

# **Social Studies: U.S. History**

Instructor: Betsy Gottschalk

Resources: Primary and Secondary Source Documents

Current Media Sources online and in print

In history class we study North America and its people and in conjunction with world events. We will dig deeply into primary and secondary sources. Our history class will most often work in Problem Based Learning (PBL). This is an inquiry-based exploration of history.

We will focus also on current news events, economic concepts, and our civic rights and responsibilities.

In addition to our regular history class, students are responsible for two large history projects:

1. During the first semester each student will write a research paper on a part of history related to the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> or early twentieth centuries. The paper needs to be well-written and documented, using both primary and secondary sources. Students will also prepare a visual project which further explains the research project and present the visual project to an audience at school. The project may be based on a person, a period of history, or a place. Each student will conference with me before settling on a topic. The final draft of the research paper is due in December.
2. During the first and second semester, each student will work on interviewing and collecting primary source information on a biography of an ancestor. The student will complete the biography during the second semester. The subject of the biography needs to be at least two generations removed from the student (i.e. grandparent generation). Students will begin thinking and planning for the biography from the beginning of the school year. It's a big project (fifty pages with text and images).

Each student will be responsible for and tested on knowledge of the states and capitals of the United States.

Grading in U.S. History is based on the following factors:

Tests/ Projects/PBL work in teams and individual work

Homework/ Quizzes

Classwork and Current Events

Performance (behavior/participation/team work)

Extra Credit is available if all required work is completed. Extra Credit will be due before the last full week of the semester.