

September 2023

Dear Students,

I hope you have had a wonderful summer and are ready to jump back into the school year. We live in extraordinary times, and I am excited to be exploring them with you.

Regardless of the courses that I will be teaching (this semester they are Canadian History and World History) there are some local and world events that we will be focusing on:

- Wildfires have raged across Canada this summer – particularly in British Columbia and Northwest Territories (both Kelowna and Yellowknife had to be evacuated). What are the impacts of these climatic events on our society?
- India became the fourth country in the world to land an object on the surface of the Moon. What are the implications of missions like *Chandrayaan-3*? No country has yet to lay claim to the Moon, but how might that change once its resources become accessible? What happens when people start living on the Moon, or Mars? Will those nation's sovereignty be extended there?



- The Russian invasion of Ukraine shows no signs of ending - What could this mean for the world? Canada? What is the goal of Russian President Vladimir Putin?
- On May 6<sup>th</sup> 2023, King Charles III was crown King of 15 Commonwealth Realms (including Canada) at Westminster Abbey. The King has a clear passion for the environment and has dedicated himself to pursuing reconciliation efforts in Canada (as Monarch, Charles III has a critical role within Treaty relationships across North America). What is the King's role in Canada? As the sovereign in an international monarchy with a history that stretches back over a millennium, Charles III finds himself in the centre of a lot of difficult history – what responsibilities does the King have in trying to answer for the systems established using the Crown? How will the King use his role to continue his work supporting a balanced relationship with the natural world?
- In November 2022, *ChatGPT* (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer), a chatbot, was launched by *OpenAI*. What are the implications of this extraordinary evolution in AI? How has technology dramatically changed the world?



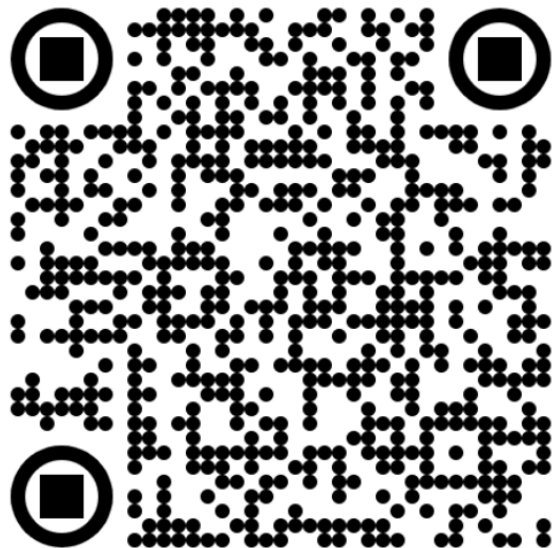
- Waterdown has been inhabited by Indigenous People for millennia, including the Neutral Nation who were the first to make contact with the French in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Currently, we are located within the Treaty Territory of the [Mississaugas of the Credit](#). As well, this land is used and inhabited by the [Haudenosaunee Confederacy](#). What responsibilities do we have as Treaty partners? – and this very much includes responsibilities to the land. [Waterdown's Souharissen Natural Area](#) reminds us of some of these responsibilities, but also challenges us to learn more.



New WDHS mural exploring the Indigenous identity of this region.

**(Learn more about the above mural using the QR Code on the left)**

- Learning about our local history is a great way to understand the history of Canada and the wider world – our community has been shaped by events and concepts like the Reformation, Colonialism, Industrial Revolution, Private Property Ownership, etc. During this semester we will be using *The Platinum Jubilee Edition of The Extraordinary History of Flamborough* to analyse the links between Flamborough/Waterdown and the outside world.



## Room 2048 Cellphone Policy

This classroom will be strictly following the provincial guideline instituted by the Government of Ontario in November 2019 which states "[using cellphones and other personal mobiles devices during instructional time is restricted.](#)" As the policy states, I am doing this to:

- prevent distractions
- maximize learning time

The importance of this policy was reflected in a new UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) report which raised concerns about the excessive use of smartphones in schools worldwide. As reported by *The Telegraph* on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, "[The] Report warns excessive mobile phone use is associated with poor educational performance and emotional instability." Read the report here: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/07/1139122>

Exceptions to this policy, as stated by the Government of Ontario, are:

- for educational purposes, such as conducting research or access educational websites, as directed by the educator in the classroom
- for health and medical purposes (note from a parent/guardian required)
- to support special educational needs, including students with mental health needs (note from a parent/guardian required)

Students are encouraged to leave their cellphone in their lockers, or place them in a "cellphone hotel" placed at the back of the classroom as soon as they come in. Cellphones may need to be confiscated and could be sent to the office for safe keeping until they can be returned at the end of the day.

It has been said that studying history is like playing a huge game of telephone - sifting through various stories, exaggerations and factual evidence. This course will present you with all kinds of information that affects you as a Canadian.

In looking at Canada and the World we will make use of many different resources: artefacts, video, primary sources, secondary sources, archives, novels, etc. This course has been designed with many elements that you will see during your time in post-secondary education. I want you to enjoy history, and will do my best to present a positive experience. Please feel free to bring to my attention any questions or concerns you might have during the course.

Some resources to keep in mind:

**This class has its own website that can be accessed at: [www.tidridge.com](http://www.tidridge.com)**

This website is as important as your textbook – check here for assignment checklists, class news, links to sites of interest, and other important information.



Online Learning  
Environment

This class will also make use of “The Hub” – please make sure you have your account up-to-date. All outstanding assignments and notes will be posted here for you.

Wishing you success,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Tidridge', with a horizontal line underneath.

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