

**Marce Herz Middle School**  
Seventh Grade Social Studies  
Mr. Wilkinson



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[Social Studies Website \(https://www.washoeschools.net/Page/15247\)](https://www.washoeschools.net/Page/15247)

### **Objectives**

The course helps students understand American history from the American Revolution through the late 19th century while assisting students in understanding global, national, and personal economics. We examine the Revolution, the founding documents, the lives of the founders and framers, western expansion, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the closing of the American frontier, and financial literacy. We focus on the background knowledge and social science skills required to meet and exceed academic expectations. We strive to achieve the Marce Herz vision of empowering learners to change the world. The course is based on the [Washoe County School District 7th Grade Social Studies Scope and Sequence](#).

### **Strategies and Tactics**

We work collaboratively to build background knowledge essential to effective learning. We practice and show evidence of our learning both collaboratively and individually. We focus on effective reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Because every academic subject has a history, and each subject is vital to our progress in self-governance, commerce, and culture, we strive to be cross-curricular in our learning. That means that if your teacher gives you [writing advice](#), don't say, "but this isn't English." Or when you [create a budget](#) or [analyze public companies](#) with a spreadsheet, don't say, "but this isn't math." Or when you learn what [chemical reactions improved steel manufacturing](#), don't say, "but this isn't science." All of it is history, and all of it is social studies, and all of it is foundational to thoughtful, rational, logical, empowered, and successful citizenship.

We will preview this year's essential standards selected by the Washoe County School District during our first week of class. These standards establish the skills and content that each learner will master this year. An early assignment will be for learners to discuss and review these standards with their families and to report back with their concise thoughts on our agenda to cover them.

### **Expectations**

The instructor's experience includes government, journalism, and law; he has high expectations for every learner. He has spent considerable time studying the learning process and understands the benefits of high-expectation, low-stress environments. Class meetings work best when we calmly focus on respecting and understanding the ideas of our classmates and on helping them learn along with us—on helping all of us learn together. We will collaboratively establish specific expectations for behaviors as required.

## **Skills and Content**

We recognize that background knowledge about important events, individuals, and ideas is essential for meaningful participation in our political and economic communities. Similarly, skills such as analyzing, explaining, investigating, researching, assessing, and evaluating facts and ideas are more important than ever with the proliferation of information available to all. We will, for example, learn how to use Wikipedia responsibly by evaluating its content and “Talk” pages. The study of history supports the development of critical thinking and writing skills, Socratic discussion practices, curiosity, inquiry, and attention to detail. We will practice them all.

The essential question throughout the course is “What does it mean to be an American?” Aspects of that to be investigated include:

1. How does history shape identity?
2. How can political and social power be limited or expanded?
3. How do resources affect cooperation and conflict?
4. Why do inequalities and oppression exist and how should it be addressed?
5. How do cultural and physical geography shape decision-making?

As in the British colonies in the 1770s, 7<sup>th</sup> grade is a good time to consider and perhaps declare independence. In our case, it will be our learning independence. We will study the text of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution in the context of our own abilities to take control of our own learning and regulate our learning process. Drafts of this material will be reviewed in class and posted on our Marce Herz Social Studies website.

The mission of Marce Herz Middle School is to empower young people to pursue their passions and change the world. History and the learning skills essential to master it are essential to steer passions in constructive directions, to make prudent economic, political, and cultural decisions, and to serve our communities. This course ambitiously pursues all of these goals in kind, caring, thoughtful, and rigorous ways. Learn on!