

# MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE SYLLABUS, 2013-2014

Subject: Eighth Grade EAL Humanities

Ms Catherine Brown

## Course Description:

Welcome to Ms. Brown's 8th grade Humanities course! Over the course of the year we will take an in-depth look at the nature of power, not only in history and human institutions, but also in literature and ideology. The social studies portion of the course will focus on the social and economic implications of such topics as industrialization, immigration, totalitarianism, and technology, and how these implications have created the power structures that exist in our world today. The English-Language Arts component will weave literature, poetry, writing, speaking and critical thinking skills into this content, as well as continue the development of language skills. It will be an exciting and challenging year for all of us, and I look forward to the conversation we will create together.

This course is student-centered. Its aim is prepare students for advancement to increased English proficiency in order to ensure success in high school in an English-medium school. The grade-level Humanities curriculum serves as the base for content instruction, but the course simultaneously emphasizes:

- ✓ Spelling
- ✓ Pronunciation
- ✓ Grammar
- ✓ Vocabulary development
- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Speaking
- ✓ Reading
- ✓ Writing
- ✓ Study skills/thinking skills

Using both language arts and social studies curriculum as the base, we will tailor the instruction to the strengths and growth areas for each student.

## Major Concepts Covered:

The constructs of POWER in the following contexts:

- Power and Change
- Power and Control
- Power and Exploitation
- Power: Today and Tomorrow

## Overall Essential Questions:

- How does power shape our world?
- How does the past affect the present and the future?
- How does literature inform and deepen our understanding of the human experience?

## Course Aims:

By the end of this course, it is a goal that each student will be able to:

- Demonstrate deep understanding of complex concepts and issues.
- Apply conceptual understandings to novel situations.
- Draw conclusions from a variety of sources to formulate their own opinions.
- Use evidence logically and persuasively to support a position.
- Evaluate the point of view and credibility of sources.
- Synthesize ideas into a unified product.
- Read texts deeply and analytically.
- Communicate what they know, think and believe in a variety of ways.
- Conduct inquiry to understand history from a variety of perspectives.
- Draw connections between current and historical events and patterns.

**Methodology:**

Classes will be conducted using a variety of methodologies, including a reader and writer workshop model, teacher demonstration, group work, student presentations, lecture, simulations, and class discussions.

**Texts and Materials:**

Students will read widely on given topics, including short stories, magazine and newspaper articles, poetry, essays and novels including whole-class read-alouds:

- The House on Mango Street
- Broken Glass
- Feed
- Short stories and excerpts from various works of literature

**Assessment of Student Performance:**

Students will be assessed as follows-

- Tests and quizzes on major subjects
- Formal and informal written compositions
- Research projects with citations and works cited
- Formal and informal oral presentations
- Independent reading

**Grading Policy:**

Quarterly grades will be based on assessments of reading, writing, oral communications skills, and social studies content. Grades will be computed using a point system, which will break down as follows:

Formative Assessments (homework, quizzes, etc.): 10%:

Summative Assessments (major projects, papers, and tests): 90%

Grading percentages to determine letter grades will be followed as outlined in the Middle School Handbook.

**Required Materials**

Student supplies needed:

- A Pen (Flash) drive with USB connection for transferring electronic documents
- A binder or other folder to keep papers and handouts from class.
- Notebook paper
- Pens, pencils, markers and highlighters

Additionally, I expect you to bring these to class every day. Don't tell me you left them in your locker!

- Your brain
- Your imagination
- A positive attitude
- An inquisitive mind

**Resources**

- **Each other.** You will often be placed into groups for projects and class-work. You will need to rely on each other for help and assistance. Use each other; if you can explain it to someone else, then you understand it!
- **ME!** Ask me questions; pester me if you don't understand. I am here to help and want to see you succeed in the class and enjoy humanities. Do not be shy when it comes to your learning!
- **Class blog.** The electronic portal for finding stuff about the class. <http://cbrown.msblogs.aes.ac.in>
- **Homework calendar.** I keep a homework calendar, which is available from anywhere in the world online. Students are expected to check it nightly, even when absent whenever possible.
- **Googlemail and the school website.** Veracross is the school-wide grading system.