



# ga studies syllabus

Veterans Memorial Middle School  
2018-2019

<b>Instructor</b>	Mrs. Vanessa Ellis <i>2017 GA Econ Teacher of the Year</i> <i>2018 Harvard Fellow</i>	<b>E-mail</b>	Ellis.Vanessa.I@muscogee.k12.ga.us
<b>Phone</b>	706-748-3203	<b>School Hours</b>	8:50 a.m. to 3:50 p.m.
<b>Office</b>	2008 Old Guard Road Columbus, Georgia 31909	<b>Planning Period</b>	9:48 – 10:43 (2 <sup>nd</sup> Period)
<b>Tutoring Hours</b>	Wednesdays, after school until 5:00 p.m.	<b>Social Studies Fair Help Days</b>	Fridays, after school until 5:00 p.m.

## course overview

In eighth grade, students study Georgia geography, history, government, and economics. While the four strands are interwoven, ample opportunity is also provided for in-depth study of the geography of Georgia and the government of Georgia. U.S. historical events are included, as appropriate, to ensure students understand Georgia's role in the history of the United States.

## goals

- Understand that history is complex and there are multiple perspectives to unpack when studying history
- Use the Cultural Approach framework to analyze history
- Seek to truly and deeply understand the content
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Become an aware, informed and active global citizen
- Visibly exhibit thinking, learning and understanding
- Strengthen reading comprehension and Lexile level
- Be a clear and communicative writer
- Interpret and analyze primary and secondary sources
- Use of technology inside and outside of the classroom and integration of blended learning
- Pass the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS) for this course
- Develop an enjoyment of social studies and strive to be a lifelong learner!

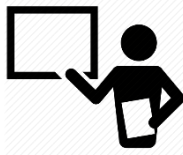
## textbook

Digital Georgia Studies Textbook: <http://www.gpb.org/education/georgia-studies/digital-textbook>

\*\*Students will have access to the digital textbook in class when applicable to assignments. The digital textbook can also be accessed from a home computer or on tablet or smartphone by downloading the [app](#). A class set of hard copy textbooks will also be kept inside of the classroom. If you would like your child to have a textbook at home, please send me a note and he or she will receive one by the week's end\*\*

- Spiral-bound, plastic covered notebook (preferably a Five Star Notebook)
- Coloring utensils (colored pencils, colored pens), Elmer's school glue, highlighters
- Kleenex, hand sanitizer and school supply donations are always greatly appreciated! ☺

# about this class



- Evaluation
  - Language, classroom culture and practices will focus on thinking, learning and understanding rather than passively doing work, obtaining knowledge and obsessing over grades. We will engage in documentation of the learning process, reflection of what we've learned, how our thinking has developed over time and multiple opportunities and pathways to show mastery of content, skills and civic principles.
  - Grades are based on **mastery** of state standards. Students will be assessed through formative daily work (40%) and summative tests/ projects (60%). All assignments, quizzes, tests and projects will be graded out of a set number of points. Example: exit ticket= 5 pts.; primary source analysis= 20 pts.
- Interactive Student Notebooks (ISNs)
  - Student documentation of learning will be recorded in a spiral interactive student notebook (ISN). ISNs will serve as a central location to record information and ideas, to provide descriptions and explanations, to make predictions and connections, to consider different perspectives and to form conclusions. The ISN is a combination of teacher-student created textbook and a reflection journal. It is essential to student success in this course.
- Attendance
  - I enjoy school most when all of my students are present, engaged and learning!
  - We will be doing a lot of hands-on activities, group work, and performances of understanding that necessitate students to be in class.
  - If a student is absent, please contact me so I can make accommodations and adaptations so that the student does not fall behind.
- Missed Assignments
  - In the event that a student is absent, students have multiple opportunities to make up missing work. Assignments will be posted on my class website and/or my Canvas page. Students are welcome to come to me before school, after school on Tuesdays or during increased learning time (ILT) with the teacher permission. It is my hope that he/she will also seek ways to fill the gaps in understanding that may have been missed. **That goes beyond simply making up missing work to replace a missing grade.** It requires the student to read, watch videos, do some research, talk with adults and peers so that he/she can truly and deeply learn the content.
- Projects
  - Select 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students will complete a Social Studies Fair Project (more information will be handed out and discussed with students at the end of August).
  - Each nine weeks, students will complete an authentic project of their choice regarding topics local/ state geography, history, governments and/or economics.
- Home Learning (Homework)
  - Each night, work through the unit review modules in Canvas (more info to come, other options available).
  - Students will be inspired to do some learning at home and in the community! I encourage students to engage in social studies as often as possible outside of class. Examples include:
    - Read/ watch the news, exploring multiple sources to consider different viewpoints
    - Tour local and state historical sites and museums
    - Speak with business owners about their impact on the local economy
    - Attend civic gatherings and hear elected official speak
    - Take nature walks and explore the natural geography of our area
    - Notice population patterns and the layout of urban and rural places as you travel
    - Pick your own adventure!
  - If students do not finish assignments and documentation in class, I am asking that they finish their work outside of class in order to continue their thinking and not develop gaps in understanding.

