCTUAL:** Students must be seated on time for every class.
3. **RESPECT PEOPLE:** Students will treat all persons in a respectful manner. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.
4. **RESPECT PROPERTY:** Students will treat our facilities and other peoples' property in a respectful manner. Horseplay and other inappropriate classroom behavior will not be tolerated.
5. **Citizenship:** Appropriate citizenship is a key element for success at Housel Middle School. Students are expected to treat all persons in the room with respect. Inappropriate behavior in class, including inappropriate participation when we have a substitute in class, and or the use of personal or class technology without direct teacher approval will earn the student an X in their agenda for behavior and possible office referral.



Sign up for important updates from Mr. Smith.

Get information for **Housel Middle School** right on your phone—not on handouts.


Pick a way to receive messages for **2017-18_Honors-8thWA20th**:

A If you have a smartphone, get push notifications.

On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the following link:

rmd.at/b74794

Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You'll be prompted to download the mobile app.




B If you don't have a smartphone, get text notifications.

Text the message **@b74794** to the number **81010**.

If you're having trouble with **81010**, try texting **@b74794** to **(509) 761-3593**.

* Standard text message rates apply.



Don't have a mobile phone? Go to rmd.at/b74794 on a desktop computer to sign up for email notifications.