**Eighth Grade**

**United States History**

**Mr. Heffron**

***What is United States History?***

This course examines the history of the United States from the Euorpean discovery of North America by Christopher Columbus through the end of the Civil War. This course examines social topics ranging from politics to slavery to women’s rights. I believe that the best way to teach a course like this is for my students to examine the events of history from a personal perspective and because of this, they will learn from the people who went before them. We examine primary source documents which were written and created in the time of the historic events. Caution…some of the social norms that we experience today were not in place during historic times so some words, comments and actions of our predecessors may be offensive. A good example of this is the word “Negro” that appears numerous times on legal documents, slave auction postings, and videos. This word is not meant to be insulting so please do not take offense with it. It was commonly used as a way of distinguishing a group of people as one of the five races of humans that people were taught 150 years ago.

***What you can expect from me:***

You can expect to learn about one of my very favorite topics – the history of our great country. You will learn how it came to be and what it took to get us where we are today. You will learn about the challenges, tragedies and accomplishments of the many people who were responsible for this country covering this land. You will find that I am an avid consumer of American history and love to talk about the subject.

You can expect me to be fair in my treatment of all students. I will give you every opportunity to earn an A+ in my class. You will notice that I did say “earn” a good grade. I do not believe in assigning a large volume of homework, but when I do, I expect it to be completed and turned in on time. A very large portion of your grade will be for your participation in classroom discussions, group work and daily activities. These can only be accomplished if you are in class, so I want to see you in class every day. I am in favor of extra credit projects because I feel that if you are willing to go above and beyond the normal class expectations to make sure that you improve your grade, I want to reward that effort.

I teach this course via Lecture, PowerPoint Presentations, Hands-on group projects, Videos (we watch *John Adams, Gettysburg* and *Pioneer House* in this class), and Document Based Question projects. I use the textbook sparingly. The vast majority of my lessons are learned in the classroom. Students who have consistent tardiness and absences may find it difficult to learn the material taught in class – you sipley must be in class to learn.

I want you to get something useful out of this course. I want to provide you with “walking around knowledge” that is actually useful to you and will someday make a difference in your lives. In doing so, you will understand why you need to sit in this class for an hour every day. I have a great sense of humor and want to have a fun year. So let’s learn something.

***What I expect from you:***

I expect you to follow the classroom constitution and parliamentary procedures as they are necessary in any smoothly operating system of government. I expect that you will ask me if you do not understand a topic so that I can clarify the topic so that you do not sit in a state of confusion. I expect that you will raise your hand if you have something important to say and I will show you the same courtesy.

I expect you to do all of your own work and not try to take credit for the efforts of others (that is called plagiarism) . I expect that you will write in complete sentences. I expect that your penmanship will be spectacular so that I do not have to try to decipher your coded messages. I do not care whether you write in pencil or pen, however, I must be able to read your work, so please use a sharp pencil and erase any errors neatly. **Do NOT use a red pen if you write in ink.** Sloppy, scribbled, erased, scratched-out, crinkled, work will be immediately returned to you, ungraded, so that you have the opportunity to turn in a better effort.

**Classroom Constitution**

**Article One:** You Shall Be Prepared

* Have all your work completed
* Have all your materials ready for class

**Article Two:** You Shall Be Respectful

* Of your classmates
* Of your teacher
* Of the property of others

**Article Three:**  You Shall Be Prompt

* Be in your seat and ready to learn

**Parliamentary Procedures**

Paper headings:

* Upper Right Corner
* Name
* Date / Class Period
* Assignment

Turn in Work:

* No Hanging Chads – trim the chads off of your papers before turning them in

Assignments:

* On the Board this week
* Transferred to the 3 ring binder next week and always posted on the website

Missed Handouts:

* Look in the 3 ring binder

Passes:

* Clipboard by the door
* One student at a time
* NOT during instruction – during seat work is OK

***My Grading System:***

• Chapter Tests and periodic quizzes will comprise 30% of your final grade.

• Projects will consist of a semester-long research project that each student will develop with the teacher. The research project will relate to the material covered in the class. Research projects will comprise 30% of your final grade.

• Homework will be given sparingly and will comprise 10% of your final grade.

• Class participation will demonstrate the student’s participation in classroom discussions, worksheets and other learning materials. A student must be present and engaged in the lesson plan to receive participation credit. Class participation will comprise 30% of your final grade.

Late work will be gladly accepted at any time; however, you will not receive full credit for turning in your work late. I will take off 20% after it is late. So turn in all of your work regardless of how late it is. Missed work is your responsibility. It will be in the “missed work” binder. If you have an excused absence, I will give you two days per day absent to turn in your work for full credit.

The class website and all accompanying information is located at **www.rogheff.com**

Review this with your parent or guardian. Have them sign it then return it to me.

**THIS is your first homework assignment and it is worth a 20 point Class Participation Grade**

I have read and reviewed the syllabus with my child.

Student Date

Parent Date