Randolph Township Schools
Randolph High School

Contemporary Issues

"Our species needs, and deserves, a citizenry with minds wide awake and a basic understanding of how the world works."

- Carl Sagan

Humanities Department
Dr. Amelia Wright, Supervisor

Curriculum Committee
Peter Quinn
Lena Wasylyk

Randolph Township Schools
Department of Social Studies
Contemporary Issues

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Randolph Township Schools

Mission Statement

We commit to inspiring and empowering all students in Randolph schools to reach their full potential as unique, responsible and educated members of a global society.

Randolph Township Schools
Affirmative Action Statement

Equality and Equity in Curriculum

The Randolph Township School district ensures that the district's curriculum and instruction are aligned to the state's standards.   The curriculum provides equity in instruction, educational programs and provides all students the opportunity to interact positively with others regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomic status.

N.J.A.C. 6A:7-1.7(b): Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973; N.J.S.A. 10:5; Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL GOALS
VALUES IN EDUCATION

The statements represent the beliefs and values regarding our educational system. Education is the key to self-actualization, which is realized through achievement and self-respect. We believe our entire system must not only represent these values, but also demonstrate them in all that we do as a school system.

We believe:
- The needs of the child come first
- Mutual respect and trust are the cornerstones of a learning community
- The learning community consists of students, educators, parents, administrators, educational support personnel, the community and Board of Education members
- A successful learning community communicates honestly and openly in a non-threatening environment
- Members of our learning community have different needs at different times. There is openness to the challenge of meeting those needs in professional and supportive ways
- Assessment of professionals (i.e., educators, administrators and educational support personnel) is a dynamic process that requires review and revision based on evolving research, practices and experiences
- Development of desired capabilities comes in stages and is achieved through hard work, reflection and ongoing growth

Randolph Township Schools
Department of Social Studies
Contemporary Issues

Introduction

In this semester elective course, students will examine and study various dynamic issues facing today's world, whether as a citizen of the United States or as a citizen of the world at large. This examination will enable students to discover their values and responsibilities as citizens in that society. The course will focus on four thematic units: *Contemporary Issues and Media Literacy*; *Civil Rights and Human Rights*; *Diplomacy and Conflict*; and *Global Connections*. Current events will be used to augment the study of these topics, as well as to enhance students' knowledge of the world around them. Students will apply different learning methods to research, examine evidence, explore differing perspectives, evaluate information, exercise critical analysis, and make independent judgements regarding the contemporary issues studied.

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENT	UNIT NUMBER	CONTENT - UNIT OF STUDY
4 weeks	**I**	Contemporary Issues and Media Literacy
4 weeks	**II**	Civil Rights and Human Rights
4 weeks	**III**	Diplomacy and Conflict
4 weeks	**IV**	Global Connections

RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
Contemporary Issues
UNIT I: Contemporary Issues and Media Literacy

TRANSFER: Students will be able to evaluate claims and analyze issues to verify the credibility of the specific point(s) of view being examined.

GOALS:	ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
6.1.12.A.16.a: Examine the impact of media and technology on political and social issues in a global society.	Evaluating the accuracy of a story or event is essential to gaining an unbiased understanding of that event.	• How do you know when something is true or valid?
6.2.12.D.5.c: Assess the influence of television, the Internet, and other forms of electronic communication on the creation and diffusion of cultural and political information, worldwide.	Point of view, perspective, and bias greatly influence the way a story is reported and interpreted.	• How could two different people recount the same event in different ways?
	KNOWLEDGE	**SKILLS**
6.1.4.B.9: Advancements in science and technology can have unintended consequences that impact individuals and/or societies.	**Students will know:** Different types of media outlets include tabloids, newspapers, television, print magazines, wire services, and the internet. Recognizing different types of news begins with categorizing sources and items, which include general, political, business, regional, entertainment, science, crime, and sensationalism/clickbait. Certain types of news outlets (e.g., national newspapers, wire services) are generally more reliable than others (e.g., fringe websites, tabloids).	**Students will be able to:** Identify and evaluate different sources of news with respect to format, point of view, and intended audience. Identify and evaluate different sources of news with respect to context, scope, and relevance. Categorize the reliability and accuracy of a variety of media outlets and sources, including both well-known and lesser known publications.