# behavior management

Rules	Procedures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Be Respectful</li><li>2. Be Responsible</li><li>3. Be Ready to Learn!</li></ol> <p>*Students are not to be on personal devices without teacher's permission.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enter class quietly and begin working on the smart start.</li><li>2. Sharpen pencils and get any needed supplies BEFORE class begins.</li><li>3. No eating or drinking in class without permission.</li><li>4. Students cannot leave class during the first or last 10 minutes of class.</li><li>5. Be on task and productive during work session.</li><li>6. At the end of class, complete the closing task and put all supplies back in the appropriate places, <u>neatly</u>.</li></ol>
Rewards	Consequences
Rewards: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal praise</li><li>2. Positive parent contact</li><li>3. Incentive passes</li><li>4. Visit VMMS Boutique</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal Warning</li><li>2. Removed from group seating</li><li>3. Teacher-Student Conference (Behavior Sheet)</li><li>4. "Time-Out" with another teacher</li><li>5. Parent Contact (phone call or email)</li><li>6. Detention (before or after school)</li><li>5. Office Referral</li></ol>

## additional information

### Helpful links:

- MCSD website: <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/>
- Standards: <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Georgia-Standards/Pages/Social-Studies-Grade-8.aspx>
- Email: [Ellis.Vanessa.I@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:Ellis.Vanessa.I@muscogee.k12.ga.us)
- Canvas: <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/Families> (also download app)
- Class Website: <http://heymrsellis.weebly.com/>
- Class Instagram: <https://instagram.com/heymrsellis/>
- Class Twitter: <https://twitter.com/heymrsellis>
- YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/mav1286/videos>
- Donor's Choose: <https://www.donorschoose.org/heymrsellis>
- Research-based Study Tips: <http://www.learningscientists.org/posters>
- Quizlet: <https://quizlet.com/vanessaellis0628>
- Remind text messages:
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> period** text the message @4g4dek to the number 81010
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> period** text the message @2ha7gh to the number 81010
  - **4<sup>th</sup> period** text the message @9agg6 to the number 81010
  - **5<sup>th</sup> period** text the message @2feg36 to the number 81010
  - **6<sup>th</sup> period** text the message @43fg3 to the number 81010
- Class hashtags:
  - 1ellis2018, 3ellis2018, 4ellis2018, 5ellis2018, 6ellis2018

### Tips for Success in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade:

- Never Procrastinate!
- Read and review notes, Quizlet, videos each day (research says it will stick) ☺
- If you have a question, do not be afraid to ask!
- Keep a POSITIVE attitude!

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*\*Please print this sheet off, sign and return or write a letter acknowledging that you have read the syllabus and discussion guidelines with a parent. A student and parent signature is required.*

I have read the information regarding the information and policies of Mrs. Ellis' class for the 2018-2019 school year. I agree to assist the teacher in the implementation of these policies and pledge my cooperation.

X \_\_\_\_\_ (Student Signature)

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_