Welcome to 8th Grade Science
Mrs. Thomas

Meridian World School
Room: M – 1.33
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Class Description:
Our class objective is to have an exemplary year exploring science using the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the MYP IB framework as our guide. This course will cover science topics that include biology and ecology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and geological science.

In this class, students will learn the process of a formal lab write up, critical thinking skills, lab procedures and analytical skills, along with ATL and scientific skills. Students will learn through a variety of methods and challenges. Projects enable students to have choices in products as well as make connections with other academic disciplines.

Class Supplies:
Supplies need to be brought every day!
• Binder with 6 tabs/dividers
• Pencils, pens (both black/blue and red)
• Colored pencils
• 1-2 highlighters
• Glue sticks, scissors, 1 sharpie
• Planner (for all classes)

Student Expectations:
1). Arrive on time with appropriate materials.
2). Follow all class and lab procedures.
3). Respect others in the community.
4). Be a constructive member of our classroom community.

The aims of MYP sciences are to encourage and enable students to:
• understand and appreciate science and its implications
• consider science as a human endeavour with benefits and limitations
• cultivate analytical, inquiring and flexible minds that pose questions, solve problems, construct explanations and judge arguments
• develop skills to design and perform investigations, evaluate evidence and reach conclusions
• build an awareness of the need to effectively collaborate and communicate
• apply language skills and knowledge in a variety of real-life contexts
• develop sensitivity towards the living and non-living environments
• reflect on learning experiences and make informed choices

The objectives for this course state the specific targets that are set for learning in the visual arts. They define what the learner will be able to accomplish at the end of the course. These are also the MYP assessment criteria for the course.

1. Knowing and Understanding - Students develop scientific knowledge (facts, ideas, concepts, processes, laws, principles, models and theories) and apply it to solve problems and express scientifically supported judgments. In order to reach the aims of sciences, students should be able to explain scientific knowledge. The application of scientific knowledge is used to solve problems set in familiar and unfamiliar situations. Students will also learn how to analyze and evaluate information to make scientifically supported judgments.
2. Inquiry and Designing - Intellectual and practical skills are developed through designing, analyzing and performing scientific investigations. Students will explain a problem or question to be tested by a hypothesis. Students will explain how to manipulate the variables, and explain how data will be collected.

3. Processing and Evaluating - Students collect, process and interpret qualitative and/or quantitative data, and explain conclusions that have been appropriately reached. MYP sciences helps students to develop analytical thinking skills, evaluate the validity of a hypothesis based on the outcome of the scientific investigation, which they can use to evaluate the method and discuss possible improvements or extensions.

4. Reflecting on the Impacts of Science - Students gain global understanding of science by evaluating the implications of scientific developments and their applications to a specific problem or issue. Varied scientific language will be applied in order to demonstrate understanding. Students are expected to become aware of the importance of documenting the work of others when communicating in science. Students must reflect on the implications of using science, interacting with one of the following factors: moral, ethical, social, economic, political, cultural or environmental, as appropriate to the task.

Methods of Assessment

A wide variety of assessments are used to gauge the conceptual understanding of students. These assessments can be formative or summative tasks. Assessments are viewed as a continuous process that allow students, parents and teachers to have the best and most accurate information about student achievement. Students’ letter grade will be calculated using the following percentages: Summative (50%), and Formative (50%).

Grading:

50% Formative (Warm ups, class discussions, homework assignments, daily work, etc.)
50% Summative (Summative Projects, Tests and MYP Labs); Students should expect to have a major grade by the fourth week of a quarter, with at least two major assessments each quarter.

Homework:

Homework will be strategically designed to last from 15-25 minutes per assignment. Homework is meaningful and supports classroom learning. Homework is not required each class period, but is determined by the lesson. Due dates are communicated in multiple ways, both in and out of class.

In ManageBac

A minimum of four MYP grades will be documented in ManageBac in this course, two per semester.

In TexEIS Gradebook:
- If a student does not turn in an assignment, an M will be placed in the gradebook. This allows the student and parent to understand that work is missing.
- If a student is excused from an assignment, and E will be placed in the gradebook.
- If the student’s work is incomplete or needs attention/cannot be assessed, an I will be placed in the gradebook.

Major Grade Retake:

If a student scores below a 70% on a major grade, students will have an opportunity to retest or redo major grades for up to a 70%. Students must work with the teacher to relearn the material or master the necessary skills before they retest or redo the assignment or test. This means at least one tutorial or Saturday opportunity school session must take place prior to the retest.

Late Work or Make up Work:

Late work will be accepted with a penalty of deducted points. The school wide penalty is 10 points per school day late. Work that is five or more days late cannot receive higher than a 50. Required Saturday School (SOS) attendance may be assigned for chronic late work at the discretion of the teacher. If your child is assigned Saturday School, please make sure that they attend.
Late work will not be accepted for a grade after the unit test. Be aware that unit tests occur approximately every 4 weeks. All assignments must be turned in before that unit’s final assessment to receive any credit! Retests on major assessments are possible, however, students must follow the procedure for this process. The process will be explained in class as well as be posted online.

**Academic Honesty:**

Meridian School’s Academic Honesty Policy is based on the idea that true learning is built on honesty and integrity. Students who commit themselves to upholding this policy will learn principles that will last beyond their middle and high school years.

**Academic Consequences:**

Meridian School’s Academic Honesty Policy is based on the idea that true learning is built on honesty and integrity. Students who commit themselves to upholding this policy will learn principles that will last beyond their middle and high school years. If a teacher suspects that a student has not been principled in the completion of academic work, the student’s exam, test, quiz, or assignment will be collected by the teacher and given to the assistant principal for investigation. If it is determined that the student committed academic dishonesty, he/she may redo the assignment for a grade of up to 70% and the student may be required to serve a 3-hour Saturday detention.

**Need to know what is going on in class?**

If you have any questions or concerns at any time during the course please contact me by email at L.thomas@mwschool.org. Please also visit my classroom on two platforms, my website, http://www.flippedoutscience.com/ and the school’s ManageBac program.

**Tutoring Times:**

Will be determined by team effort (at the beginning of the school year). Check the home page of my website for updates or changes. Tutorial times will also be posted in the classroom.

**What is Science class like in 8th grade?**

A combination of lecture, class discussions, videos, cooperative learning, hands-on activities and laboratory experimentation are used in this course. Students will be required to work outside of the classroom so that class time can be used for exploration using what is commonly called the “flipped classroom” model. Grades will be determined by satisfactory and timely completion of assignments. Grades are earned according to mastery of skills and content knowledge.

Science class is a unique learning environment that allows students to embrace the discipline with hands-on opportunities. I work very hard to provide a learning environment that is both engaging and safe. Students are taught lab safety skills and are expected to follow these rules as well as lab procedures, at all times. If at ANY time I feel that a student is not following procedures or other safety rules, they may be pulled from the lab setting. After repeated infractions, there may be academic and disciplinary consequences. On this same note, backpacks will not be allowed in the science lab area for safety reasons.

**Final Thoughts:**

I am looking forward to having a fun and exciting school year with each and every one of you. Please contact me for any concerns or issues. Email is the best method. If we work together, I know it will be a success!

Sincerely,
Laura Thomas
Verification of Receipt – 8th grade Science

After you have read the syllabus and course organizer, please sign below, and return this portion to me as soon as possible.

I have read and understand the policies covered in Mrs. Thomas’s Science syllabus.

________________________________________  ____________________________
Print Student’s Name                      Print Parent/Guardian’s Name

________________________________________  ____________________________
Student Signature                         Parent/Guardian Signature