Thoroughness, accuracy, credibility, objectivity, and newsworthiness must be considered in evaluating news.

Bias in news takes many forms, including selection/omission (gatekeeping and agenda setting), placement, headlines, photos/captions, use of names, titles, and honorifics, statistics, source control, and tone.

Please refer to the Appendix for a more specific list of topics regarding contemporary content for the particular academic year

VOCABULARY & KEY TERMS:
agenda setting, gatekeeping, audience, bias, censorship, tabloids, wire services, newsworthiness, media literacy, mass media, credibility | Apply both subjective and objective criteria in evaluating news items and sources through discussion and writing.

After active listening, reading, and viewing, identify examples of bias through comparing and contrasting viewpoints. |

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE:
Students will show their learning by:
- Formative and summative, as well as formal and informal, class discussions and reflective writing assignments.
- Researching examples of unit themes and identifying key factors to demonstrate an understanding of media literacy, and then presenting these findings through the utilization of reading, writing, and speaking.
- Evaluating the political/social bias of a news story (print, online, tv, etc.) and determining the overall credibility of the source.

KEY LEARNING EVENTS AND INSTRUCTION:
- Students will read, watch, and analyze various news articles and other relevant texts and resources from a variety of sources to determine credibility, reliability, and bias.

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENT	CONTENT-UNIT OF STUDY	SUPPLEMENTAL UNIT RESOURCES
4 Weeks	- News - Outlets - Formats - Scope and Gatekeeping - Local vs. national vs. global - Validity - Positive vs. negative coverage - Bias - Political ideology - Cultural bias - Media Bias	Local and national magazines and newspapers (*New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Time* Magazine) Student magazines (e.g., *Upfront*, *The Week*) Newseum, www.newseum.org Video and television news networks (e.g., CNN, FOX News, ABC News) Current and emerging social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat) CIA World Factbook https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/ Reference resource for a wide variety of country-specific information *Great decisions: 2018*. (2018). NY, NY: Foreign Policy Association. (with DVD/video accompaniment) Media Bias/Fact Check, https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/

RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
Contemporary Issues
UNIT II: Civil Rights and Human Rights

TRANSFER: Students will synthesize content learned and analyzed and skills demonstrated in the unit to advocate for themselves and others today in an increasingly diverse society.

GOALS:	ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
6.1.4.A.13: Immigrants can become and obtain the rights of American citizens. 6.1.4.A.9: Compare and contrast responses of individuals and groups, past and present, to violations of fundamental rights (e.g., fairness, civil rights, human rights). 6.2.12.A.5.e: Assess the progress of human and civil rights around the world since the 1948 U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. 6.1.4.D.16: Describe how stereotyping and prejudice can lead to conflict, using examples from the past and present 6.1.12.A.8.c: Relate social intolerance, xenophobia, and fear of anarchists to government policies restricting immigration, advocacy, and labor organizations.	Culture is both a unifying and divisive force in human relations and individual perspectives.	• How might culture influence perspective?
	Global societies are diverse, creating varied perspectives, contributions, and challenges.	• What rights should all humans have?
	Societal norms vary from culture to culture, each specifically mandating how its citizens are treated.	• To what extent do the perspectives of freedom and human rights differ among societies?
	KNOWLEDGE	**SKILLS**
	Students will know: Prejudice and discrimination produce immense effects in the psychological, social, political, and economic domains. Women, LGBTQ+, ethnic groups, religious groups, and various other minority groups have been the targets of human rights and civil rights abuses, resulting in a variety of protests and a resurgence of political activism.	**Students will be able to:** Evaluate the effect of discrimination on a society through class discussion and reflective writing. Following active reading and listening, assess and describe the nature of current instances of human rights and civil rights abuses in the United States and the world.

