8th Grade Pre-IB Prep U.S. History

2014 – 2015

**Course Description:**

8th Grade Pre-IB Prep United States History is designed for the highly motivated student who wishes to pursue the International Baccalaureate Program or Advanced Placement courses in high school. Students will explore the events of U.S. history using documents, images, cartoons and other primary sources along with secondary text. With a more rigorous focus on document based inquiry, the students will examine and analyze the political, economic, technological and social developments of the United States from the period of colonial settlement through Reconstruction. Florida’s role in our nation’s history will also be emphasized. Instruction will focus on students developing an understanding of themes in U.S. History including the impact of expansion, the development of conflicts, the influence of diverse groups on American culture and the impact of world events on American thinking. This course was designed to give students a more in-depth view of U.S. History and includes the development of complex skills in reading, writing and research. Writing in a historical context will be emphasized and students will be expected to engage in extended research and produce writing of significance on a frequent basis. The text for this course is ***America: History of Our Nation***. You will be provided with online access to the textbook.

**Students who successfully complete the SCPS Pre-IB Preparatory Program have a program link to Seminole High School IB. The student is required to submit an application during the application period and return the response form on time to guarantee assignment.**

**Advanced Placement Skills**

The AP History and Social Science Curriculum Alignment Framework identifies four key skills that students need to master to be successful in academically challenging course work, which can prepare them for advanced-level coursework success. These skills include:

* Practice Inquiry
* Identify and interpret information from primary and other sources
* Analyze data from written and visual sources
* Evaluate, apply and clearly present information

**DBQ Project**

One of the main components of this course will be the DBQ Project, which is committed to helping teachers implement rigorous writing and thinking activities with students of *all* skill levels. This project is guided by the 5 core beliefs:

1. All students need to learn how to think
2. Learning to think requires practice
3. Thinking is hard work
4. Thinking is clarified by writing
5. Thinking is for everyone

Through Document Based Questions (DBQs), students develop high-level critical thinking skills through engaging questions and use of primary and secondary sources. Students are given the opportunity to investigate history from a variety of perspectives.  DBQs support discussion and debate as students clarify their own ideas and write evidence-based arguments. Learning this way not only deepens student understanding of history, it also builds reading, thinking, and writing skills.

**History Fair:**

All 8th grade Pre-IB Prep students are required to complete a History Fair research project. History Fair is an inter-disciplinary program that allows students' to broaden their historical experiences and develop necessary research skills that engage them in higher order thinking skills. Students will choose a historical topic related to the annual theme, then conduct primary and secondary research. After analyzing and interpreting their sources, students will draw a conclusion about the significance of their topic and present their work in one of five ways: a paper, an exhibit, a performance, a documentary, or a web site. Detailed paperwork will be provided about requirements and deadlines. For more information please visit [www.nhd.org](http://www.nhd.org).