

Housel Middle School

August 2017

6th & 7th Open Door / 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. The History/Open Door class at Housel Middle School offers some exciting historical events for us to 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. We will be studying Washington State and Colonial United States History. This class will serve as your child's graduation requirement for Washington State History.

Tests and assessments will be **eighty** percent of the term grade in 6th and 7th 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.

Please note that 6th and 7th Grade Classes will be taught together
Open Door 6th / 7th Grade Curriculum:

- In Individual learning plans will be recorded for each student that are based on the multiple intelligences. An emphasis will be placed on developing skills that are at the top of Blooms Taxonomy: Analysis and synthesis of information and materials, application of knowledge and learning, and evaluation of results will be used in various class projects.
 - Curriculum for the Open Door program will seek to help students develop a positive self-esteem through unique intellectual challenges that extend beyond the traditional classroom. Units will use project based learning which fosters individual creativity, risk taking, problem solving, and critical higher level thinking skills.
 - Open Door units will obviously evolve and change so as to stay fresh each year and to accommodate students evolving individual academic needs. Grading will be individualized based on the student's individual instructional objectives and their ability to complete class activities.
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U.S. History and Civics

- First Semester

- Students will cover the same essential material as students in first semester 7th grade U.S. History. Students will specifically examine the roots of democracy, American Colonial History, causes for the American Revolution, and the development of the U.S. Constitution.
- - **Colonial Experience**
 - Students will explore the various conflicts between colonists and Native Americans in seventeenth century North America.
 - **American Government**
 - The class will consider the various causes for colonial dissent with Britain.
 - Students will study American Government as they reenact a mock Constitutional Convention.
 - The class will also examine the Bill of Rights and the three branches of the Federal government.

• **: Washington State History and NHD Research Project**

- Second Semester

- 6th grade and 7th grade students will be participating in a unique honors based study of Washington State history in the spring semester that will incorporate National History Day research and will also complete the students' required Washington State History class requirement for high school graduation.
- Students will create original presentations that are individualized for each student's own interests, skills, and academic objectives. Students will create projects that will be part of our Housel History Night presentation and our regional National History Day in Yakima.
 - This year's National History Day Theme is: **Conflict and Compromise**:
 - <http://nhd.org/conflict-and-compromise-history>

Flipped Classroom / Technology in the Classroom

This year, I plan to **post some lessons** on my classroom website www.smithclass.com. 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. If your child has no computer or Internet access at home, please ask her or him to speak with me in the next week before or after class. We can work on other options for accessing online work.

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 22rd, 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.

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

Permission for student inclusion in online class blog posts.

Please be sure to read the attached page on Flipped Classroom.

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: _____



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_OD-6-7:

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/b6c67

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 @b6c67 to the number 81010.

If you're having trouble with 81010, try texting @b6c67 to (509) 761-3593.

* Standard text message rates apply.



Don't have a mobile phone? Go to rmd.at/b6c67 on a desktop computer to sign up for email notifications.