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The central goal of US foreign policy has been the promotion of respect for human rights, as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).	Collaboratively and independently examine US foreign policy towards promoting democracy and human rights worldwide.
Useful indicators to measure the effectiveness of the United Nation's efforts in regard to human rights is determined by the country's commitment to human rights and the enjoyment of rights by the population.	Assess the effectiveness of the United Nations on improving human rights around the world through speaking and writing activities.
Genocides are more common during times of political upheaval and transition.	Interpret the causes of and the responses to genocide and share through writing and discussion.
VOCABULARY & KEY TERMS: bias, discrimination, human rights, civil rights, foreign policy, trafficking, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), fundamental tenet, tyranny, indigenous, worker rights, ethnicity, race, sex, gender, genocide, International Court of Justice, Department of State	

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE:
Students will show their learning by:
- Formative and summative, as well as formal and informal, class discussions and reflective writing assignments.
- Research and present findings on late 20th and early 21st century human rights and/or civil rights issues through group and individual work.

KEY LEARNING EVENTS AND INSTRUCTION:
- Students will read, watch, and analyze various news articles and other relevant texts and resources from a variety of sources to determine credibility, reliability and bias.
- Students will research and critique a current American policy with a direct impact on women, the LBGTQ+ community, or an ethnic, religious or other minority group, while constructing an argument either for or against its implementation.

RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
Contemporary Issues
Unit II: Civil Rights and Human Rights

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENT	CONTENT-UNIT OF STUDY	SUPPLEMENTAL UNIT RESOURCES

4 Weeks	• Bias and Discrimination
	  o Definition
	  o Effects
	
	• Minority Groups of American Society
	  o Women
	  o LGBTQ+
	  o Religious
	  o Ethnic
	
	• Resurgence of Political and Social Activism
	
	• The United Nations
	  o Universal Declaration of Human Rights
	
	• Causes and Responses to Genocides
	  o Notorious Genocides
	  o Commonalities and Differences
	  o Responses
		Confronting Genocide: Never Again?, www.choices.edu
		
		The United Nations Official Website, http://www.un.org/
		
		Teaching Tolerance, www.tolerance.org
		
		Universal Declaration of Human Rights, http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf
		
		Local and national magazines and newspapers (*New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Time* Magazine)
		
		Student magazines (e.g., *Upfront*, *The Week*)
		
		Video and television news networks (e.g., CNN, FOX News, ABC News)
		
		Current and emerging social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat)
		
		CIA World Factbook https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/
		
		Girl Rising - http://girlrising.com/
		Multimedia and text resources for gender equality in the developing world.

TRANSFER: Students will be able to analyze the different causes and effects of past policy and conflict and justify why the United States should/should not be involved in modern conflicts.

GOALS:	ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
6.1.4.D.20: Describe why it is important to understand the perspectives of other cultures in an interconnected world. 6.1.8.A.4.a: Explain the changes in America's relationships with other nations by analyzing policies, treaties, tariffs, and agreements. 6.1.8.D.4.a: Analyze the push-pull factors that led to increases in immigration, and explain why ethnic and cultural conflicts resulted. 6.1.12.D.3.b: Explain how immigration intensified ethnic and cultural conflicts and complicated the forging of a national identity. 6.1.12.A.11.b: Compare and contrast different perspectives about how the United States should respond to aggressive policies and actions taken by other nations at this time. 6.1.12.D.12.c: Evaluate how the development of nuclear weapons by	In the modern era, there are many threats to world peace and the global order, including the proliferation of banned weapon types, international terrorism and radicalism, and unstable or failed states in the developing world.	• What makes some nations prosper and others fail? • Are there rules to war and peace?
	Nations, including the United States, take a variety of actions to balance their national security interests and policies with international relations and domestic rights.	• What is the proper balance between freedom and security? • In what ways are policy decisions a reflection of a country's ideals?
	Diplomatic efforts to reduce conflict and preserve the global balance of power are augmented by a variety of supranational organizations, agreements, and alliances.	• What is the appropriate role of a superpower on the world stage?
	KNOWLEDGE	**SKILLS**
	Students will know: One of the major goals of international diplomacy is to reduce nuclear proliferation and to eliminate the development and use of chemical and biological weapons. International terrorist attacks, guided by radical political, social, and religious ideologies, have provoked a response	**Students will be able to:** Identify nations and hotspots related to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and WMDs and describe the events that led to the situation. Categorize different international terrorist groups and analyze the steps and methods that countries have used to undermine or eliminate them.

