

Cambridge Street Upper School  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies  
2020-2021 Remote Learning  
Angela DePalma ([adepalma@cpsd.us](mailto:adepalma@cpsd.us))

Dear Caregivers,

My name is Angela DePalma and this is my 7th year teaching at CSUS. I am very excited that we will be having live classes twice a week, because I strongly believe that student-centered classroom discussions foster critical thinking skills and help scholars learn to express their ideas effectively, and to listen respectfully to others.

Given the events of 2020, I have adjusted my curriculum to adapt to the limitations of remote learning, and address the trauma that many scholars are experiencing. I am a long-time proponent of abolitionist (anti-racist) teaching practices, and my goal is to empower all 8th graders (regardless of their intersectional identities) to become advocates for social justice.

My other year-long transfer goal is for all 8th graders to be able to read and analyze evidence to support their arguments in writing using formal academic voice. Therefore, social studies class will be fairly writing-intensive, but I will allow students to choose their topic whenever possible. We will have several short CEA (claim, evidence, analysis) writing assignments this year instead of DBQ essays. Because scholars have a wide range of writing skills, I will differentiate assignments to ensure that all scholars are able to access the work, while also being challenged.

Scholars will have TWO LIVE social studies classes each week. They are expected to be on time because I will be posting attendance in ASPEN for every class. Scholars join live lessons by signing into their social studies Google Classroom and clicking the link for our Google Meet.

Scholars will also be assigned TWO INDEPENDENT assignments each week. They will access these assignments and turn them in via Google Classroom. They have "flex time" built into their schedules so they can work on independent assignments. Every week one of these independent assignments will be to analyze a news article/ podcast or video. I will provide several options for them to choose from. In the age of fake news/ widespread misinformation it is important that scholars learn to become critical consumers of media so they can eventually formulate their own opinions and expand their worldviews. Their news analysis graphic organizer should be submitted by 11:59 pm on Thursdays. Scholars will have one additional independent assignment each week that will vary based on what we are learning about. The second independent assignment will be due by 3 p.m. Friday. All independent assignments will be graded and posted in ASPEN within one week.

The best way to reach me is by email, [adepalma@cpsd.us](mailto:adepalma@cpsd.us) or texting through the Remind App. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions and please encourage your child to text me anytime they have questions, need help with independent work or are experiencing internet connection issues.

Sincerely,

Angela DePalma