

February 2022

Dear Students,

We finally find ourselves heading into a regular semester!



Even though we seem to be heading out of the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic is important to underscore that my primary concern is that you are both mentally and physically OK. It falls 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. You have a lot of people supporting you at WDHS from the school administration, caretakers, office staff, teachers and peers.

With the two-year anniversary of the World Health Organization (WHO) declaring the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic (March 11th, 2020) it is not hard to see that these years will be 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 in June 2020](#) – 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 World History, Canadian History and Canadian History, Identity and Culture) there are some local and world events that we will be focusing on.

- Last May the discovery of the remains of children at the site of Kamloops Residential School underscored what Indigenous People already knew: the Canadian state established a residential school system to remove children from their families in an effort to violently assimilate them into colonial society. In many cases children died due to these efforts. On January 25, 2022, the chief of Williams Lake First Nations announced that 93 potential burial sites were discovered, bringing the total number of remains to over 6000.
- February 6th, 2022, marks the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II (70 years on the throne), an event without parallel in the Commonwealth. Moments such as these naturally ask people to reflect on their history and the stories that are told in an effort to capture it. This is a healthy exercise that highlights the reflective nature inherent in the study of history – addressing its tensions, injustices and lessons move us closer toward a definition for a place like Canada. You will have an opportunity to participate in a local commemoration (partnering with our Treaty partners) of the Platinum Jubilee that centres the Crown's long relationships with Indigenous People.

This 1966 portrait of Queen Elizabeth II once hung in the Council Chambers of the Town of Flamborough. It now presides over our classroom :)



- 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.
- Tensions seem to be at a breaking point in Ukraine concerning a possible invasion by the Russian Federation. If the news is correct, events could start happening during our time together. What could this mean for the world? Canada? What is the goal of Russian President Vladimir Putin?
- The Beijing Olympics will be running from February 4th-20th amidst a lot of controversy, including allegations by the global community of a genocide being committed by China against the Uyghur People. The erosion of democracy in Hong Kong, human rights abuses perpetrated in Tibet and Xinjiang, as well as the careful control over expression and history by the Chinese Government will all be under a spotlight during this time – will it matter?
- 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.
- Since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic the #WaterdownFlag Challenge has been asking people across Flamborough and the outside world to identify different national, international and other flags. Everyday Mr. Tidridge will fly a new flag at his house and will post a picture of it on The Hub and Twitter (@Tidridge) for students to guess. The rules are simple:

- Identify the flag and one random fact about the area it represents and post it on The Hub. The first student to do this will receive a prize (one per class) and a copy of the weekly newsletter. Mr. Tidridge will be cycling through his flag collection (he has flags representing countries, provinces/states, cities and people).



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.

Mr. N. Tidridge
Depart of Canadian and World Studies
Email: ntidridg@hwdsb.on.ca