**Humanities Syllabus**

**Humanities II**

**Room: 9800/9850**

**Teachers: Matt Misuraca and Nick Pelster**

**Contact:** [**mamisuraca@dcsdk12.org**](mailto:mamisuraca@dcsdk12.org) & [**npelster@dcsdk12.org**](mailto:npelster@dcsdk12.org)

**Website:** [**http://cvhumanities2.weebly.com/**](http://cvhumanities2.weebly.com/)

**Who we are as teachers?**

We strive to create a community of learners. We believe that the education system often places too much emphasis on competition, even though society has proven time and time again that cooperation is the most effective way to accomplish a goal. We believe this community to be a safe place. If students do not feel comfortable voicing an opinion, then we can never truly dig to the root of a problem.

We encourage you (as the student taking this class) to advocate for yourself. When parents contact us, my first question will always be, “Have I spoken to \_\_\_\_\_ about this?” Understand we would like you to take your grades and future in your own hands.

Please contact us via email only. All emails will be returned within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays. To resolve issues in the most efficient way possible, we encourage students to meet with one of us during advisement.

**Materials Needed:** 1 folder specific to this class

1 notebook specific to this class

1 pack of sticky notes

1 book of your choice

1 flash drive

Various pens/pencils/highlighters, etc.

One community school supply (will sign up for in class)

Library card or novel (more information to come)

**Grade Breakdown:** Rounding is at our discretion.

90%-100% is an A

80%-89% is a B

70%-79% is a C

60%-69% is a D

59% and below is a F

**First 15:** Because one of our ultimate goals for you is to become better readers and writers, you will be either reading or writing for the first 15 minutes of most class periods. Reading material is your choice, however, there are some obvious exceptions (textbook, magazine, catalog, internet, websites, etc…). You need to have a physical book! If you need help choosing a book or acquiring the proper reading material, just ask. There is a great deal of reading material available for all. You may take any book of Misuraca’s home, and if it is something you would read again, chances are he will let you keep it.

**Course Description:** In this course, students will prepare for the demanding reading and writing requirements in college. Students will learn valuable techniques for improving their reading comprehension and developing their critical thinking skills across various subject areas. Students will improve their ability to read deeply and carefully, understanding how authors use language to create meaning. All elements of this course are intended to make a student’s transition into college as smooth and successful as possible.

We tend to agree with Standford that Humanities describes “how people process and document the human experience.” This allows for a great deal of freedom within our course in that students will not be limited to simply English nor History. We believe that Humanities is all encompassing and genre blending.

Writing is a major focus of the course. Students will be expected to research and write about relevant topics constantly. The history portion of the class is taught reverse chronologically so that connections come more naturally and students are able to relate global issues to their personal lives. The literature used in class is intended to deepen understanding along with art, music, science, and a plethora of other mediums.

**Room Layout:** Our classroom is not laid out as a typical student would expect. There are not rows of desks, or even small groups. Tables are spread throughout for student to work at, but there are many other optional work spaces. There is a “coffee shop” area for small group discussion and ideation purposes. There is a workshop with access to a great deal of raw materials for students to build models or have a lab type setting. There is a screening and presentation area for students to share their findings or watch documentaries relevant to subject matter. Throughout the room students may expect to find a number of desktop computers that are readily available for those who choose not to bring their own technology.

**Reversing History**

**Why:** In order to know the United States and its place in the world not only today, but tomorrow as well, it is important to understand how we got here. Traditional history classes are capable of this, but often run out of time or move too quickly through the most recent events, making it difficult for students to make the critical connections from the past to the present. In order to solve this problem, we will start with current events and then trace the why and how of those events backward through time until the end of the year. The goal is to help students truly think historically, to understand the importance of history, and find solutions to our current problems that are less superficial and reactionary, but well thought out, practical, and meaningful.

**Course Policies:**

**Attendance:**  It is simple. Come to class. Don’t be late. We will honor your time in our class. We will use it wisely and try to keep you from having excessive amounts of homework. However, if you choose not to work, to show up late or not at all, you will have lots of homework. The amount of homework you have is directly affected by how absent/tardy you are and your use of class time appropriately.

**Participation:**  It is simple. In order to create a community, we need to hang out and get to know one another. We will get to know each other by sharing our work, by working together in groups and all that sort of fun. To keep each of us accountable for our participation, each student will be given a “quality worker” grade. This 50-point grade is there to reward students who demonstrate the 4 Ps (punctuality, preparedness, participation, politeness). This grade may fluctuate throughout the term. Discussion is a large part of this course, and most people prefer this to constantly having to write. As long as we are able to sustain discussion, then we can avoid busy work assignments.

**Missed Assignments**: …are simple. If you know you’re going to be absent before a due date, get your assignment to us (via email or give it to a friend to turn in for you) before you go. If you are absent, you get as many days as you were gone to make-up an assignment plus one day. This is the policy at Castle View High School. After those dates, the late work policy applies.

**Late Work Policy:** Late work will not be accepted except for on a case by case basis. Discussions about late work must take place during advisement periods only.

**Cheating:** Don’t cheat. Don’t steal. Trust that whatever you come up with in our class is going to be loads better than some ridiculous thing you can find off the internet. Oh, and assume that if you can find it, I can find it too. Plagiarism will result in 0s on assignments. Students caught plagiarizing will be expected to explain to us, and their parents (in their own, non-plagiarized, words) why they thought someone else’s work was better than their own. We will teach you how to properly use the internet as a resource. If you ever have a doubt about whether your use is appropriate for the class, please ask. Better safe than sorry with this policy.

**Technology:** Use of technology including personal computers, tablets, smartphones, etc. is an important part of our class. Abuse of technology (texting in class) will cause you to not be able to use any of the available technology in class. Don’t ruin it for yourself by misusing technology. If you have any questions about whether or not your use is acceptable, please ask! Most importantly with regards to technology, if you do not think you will have access to certain devices or a home computer then please see me privately and we will work something out.

**BYOD (Bring Your Own Device):** Castle View provides its students with an immense amount of access to technology; however, despite all of the available computers/tablets, at times it is still difficult to book these devices for a class as large as ours. Especially due to our frequency of use. Students are encouraged to bring their own devices, but this is NOT REQUIRED. We will do our best to provide devices for students at all times.

Please detach the bottom of this page and return no later than Friday, August 12th.

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I have read and understand the policies for Humanities with Mr. Misuraca and Mr. Pelster.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_