

American Studies, 2010-2011

Management Memo

Alex Wiese

"Speak not to offend and listen not to be offended."

Dear Students and Guardians,

Welcome to the start of another great school year! I look forward to meeting each and every one of you, and hope you feel the same about me. Our first order of business (much like it was for the Continental Congress over two hundred years ago) is to establish some ground rules which will allow our day-to-day operations to run more smoothly. My expectation is that this class will not only be an environment for learning, but also a destination for respectful dialogue and the considerate exchange of ideas. After you read this document, please ask any questions, share it with your guardian(s), and return it signed with their signature and yours as a contract to abide by for the rest of the school year.

Daily expectations:

- Students are expected to bring their American Studies notebook/journal and a writing utensil to class every day. Each class period starts with students answering a short journal question on the board, so please scrounge up these two basic supplies before class.
- When homework or other assignments are due, they are expected at the beginning of the period, on my desk, and in your respective class period's folder. In exchange for turning in assignments in this manner, I will always make an effort to return them to you promptly and, when necessary, an explanation of any points docked.
- Late assignments will be accepted but docked points. 10% one day late, 20% two days late, and 30% for three or more days late. For assignments three or more days late there will also be additional requirements, often including a written explanation of tardiness. If you know in advance that you might have trouble turning an assignment in on time, discuss it with me and we will work together to sort something out.
- Always treat other students, the teacher in the room, and yourself with respect. A large portion of students' grades in this class will be participation and I expect all students to be able to voice their opinions and ask questions without fear of being made fun of or ostracized in any way. If you ever have a problem, please inform me as soon as possible.
- Take care of the school you inhabit and the materials you operate with. We are very fortunate to have such a nice building, computers, library books, and other materials. As a sign of respect to me and your fellow classmates, I hope that you ensure they stay nice and new for as long as possible.

Inappropriate behavior:

When I was your age I played a lot of tennis and soccer. If you know anything about tennis, you will know that a lot of the time there are not referees or umpires to judge the matches. The pressure is on the players to call the balls in or out, correct their mistakes, and be honest. This classroom will be treated much the same way in that I expect students to be mature, address classroom problems on your own as much as you can, and own up to mistakes if they occur. If a problem cannot be solved, you are welcome to appeal to me and hopefully we can solve the problem.

If you know anything about soccer, you know that there are two sorts of penalties. There are yellow cards, which are given to players who commit minor violations, and red cards, for more serious violations. Two yellow cards also constitute a red card. If I see something in my classroom that constitutes inappropriate behavior, a yellow card will be placed on your desk as a warning and requires a short meeting with me after class. A red card is an immediate meeting with me out in the hallway and a ladder of other consequences that include; a detention after school in my room, loss of group work privileges, a written reflection on the behavior, contacting your parents, suspension from my classroom, and lastly, administration involvement.

I know at first it may seem like all I care about is rules. However, I assure you that this is not the case. My only intention is to provide the rules early and in a clear manner so that we can get them out of the way and focus on more fun and interesting subjects as soon as possible. If there is anything I did not explain, requires clarification, or you simply have questions about, please feel free to ask me. I am always in my room before and after school, as well as during my prep periods. Thank you and I look forward to getting to know you throughout the school year!

Sincerely,

Mr. Wiese

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____