English and Social Studies Curriculum Review

Ed Puchalla presenting on Social Studies
Ed is chair of department

Teaching students how to be historians: look to source first, think about what is being written and who is being spoken to, consider different perspectives from different sources. Which sources are more credible?

Goal of MIHS Social Studies department: Don’t care if students know all the details. Rather, help kids develop skills to be capable and active citizens.

Looking for conceptual understanding and skills
Classes include
• history
• civics
• geography
• economics

Under review now. Currently, more focus on history. May shift focus a little in future to include more options in civics, geography and economics.

Skills seeking to develop
• analyzing info and sources
• historical thinking
• asking questions, finding information
• evaluating and making arguments

Curriculum
9th grade - Early Civ (one or two semesters)
• focus on development of human societies
• elective for Freshmen. Can be a challenge if student chooses not to take SS in 9th grade.
• focuses on the origin of world religions
• full year option allows additional skills and more skills practice, intro to more non-western topics
10th grade - Modern World History (honors option)
   World studies - Mod World Hist integrated with literature (honors option)
11th grade - US History (state required) - can take AP US History or American Studies
   both taught integrated with English course; AP classes are all blocked; there
   is an option to take Amer Studies without block.

Blocks - have to have enough students interested to run 2 sections (i.e., close to 60
students). If don’t have enough students, can’t offer the blocks.

12th grade - Civics (semester)/International Studies (semester)
AP Comparative Gov (year) - can be integrated
Macroeconomics/microeconomics (full year) and Civics (semester) -macro/micro
alternate

State social studies requirements:
3 years total:
   1 of Amer Hist
   1 of Contemporary world problems
   1 of Civics - how student meets this requirement can be confusing

Teachers believe understanding the world today is very important
may address this in current curriculum review

Teaching methods
• reading
• doc analysis
• inquiries
• argue in writing
• simulations/role play
• projects (videos, websites, posters)
• discussions, debates and seminars
• interactive presentations/lectures

Teachers are given flexibility in the way they teach. The goal is to teach the same
concepts and skills, but may do it in different ways. Some teachers use textbooks more
than others.

SS teaches problem solving. Sometimes there is no right answer to memorize.
Students continue to develop skills and understanding in SS (e.g. argument, rule of law)
Expectations
• read
• think
• write
• collaborate
• develop academic discipline
  ◦ brilliance alone will not carry the day
  ◦ take notes
  ◦ review
  ◦ ask questions
  ◦ organize and manage longer inquiries and their products

English

Creighton Laughery
Co-chair for English department

Overview:
• 4 year requirement for English
• working toward greater alignment - 40% content and 75% prioritized standards
• Common Core standards address skills and some content
• Novel/literature-based approach (don’t have textbook per se)

Focus recently on including more diverse authors in the reading lists. Still have primarily white, male authors.
It is difficult to change book lists because English teachers have for the most part developed their own homegrown curriculum around longstanding novels.

SIP goal: trying to better align curriculum and student assessments. This is a long term process.

English 9, English 9H, English 9/BT, English 9H/BT
• theme: identity
• required texts: Romeo & Juliet, Of Mice and Men, Color of Water, Fahrenheit 451, Lord of the Flies, Epic of Gilgamesh (honors only)
• other required elements: speech to inform or persuade, intro to poetry and poetic terms, multi-paragraph (5) essay, the hero’s/heroine’s journey

Teaching grammar: Common Core only requires that in 9th/10th, teach colon, semi-colon, in 11th/12th teach hyphenation
some teachers continue to teach other grammar concepts as necessary

English 10, English 10H, World Cultures, World Cultures H
• theme: world lit up to Cold War
• required texts: Catcher in the Rye, Othello or Midsummer’s Night Dream or Julius Ceasar, Frankenstein or similar work of Romanticism, All Quiet on the Western Front
• other required elements: anti-hero and tragic hero, critical lenses, intertextual comparison, Romanticism

American Studies, AP Language & Comp (integrated with AP US History), English 11
• theme: US lit
• required texts: Huck Finn or another novel around Civil War era dealing with race, Moby Dick or Scarlet Letter or the Crucible, Transcendentalism, The Great Gatsby
• other required elements: intro to advanced poetic/literary/rhetorical devices, personal essay, satire

English 12, English 12-Film as lit, English 12H (integrated with AP Comp Gov), AP Lit & Comp
theme: contemporary world lit from 1950-present
required texts: Hamlet, Man’s Search for Meaning, existentalist lit, How to Read Literature Like a Professor, The Road
Other required elements: year-end reflective personal essay

Electives: Newspaper, Creative Writing (hasn’t run for several years)