

The Action Faction 2013-2014 Team Syllabus and Policies

Instructors

Aliza Cruz, Math/Chemistry
acruz@hightechhigh.org
619-591-2500 x25011

Laszlo Folks, Humanities
lfolks@hightechhigh.org
619-591-2500 x25025

Teaching Philosophy

Satisfaction of one's curiosity is one of the greatest sources of happiness in life.

Linus Pauling, American chemist, peace activist, and educator

We believe that education is a gift. Our goal is to teach students HOW to learn, not WHAT to learn, and more importantly, to discover that learning as a means to knowing things can be incredibly gratifying. Humans are naturally curious beings, and we are blessed to be part of the HTHCV community, which allows teachers and students to investigate their curiosities and learn to love learning. Furthermore, as members of the global community, education equips us with many of the tools we need to contribute to the world and enrich life for the people around us.

As your teachers, we promise to do our best to provide a rigorous and engaging curriculum. However, we cannot make you pay attention and we cannot make you try your best. Please make the most out of your education! We are motivated every day to come in and teach in the best way that we can, so we hope that you will be motivated every day to come in and learn from us as much as possible.

Lastly, if you have any comments, complaints, suggestions or praises about things we've done or are doing in class, we want to know! Please visit us during our office hours or write us an email. This is OUR classroom, and we hope we will all work together to make the next year as meaningful and rich as possible.

Course Philosophy

The guiding principles for the Action Faction are as follows:

1. **Think forward.** Think creatively toward the future; understand the impact of your choices.
2. **Be uncomfortable.** Take risks, embrace differences, and push through your fear.
3. **Take action.** Each day, whatever it is, leave it better than you found it. Advocate and be the change!

These guiding principles will apply to everything that we do this year, from developing a positive classroom culture and treating others respectfully to completing projects and growing as proactive citizens of our classroom, HTHCV, and the world at large.

This year, our interdisciplinary projects will focus on identifying global issues and developing as agents of change who work toward finding specific and meaningful solutions to those issues.

Class Participation

We expect that you will come to class on time and ready to listen and be actively involved in the discussion, project or activity. In order for us to have successful classrooms, we need your help and participation!

It is essential that you ask questions – this helps you as well as other students who may have been wondering the same thing! It is an expectation that you will assist your classmates when you can, either by answering their specific questions, or by explaining the answers through example. We will often be working in groups of students, and you are expected to treat your partners and teammates with respect, and help contribute to completion of the task at hand. If you or your group has a problem that you cannot solve, talk with your team teacher and we will try to help you find a solution.

Grading Policy

25%	Content - Items that demonstrate learning content
40%	Process - Items that develop learning
25%	Product - Quality of products produced while learning
10%	Reading - Both outside reading and in-class reading
P/F	SLCs, POLs, TPOLs

Academic Integrity

Students' work should always be their own original creations. Many times, our work will be informed by the work of the course. We will learn how to pay tribute to the ideas and words of others using MLA formatting style. Please ask Aliza or Laszlo if you have any questions, concerns, or need clarification about how to properly cite other's work or whether what you are doing is appropriate.

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes cheating on tests, copying others' work, giving access to work to another student so that they may copy, talking during exams, and other infractions that consist of giving answers or passing off others' ideas as your own. Students who choose academic dishonesty will receive a zero for the assignment for the first violation and an "F" in the course for the second. Parents will be notified in all instances.

Attendance and Late Work

If you are absent from school, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and to make up any missed work. Generally, you are extended the number of days you were absent to make up missed work. Long-term projects do not get an extension, except in extraordinary circumstances.

Late work will be accepted after the deadline for 50% credit until the end of that particular project or unit. After the completion of each project/unit, any associated work will no longer be accepted.

Due to the nature of project-based learning, it is essential that you and your family plan to take long vacations or traveling opportunities during our many scheduled breaks throughout the year. It is very challenging to make up experiences that you will have in the classrooms, and as a result, group projects quite often suffer considerably. Also, for similar reasons, please schedule doctor/dental appointments during after-school hours, which almost every dentist and doctor provide.

Exhibitions

One of the major values of this school is the presentation of student work for the public. You will participate in several exhibitions throughout the year. Parents will be given notice of the date of these exhibitions. Students are expected to stay at school the entire day of exhibitions to help set up, tear

down, and get projects ready to present. You are also expected to dress professionally on the date of exhibitions.

Behavioral Expectations

Keep Our Classroom Clean!

As citizens of the Action Faction, we hope that you will be active in working with the team. Remember, one of our guiding principles is to, every day, leave it better than you found it. This especially applies to the space in which we will spend our year learning and growing together.

Don't throw things across the room or into the trash can. If you do throw something into the trash can and you make it, we will kindly ignore the infraction. If you do miss, however, you have to pick up 20 pieces of trash at the teacher's discretion.

Cell Phones and Computers

You will often use the school laptops during school to research, document and develop their projects. With this privilege, we have expectations that students will exercise respect and caution. These expectations are in addition to the school policy for laptop usage.

1. Students cannot have food or water within three feet of the computers when in use.
2. Students will stay on task and on topic when using computers (no instant messaging, Facebook, computer games, etc.).
3. Students ask courteously to use computers instead of making the assumption that it is okay.

It is against school policy to use your cell phone during school hours. If you need to use your cell phone to text a parent/guardian, arrange a ride home from school, or any other instance that requires you to use your phone for non-social circumstances, you must ask Aliza or Laszlo for permission. If you are seen using your cell phone without permission, it will be confiscated and sold on eBay. Just kidding, but we will take it away for the rest of the day.

Field Trips

Because of our value of creating adult world connections, students at HTHCV have the unique opportunity to participate in a variety of field trips. Because you will be representing the school and the team, we have higher expectations for students' good behavior and attitude. Your enthusiastic and respectful participation in field trip programs is absolutely essential. If there is any doubt that students will be able to meet these expectations, they may be asked to not attend the field trip.

Office Hours

Laszlo and Aliza will be available for office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30-4:30 and by appointment. If no students show up for regular office hours before 3:45 or advanced notice hasn't been given for a late show, office hours will be cancelled.