Mr. Martin’s Class Guidelines

Westside High School – Spring 2008 – Holocaust Studies

Dear Parent/Guardian and Student,

The world’s history has been shaped by so many extraordinary events that it is difficult to single out one which stands out as the most significant. However impossible that task may be, I believe that one of the most significant and tragic events in human history is the Holocaust. I have spent several years studying this very subject and am ecstatic to have the opportunity to teach this class this semester.

Holocaust Studies will not only focus on the series of events that led to the extermination of some 12 million people. We will also turn our attention to the lessons learned and unlearned through the thoughtful research into countless other acts of genocide that have taken place and continue to take place around the globe since the Second World War.

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to have your student in my class. With that in mind, I feel that it is important for you to know that I have been teaching for 7 years and have taught across the age range from first grade to middle school and now high school.

My main concern as a teacher has always been to help children achieve success not only in class, but also in his/her other classes. I will need your help. Most recent educational scientific studies have proven how important parental involvement is in helping students achieve success in school. That is why I communicate so much with parents through e-mail first and phone calls second. Because I know you want your student to have an excellent semester, I am pleased to tell you about what we are going to be doing in class and suggest some ways you can participate in improving your student’s performance.

In this course your child will study the lessons of the Second World War through a variety of ways. We will ready and analyze both historical fiction and non fiction literature. We will watch several movies depicting significant events in our history. We will take a field trip to Houston’s Holocaust Museum and we will hear both video and live testimony of survivors of the Holocaust.

Your can help your student get the most out of this year by helping me in the following ways:

1. Ask to see your student’s work at various times. Engage them in conversations about the class and the lessons we can learn from such tragedy.

2. Remind your child that school is important. Please stay involved. Discuss school at any time. In some way, please try to show your student that you value education and you value him/her giving the best effort possible.

I believe that learning is much more than listening to a lecture, reading a book, or taking a test. With your help and cooperation, I am going to help your child learn to do quality work and that what he/she learns in school will be useful in his/her life. If you want to know what we are up to please go to www.westsidewolves.org and there will be a link to my class web page that will have my schedule, contact information, lesson plans and syllabus. The direct link to that page is http://whscmarti15.edublogs.org.
This course will focus on:
1. Studying the Holocaust
2. Anti-Semitism and Bias
3. Nazi Germany and Propaganda
4. Jewish Ghettos
5. The Final Solution
6. Jewish Resistance
7. Rescuers and Non-Jewish Resistance
8. Survivors and Liberators
9. Perpetrators, Collaborators, and Bystanders
10. The Children of the Holocaust
11. Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Darfur – Genocide
12. Research Proposals

Grading Policy:
1. Daily Grades: 100 points per assignment
   Tests: 200 points per unit exam
   Quiz: 100 points per quiz
   Projects/Presentations: 300 points (this includes a visual, written, and spoken component)

2. LATE work may result in serious reductions in grades. It is the responsibility of the student to get their work in on time. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT A ZERO. STUDENTS WILL COMPLETE ALL ASSIGNED SPEECHES AND PRESENTATIONS EVEN IF I HAVE TO WATCH THEM IN YOUR LIVING ROOM!!!**

3. I will be taking an organization grade at the end of every six weeks. This will be counted as a test grade. Because of this, all students will be required to have a three-ringed, hard-backed binder with at least three dividers or a three to five subject notebook. The notebook needs to be for that subject only. Work from the previous six weeks should remain in the notebook and not be thrown away. Because of this, the ring size should probably be at least 1 ½ inches.

4. Audience etiquette during student presentations and with outside lecturers is an important part of this course. Students who choose not to be good audience members will first have a conference with the instructor in order to correct behavior. If the disrespect continues, a parent/guardian will be contacted, and points will be deducted from his/her participation grade. Although rare, if misbehavior continues, then further disciplinary action will be taken through the administration.

5. When a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to inquire about make-up work. All make-up work should be completed within three days of the absence.

6. This class will read, discuss and view material that is often considered disturbing. I will always navigate through the course with the dignity and grace that is required to not just study the subject but to honor those whose lives have been impacted by this event.

7. I encourage families to be involved in this course so please come hear our speakers, come watch our movies, join us at the museum, but most importantly talk about this class with your student.
I look forward to working with your child and sincerely hope that you will contact me if you have any questions during the school year. My school e-mail is cmarti15@houstonisd.org. I primarily communicate through e-mail. The school phone number is 218-920-8000 x 6032 and my cell phone number is 832.646.1800 (no phone calls past 9:00 p.m. please!).

Please have your student return the document requiring your and his/her signature. Doing that will result in your student beginning the semester with a 100 as a daily grade. If you also send me an e-mail confirming your e-mail address, your student will automatically earn 20 points this six weeks in extra credit.

I know we're going to have a great semester!

Sincerely,

Heath Martin
Westside High School Speech and Debate
Signature Document

By signing, I have read, understood, and will follow the class guidelines in Mr. Martin’s class for the Spring 2008 semester at Westside High School.

(Parent name - printed) ____________________________________________ (Parent Signature) ____________________________________________

(Student name - printed) ____________________________________________ (Student Signature) ____________________________________________

(Date) ____________________________________________

(Parent E-mail) ____________________________________________

(Student E-mail) ____________________________________________

(Mailing Address – please don’t forget to include the zip code) ____________________________________________

(Phone number where a parent/guardian can be reached during the day) ____________________________________________

Thank you!!!