industrialized countries and developing counties affected international relations. 6.1.12.A.15.b: Determine the effectiveness of the United States in pursuing national interests while also attempting to address global political, economic, and social problems. 6.1.12.A.15.f: Analyze the impact of United States support for the policies and actions of the United Nations and other international organizations. 6.2.12.A.6.c: Analyze why terrorist movements have proliferated, and evaluate their impact on governments, individuals, and societies.	from targeted nations that seek to destroy the groups responsible and eliminate the conditions that create them. Unstable and failed states are states whose governments are losing or have lost control; they are of great concern to the international community. Nations must balance their commitment to freedom and individual rights with the demands of keeping their citizens safe. Creating national security policy in the United States is challenging, given the different branches of government and different political ideologies involved in the process. Organizations that transcend borders, such as the EU, NATO, and the UN, attempt to bind nations together by offering economic and military benefits to member states. The confluence of political instability, ethnic and religious conflict, and highly sought-after resources has made the Middle East an international hotspot for conflict. While the United States remains the only global superpower, the "rise of the rest" since the end of the Cold War means that other countries are challenging American dominance of the world's diplomacy, economy, and culture. **VOCABULARY & KEY TERMS:** supranational, UN, NATO, IMF, EU, superpower, terrorism, Hezbollah, Hamas, Al-Qaeda, Islamic State,	Create a profile of one or more unstable or failed states, describe the events that led to led to its circumstances, and recommend next steps in writing. Debate the proper balance between civil liberties and freedom with increased security measures meant to keep citizens from harm. Trace the flow of how national security policy is established in the U.S. and analyze the inputs at different steps in the process. Summarize the function of several organizations and describe their roles in the interconnected global system. After active reading, viewing, and listening, compare, contrast, and assess prospects for peace in selected countries and regions of the Middle East. Create a projection of countries on the rise in terms of political, economic, and cultural power, and explain whether they pose a challenge to American dominance in the world.

	Boko Haram, FARC, NSA, CIA, TSA, failed state, nuclear proliferation, weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)	

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE:
Students will show their learning by:
- Formative and summative, as well as formal and informal, class discussions and reflective writing assignments.
- Researching examples of unit themes and identifying key factors to demonstrate an understanding of media literacy.

KEY LEARNING EVENTS AND INSTRUCTION:
- Students will read, watch, and analyze various news articles and other relevant texts and resources from a variety of sources to determine credibility, reliability, and bias.
- Student will create a risk assessment, using contemporary and/or scholarly sources, that outlines the risks a particular problem area (e.g., terrorism, separatism) poses to a specific country or the world.

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENT	CONTENT-UNIT OF STUDY	SUPPLEMENTAL UNIT RESOURCES

4 Weeks	• Threats to World Peace
	  o International Terrorism and Radicalism
	  o Nuclear Proliferation and Weapons of Mass Destruction
	  o Unstable and Failed States
	
	• National Security
	  o Freedom/Security Balance
	  o Domestic National Security Policy
	  o Domestic Terrorism
	
	• International Diplomacy and Balance of Power
	  o United Nations
	  o International Alliances and Agreements
	  o Supranational Organizations
		Local and national magazines and newspapers (*New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Time* Magazine)
		
		Student magazines (e.g., *Upfront*, *The Week*)
		
		Video and television news networks (e.g., CNN, FOX News, ABC News)
		
		Current and emerging social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat)
		
		CIA World Factbook
		https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/
		Reference resource for a wide variety of country-specific information
		
		Great decisions: 2018. (2018). NY, NY: Foreign Policy Association. (with DVD/video accompaniment)
		
		Foreign Policy Magazine
		
		Choices Program, Brown University.
		
		Zakaria, F. (2012). *The post-American world: Release 2.0*. New York: W.W. Norton.

TRANSFER: Students will be able to identify and analyze global interdependency and create proposals to cooperatively and peacefully exist with each other.

