

10th Grade U.S. History I (pre-Columbus through Reconstruction) – Parent Letter

Greetings and welcome to a new and exciting school year! My name is Joel W.

Hawbaker, and I am excited to be a part of the Westbrook Christian School family. I would like to first tell you about myself and then describe what will be taking place in my classroom this year, including assignments, policies, subject matter, and expectations.

To start with, this will be my sixth year at WCS and my thirteenth year as a teacher, and in those thirteen years I have taught, at different times, every grade from fifth through twelfth. I have taught a variety of subjects, including various history classes, English, algebra, P.E., Bible, and chemistry. I have also taught in a number of different instructional settings including private schools and public schools, Christian schools, and even a Muslim academy. As such, you may feel confident that your student's education is in good hands. However, if an issue does occur and you would like to conference with me, you may reach me through my school email address at any time, and I will do my best to respond within twenty-four hours. My email address is jhawbaker@westbrookchristian.org and also may be found on the school website.

As far as assignments go, the class will be structured as follows: tests, quizzes, and homework will occur regularly, as well as at least one class project, details of which will come home at a later date. The grades will be determined on a total points (rather than a weighted) system. This means that homework takes on added significance. Because of this, homework will be assigned most nights, and it will most often be used to reinforce the lesson taught in class that day. Quizzes will occur every two to three days, to make sure students are keeping up with the material and objectives covered in class, and tests will occur at the end of each chapter (roughly once each week to week and a half, depending on the complexity of the chapter and the speed with which students grasp the material).

My classroom policies will be detailed in another handout, given to students on the first day, but generally my goal is to help students become successful through encouraging intrinsic motivation aimed at self-discipline. My major rule in the classroom is to treat others as you wish to be treated and thus to be respectful toward others at all times.

I am teaching U.S. History I this year, and so the subject matter will be very broad, covering the time periods beginning with pre-Columbian America and covering everything through the period known as Reconstruction. We will look at many different aspects of American culture and civilization, seeking to understand the importance of history and stories, while identifying key themes such as culture, continuity, change, and cause and effect. The goal of this course is to help students see how an understanding of history is essential to understanding the present and can lead to a better grasp on their own futures while also having compassion and understanding for others. History is the medium through which students will learn skill sets such as reading for analysis, determining cause and effect, improving critical thinking, and learning to discern between good and evil. I believe these are issues are crucial and that the classroom is one of many places they can be discussed, analyzed, debated, evaluated, and enhanced.

Lastly, my expectations for the year are for the students to grow in their knowledge of the subject, in their ability to be self-disciplined, and in their understanding of the world around them and their place in it. It will be an exciting, challenging, and fruitful year, and I am greatly looking forward to teaching your sons and daughters! Thank you for the opportunity, and I look forward to working with you and having a wonderful school year.

Sincerely,

Joel W. Hawbaker