

September 2020

Dear Students,

I hope you had a nice March Break!

In all seriousness, as you well know, this is an extraordinary period of history we are witnessing right now. There is not an aspect of our lives that has not been touched by the Covid-19 Pandemic as evidenced by the transformation of our schools into whatever they are now.

For this extraordinary semester we are about to embark on together it is important to keep in mind that my primary concern is that you are both mentally and physically OK. In a few weeks is the Autumnal Equinox, following which our daylight will steadily decrease until the end of December – it will fall to us to keep an eye on each other and ensure that we are checking in, getting outside whenever possible, as well as enjoying our learning together. Please know that throughout all of this it is OK to have bad days.

One thing is for certain this semester: Flexibility will be key to our success. Safety protocols and social distancing guidelines will undoubtedly change, and there is always the possibility of school being temporarily closed again. Throughout all of these disruptions please know that your education will not be in jeopardy (no stressing about marks) and that we will get through it together. You have a lot of people supporting you at WDHS from the school administration, caretakers, office staff, teachers and peers. Let's make sure we take care of each other as we muddle through all of this.

Remember: We are doing all of this for our loved ones.

It is not hard to see that this year will be one studied by future generations for a long time to come – you will be helping your kids and grandkids with their 2020s units! The social, political and cultural changes triggered by Covid-19 will be far-reaching (much of which we won't understand until years from now). Systems that have long-shaped our society have been shaken – not necessarily a bad thing! Conversations are being had about our society – about inequities, systemic racism and privilege - that are shaping what our future will look like.

Personally, when I had the privilege to witness the [Solidarity March organized by WDHS student Camilie Abreu last June](#) – the first of its kind in our community's history – I was filled with a lot of hope.

Regardless of the courses that I will be teaching (this semester they are Civics, Canadian History and Indigenous Studies) there are some local and world events that we will be focusing on.

- On November 8th, 2020, **the United States of America will be holding a presidential election.** The United States is a polarized nation with numerous fault lines along economic, political and racial lines. President Trump was elected in 2016 as an outsider that would challenge the norm, and he delivered. There is no way of knowing what the next few months will bring for the United States, but they will certainly raise important questions around our ideas of democracy. Trump has only been president for four years, yet his time in office thus far has ushered in an era that we will be studying and dealing with long after he leaves the White House.
- 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 17th and 18th 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.

- Last semester my students and I planted [Covictory Gardens](#) to learn about our various subjects through gardening and the land. This project will continue into the fall and winter – what can we learn from the land about these important seasons? Perhaps we will get some clues as to how to take care of ourselves as well.

I am very excited that we are going to be experiencing this all together.

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

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



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 be "N. Tidridge", written over a horizontal line.

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