

**Humanities II - Social Studies  
2015-16 Syllabus**

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**Guiding Questions:**

What are the historical roots of inequality?  
How do we measure inequality?  
How and why does society create and perpetuate "the other"?

**Course Description:**

The unifying theme for Humanities II in 2015-16 is an investigation of how past events created global inequality and how societies "otherize" people as a way of perpetuating inequality.

The year launches with a mock trial based on the encounter between the Spanish and the Aztecs in 1519. The trial will help students understand the causes and consequences of the Europeans' arrival in the Americas. *(Any adults available for jury duty during one of our trials on **Thursday, September 24** are encouraged to volunteer by e-mailing me. The morning trial will be from 8-9:30 and the afternoon trial will be from 1-2:30).*

Next, on September 28th, we launch our fall expedition, Africa Rising. King Leopold's colonization of the Congo serves as the case study for our investigation of European Imperialism in Africa. Students will raise money by hosting a Halloween Dance (Friday, October 23rd from 8-11). They will then investigate organizations that are contributing to Africa's development. They will present to a panel of experts about why the class should contribute funds to the organization they have chosen.

*Any adults interested in sharing their expertise about Africa or international development are invited to contact me to arrange a time to present to the class (or a portion of the class in October). Also, please contact me if you are interested in serving on one of our expert panels during the Africa Rising culmination on **Thursday, November 19**.*

During the winter trimester, students will focus on the structure and function of the government of the United States and will hold mock senate hearings to gain a deeper understanding of how a bill becomes law.

In the spring, students will investigate the causes of rising inequality in the United States and the current and historic attempts to address inequality. The Hidden History expedition in the spring will be part of this investigation and will focus on the 1950's and 60's civil rights movement in the United States.

## **Course Standards:**

### HISTORY

*Knowledge:* Identify and describe major historical eras and their defining characteristics using a variety of sources, including primary sources.

*Themes:* Identify and describe major enduring themes in history and their chronological patterns using historical sources, data and knowledge.

### CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT

*U.S Government:* Describe the structure and processes of the U.S government.

*U.S. Political System:* Demonstrate an understanding of how to participate in the U.S. political system.

### APPLICATION OF SOCIAL STUDIES KNOWLEDGE

*Writing:* Integrate information from diverse sources into a coherent understanding of an idea, event, or issue.

*Argument:* Research, formulate, and defend a position on a current social studies issue.

*Decision Making:* Make decisions relating to a current social studies issue.

*Action:* Take action using social studies knowledge and skills.

*Accessing information:* Find useful and readable informational text from internet, databases, statistical information, libraries, newspapers, magazines, and primary sources.

## **Skills:**

Throughout our investigations, students will practice the following:

- close reading of complex texts
- using numerical data to analyze social issues
- making a claim and supporting it with evidence
- using numerical evidence to support a claim
- conducting effective research
- becoming informed about civic issues
- using parliamentary procedure

## **Classroom Norms:**

- Come to class on time with completed homework, notebook, pen or pencil, curiosity, and an open mind.
- Use electronic devices appropriately.
- Eat and drink outside of class time.
- Meet deadlines.
- Seek make-up work after any excused absence.
- Be a good steward of our classroom and our learning resources.
- Be the amazing, thoughtful, interesting, enthusiastic, compassionate, considerate and delightful person that you want to be.