



## Barack Obama Academy of International Studies

515 N. Highland Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
Phone: 412-622-5980 | Fax: 412-622-5983

September 2016

Greetings Parents and Guardians:

My name is Mark Demmler and I am your child's Civics IB/MYP teacher this year. I look forward to the active engagement of our students in the rigorous exploration of the study or science of the privileges and obligations of American citizenship. Students will practice and develop skills of critical analysis of primary and secondary sources, conduct investigations, and present arguments in both written and oral formats prescribed by the International Baccalaureate. Please read the following guidelines to help ensure a better understanding of the policies and procedures that effect the success of your adolescent during their freshman year at Obama Academy of International Studies.

### GRADING POLICY

Grades follow the PPS guidelines: 100% - 90% A, 89%-80% B, 79%-70% C, 69%-60 D, 59%-50% E.  
Grades are weighted (different categories have different values, here is a break down).

*Participation* (Formative Assessment): 20%

Chart Points: Students will earn four points each day for coming to class prepared to participate in class activities. Students will lose two points for the following reasons: failure to complete warm-up in a timely manner, no notebook or binder, no pencil and for disrupting the class during the warm-up. Students will lose all four points for unexcused absences and up to two points for not participating in class activities. All four points can be lost if a student doesn't complete the warm-up and if the student does not participate in the class activities. If a student has an excused absence, no chart points will be given until all of the class work is made up.

*Classwork* (Formative Assessment): 25%

Students' work in class will be graded. This includes individual and group class activities, i.e. written responses, group posters, skits, role play, debates, etc.

*Quizzes and Exams* (Summative Assessment): 25%

*Writing*: 20% Writing prompts, essays, investigation (research projects).

*Homework*: 10% Homework will consist mostly of questions related to topic readings, outlining text and creating original primary source documents. I'm trying something new this year and have a subscription to Study.com, to create a "flipped" classroom, students will receive an email with a link to a video lesson related to the unit topic. Video lessons typically last anywhere from 7 to 10 minutes and the student then takes an online quiz, the results are emailed to me. Hopefully, students will enjoy completing their homework in this form.

**There are no opportunities for EXTRA CREDIT!**

### Resources:

Primary text James E. Davis' *Civics: Government and Economics in Action*. Also, PPS has student handout materials for each unit, please make sure your student has a binder to secure these resources. The District has titled the course "Be the Change."

### IB/MYP:

Following the IB/MYP format, students will experience learning through the curriculum that incorporates the Learner Profile qualities of reflective, communicator, balanced, inquirers, principled, risk-takers, open-mindedness, caring and knowledge students.





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### Assessment Criteria:

Criterion A: Knowledge and Understanding

Criterion B: Investigating

Criterion C: Thinking Critically

Criterion D: Communicating

All summative assessments will be assessed using the IB Criterion Rubrics. Rubrics are posted in the room and each student will have a copy of the four criteria used.

### Academic Expectations:

Students must have a Civics specific notebook/binder. Learners must bring it to class every day. No multiple subject notebooks.

### Behavioral Expectations

All student will treat each other and their teacher with respect. *"Manners are always in style!"*

If a student exhibits any behavioral issues or doesn't adhere to classroom and school rules I will conference with the student privately and make a phone call home.

A student may be issued a written referral for the following reasons:

Cell phone usage, disrupting class, use of headphones, tardy to class, and use of profanity. This list is not inclusive of all behaviors, which may result in issuing a referral. Referrals are the final step for many of the infractions listed above.

### Late Work Policy:

Classwork and homework will be marked 50% if it is handed in late. I do not accept any assignments or homework a week after its due date. That means your mark for that assignment will be a zero.

As your child enters the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, it is important for them to develop the maturity necessary to communicate with their teachers in order to ensure their success. Students should make a concerted effort to consult with me during our Quality Resource Time (QRT), to get any extra help or assistance they may need. They may also send me an email. Email is the best way to contact me, my board email address is [mdemmler1@pghboe.net](mailto:mdemmler1@pghboe.net) Please email me if you have any questions and/or concerns regarding your child's involvement and engagement in this course. It's an election year – what a great time to study duties and responsibilities of citizenship. When you email me please put your child's name in the subject heading (I see 187 students a day). You may also call me, my cell phone is (724)651-1673.

This is going to be a great year folks, let's go class of 2020 – you will be the change that we want to see in the world.

Sincerely yours,

Mark A. Demmler

Approved: , Director