GOALS:	ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
6.1.4.A.14: The world is comprised of nations that are similar to and different from the United States. 6.1.4.A.16: In an interconnected world, it important to consider different cultural perspectives before proposing solutions to local, state, national, and global challenges. 6.1.4.C.1: People make decisions based on their needs, wants, and the availability of resources. 6.1.4.D.1: Immigrants come to New Jersey and the United States for various reasons and have a major impact on the state and the nation. 6.1.12.A.11.b: Compare and contrast different perspectives about how the United States should respond to aggressive policies and actions taken by other nations at this time. 6.2.12.A.6.a: Evaluate the role of international cooperation and multinational organizations in attempting to solve global issues.	Globalization, an increased interaction and interdependence between global societies, has transformed the world's political, economic, and cultural fabric in a short period of time.	• Is the Earth one global community? • To what extent does global interdependence affect our daily lives?
	Decisions concerning the allocation and use of resources, capital, and economic opportunities have strong impacts on individuals, groups, and countries across the world.	• How do economic systems and structures affect daily life? • What is the purpose of trade?
	Human progress depends greatly on the collective understanding and response to major problems concerning health and environmental issues.	• What are our responsibilities to one another?
	The rapid development of technology, including the internet and mobile devices, has been a major force for change in the world, for both good and ill.	• How do technological advances impact human relationships?
	KNOWLEDGE	**SKILLS**
	Students will know: Current environmental issues include oil drilling, nuclear power, fossil fuels, global warming, environmental disasters and relief, and recycling.	**Students will be able to:** Identify and explain current environmental issues in the media. Compare and contrast the current health concerns and the availability of health resources around the world.

Current world health concerns include HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, access to reproductive health, immunization availability, and traditional infectious diseases.	Analyze the impact of globalization on various nations' economies and societies.
The debate over who benefits from economic liberalization such as free trade agreements and globalized markets has led to a variety of economic, social, and political reactions.	Assess the positive and negative consequences of the emergence of new technologies and their effects on human interaction.
The widespread global pervasiveness of the internet, mobile devices, electronic communication, and automation has transformed the way humans interact with one another.	Describe the ways in which a global society is established.
Human beings across the globe are more connected now than ever before, through diffused culture, economic interdependence, and global political cooperation.	
KEY TERMS & VOCABULARY: World Health Organization, World Wildlife Fund, conservation, epidemic, pandemic, globalization, global interdependence, nuclear, universal culture, ubiquitous, multilateral/unilateral, consumerism, standardization, national sovereignty	

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE:
Students will show their learning by:
- Formative and summative, as well as formal and informal, class discussions and reflective writing assignments.
- Researching worldwide health concerns and chart statistics to hypothesize the reasons for epidemics and pandemics.

KEY LEARNING EVENTS AND INSTRUCTION:
- Students will read and analyze various news articles from a variety of sources to determine credibility, reliability and bias.
  Students will evaluate the causes and responses to various worldwide crises (environmental, health, and economic).

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENT	CONTENT-UNIT OF STUDY	SUPPLEMENTAL UNIT RESOURCES

4 **Weeks**	• The Global Economy
	   o Economic Globalization
	   o Trade Agreements, Organizations, and Policy
	
	• Global Health Issues
	   o Disease Prevention and Treatment
	   o Developed vs. Developing Countries
	
	• Environmental Issues
	   o Economic/Environmental Balance
	   o Role of technology and human interaction
	
	• Technology
	   o Innovation and Discovery
	   o Trends and Concerns
		Local and national magazines and newspapers (*New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Time* Magazine)
		
		Student magazines (e.g., *Upfront*, *The Week*)
		
		Video and television news networks (e.g., CNN, FOX News, ABC News)
		
		Current and emerging social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat)
		
		CIA World Factbook
		https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/
		Reference resource for a wide variety of country-specific information
		
		Gapminder
		https://www.gapminder.org/
		Statistics and graphics on global population and development.
		
		The United Nations Millennium Goals:
		www.un.org/millenniumgoals/
		
		Climate Change and Questions of Justice, Choices Program
		www.choices.edu

*2018-19 Suggested topics may include, but are not limited to:
Middle East/North Africa
Russia's Resurgence
Energy and the Environment
Global Health and Poverty
Disruptive Technologies
South and Central Asia
Immigration and Social Issues
Election 2018
The Internet
Technology and Privacy
Education
Branches of the United States' Government
Contemporary Issues as they Occur