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# Communication and Advocacy

# (Individuals & Society / Language & Literature)

# Brody Middle School

# Course Syllabus

Welcome to 8th Grade! As this course begins, it is important to understand that teachers and students have roles. As the teacher, I am responsible to help guide your learning. As the student, you are expected to follow the course outline and requirements in order to maximize your learning. With that in mind, this syllabus will walk you through both teacher and student expectations.

**Expectations of Instructor**

**Expectations of Student**

* Respect
* Honest feedback
* Attentiveness
* Correspondence
* Willingness to learn from you
* Respect
* Preparation
* Participation
* Effort
* Timeliness

# Course Description

In 8th grade ELA & Individual and Societies we explore real world questions and issues that address our past and present. We investigate, write, read, discuss, debate and present the beginnings of America and its founding. More than just history and geography, we will measure the strengths and weaknesses of the events that led to the colonization of America, the various effects of wars, why privilege can lead to inequality for some, and how we can be a force for powerful and positive change. This will require active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also have an understanding of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

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| **Individuals & Societies** | |
| Colonization | 1. Compare and contrast reasons for migration to precolonial America 2. Examine similarities and differences of colonial settlements 3. Differentiate the effects of precolonial migration |
| Revolution & Founding | 1. Form conclusions about factors that contributed to the development of colonial identities 2. Differentiate patterns of economic development within colonial America 3. Critique the effect of different political systems in the colonies 4. Identify the circumstances that led to the Revolutionary War |
| A New Nation | 1. Assess how the goals of the Declaration of Independence were represented in the founding of the new government 2. Examine similarities and differences between compromises during the development of the US Constitution 3. Differentiate the roles of the three branches of government in the law making process 4. Evaluate the structure of Federalism 5. Assess how the structure of the US government effects citizens |
| Expansion & Reform | 1. Examine the similarities and differences in the reasons for westward movement for different groups 2. Assess the impact of westward migration |
| Domestic Conflict | 1. Interpret data to examine the similarities and differences between the North and South before the Civil War. 2. Discuss the impact of the early years of the Civil War on Americans. 3. Discuss the impact of the latter years of the Civil War on Americans. |
| **Language & Literature** | |
| Writing | 1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. 2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. 3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well–structured event sequences. 4. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. 5. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline–specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. |
| Reading | * Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. * Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. * Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. * Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. * By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently. Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. |
| Language | 1. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. 2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. 3. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. |
| Speaking & Listening | 1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one–on–one, in groups, and teacher–led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly. 2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation. 3. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well–chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. 4. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest. |
| **Year-Long Standards** | |
| Thinking Critically | * Create a product by integrating visual information with other information in print text by clearly showing connections between them. Product created uses a variety of relevant sources and makes reference to each source used * Use information from sources to evaluate relevance and usefulness of a source * Use questions about sources to identify additional sources and areas of research |
| Communication | Write informative text that:   1. Introduces the topic clearly 2. Organizes information clearly (chronologically, thematically, etc.) 3. Develops a topic with relevant facts, definitions, details, and examples; use content-related vocabulary. 4. Provide a concluding statement (sentence or paragraph) |
| Investigating | * Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources. * Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts. * Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text. * Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic. * By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently. |

# IB Framework

Middle Years Program (MYP) assigns four (4) criteria to each subject. Each teacher must assess each criterion two times per semester. Criteria based assessments are assessed using an MYP 8-point rubric. When more than one criterion is assessed in a task, there will be multiple grades. For example if an essay is assessed using Criteria A: Analyzing, B: Organizing C: Producing Text, and D: Using Language, then the teacher will input a separate score for each criterion, thus there will be four (4) grades for the essay.

The Assessment Criteria for all eight subject areas are listed below.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject Area** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** |
| Language and Literature (formerly known as English Language Arts) | Analyzing | Organizing | Producing Text | Using Language |
| Individuals and Societies (formerly known as history and/or social science) | Knowing and Understanding | Investigating | Communicating | Thinking Critically |

# Required Work

One of the major goals of the course is to improve reading, writing grammar proficiency. Most of the units and assignments require reading and writing. You will need to sharpen these skills if you are not currently exercising them. You will be asked to read the following this semester:

* 1. *Educurious*, Project Based Learning
  2. *NoRedInk.com,* Grammar and Writing
  3. Research Articles, provided
  4. Primary Sources, letters, speeches, poems, songs, etc.

Student Preparation for Class (Supplies)  
Preparation is important for this course. Here is what you will need to be successful in this class:

1. A notebook per class.
2. Writing utensils: #2 pencils and/or pens.
3. A notebook and folder for storing assignments and handouts.
4. An audio/video recording device (a video camera, digital camera or cellphone will work)
5. Headphones that will work with your computer

# Participation – Why It’s Important

Daily participation will be an important part of your overall learning. Productive discussions are essential to the work we do in this class. In high school life, and beyond, you will constantly be asked to share your opinions, so I want to give you space to practice this important skill. Within the virtual classroom structure, participation will be critical to the learning process. You are an interesting person—with interesting thoughts—and I know the class will benefit from hearing them!

# Absences/Late Work

If you know you will absent in advance, please see me in advance to collect any work that you may miss. If your absence coincides with a due date of a major presentation, you must make arrangements with me in advance to present at another time. It is up to you to maintain your calendar!

# Language

There are many ways to communicate pain, anger frustration and bodily functions. This class chooses to use class. Please refrain from swearing, negativity, hate speech and crude language. Piranhas take bites out of each other, let’s not use our words in the same way.

Laptops  
Laptops are an important tool for the classroom; however, they should not be a distraction. Working for other classes, or watching videos is not allowed. Any inappropriate material will be reported to the administration immediately.

# Cellphones

Phones in this class can do more harm than good. They’re a distraction that most people do not recognize as addictive. Please keep your phone away during the times you are in class. If your phone is seen, you will be warned. If it happens again you will be asked to give it to your parent/guardian or make use of the phone caddies.

# Homework

Due to the structure of the virtual classroom schedule, students will be given a set time after the initial lesson to work on assignments, projects, and in small groups. However, homework should be expected and completed by the assigned date given by your instructor(s).

# Digital Citizenship

Digital Citizenship is a new component of the Brody framework for this school year and will be a weekly exploration of how to become a responsible digital citizen in this global world we now find ourselves connected to. As part of the curriculum, the 8th grade will be using activities and lessons from the CommonSense.org and we encourage families to explore the website in further detail.

# Social/Emotional Learning

Our classrooms will have a social/emotional learning component for student success. Teachers will introduce new topics on Monday and then use those topics as a weekly theme. As part of this, we’ll be using the Second Step program.

# Extra Assistance

If you feel that you are struggling in this course, please feel free to contact me at any point in the year. One of my primary goals is to help you have a meaningful experience, and I will do whatever I can to make sure you achieve this. I am good at responding to individual e-mails, but I would also be happy to meet before or after school. I am more than willing to answer questions, to provide additional assistance if necessary, or simply to have additional conversations about our class! You can use Canvas to contact your teacher(s) directly.