



## **Greenwich Public Schools Curriculum Overview**

### **Ethics**

Personalized learning is achieved through standards-based, rigorous and relevant curriculum that is aligned to digital tools and resources.

*Note: Teachers retain professional discretion in how the learning is presented based on the needs and interests of their students.*

### **Course Description**

In Ethics, students study the philosophical foundations and practical applications of ethical decision-making and conduct that are vital to a pluralistic and democratic society. They become familiar with a broad range of secular and multi-faith religious sources in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of ethics. Students study the basic principles of logic, including recognizing errors in reasoning. They apply ethical theories and principles to hypothetical and actual personal, civic, academic, workplace, international, and environmental issues.

### **Unit Pacing Guide**

- Unit I: Foundations (approx. 15 classes)
- Unit II: Ethics in Daily Living (approx. 15 classes)
- Unit III: The Individual & The Common Good (approx. 15 classes)
- Unit IV: Ethics in Contemporary Issues (approx. 15 classes)

### **Enduring Understanding for the Course**

- Ethical reasoning, decision-making and conduct are essential to a good personal life, a just society, and a sustainable living environment.

## **Enduring Understandings By Unit**

- **Unit I: Foundations**
  - a. Students will learn that ethics is the study of what constitutes a good life, whether there is any objective right and wrong, how we know if there is, and what is the right thing to do and why.
  - b. Students will learn that common ethical principles today are rooted in diverse secular and non-secular traditions.
  - c. Students will learn that ethical decision-making requires sound reasoning.
- **Unit II: Ethics in Daily Living**
  - a. Students will compare, apply, and evaluate major ethical theories that address the question of what the individual ought to do and why, and that seek to explain the interdependence of ethics in daily life and personal happiness.
  - b. Students will understand that ethics is a determining factor in the quality of an individual's daily life.
  - c. Students will apply ethics theories in solving typical ethical challenges in daily life.
- **Unit III: The Individual & The Common Good**
  - a. Students will examine the interdependent and conflicting interests of the individual and common good.
  - b. Students will recognize that a pluralistic and democratic society is shaped by the ethics of the individual and of the common good.
  - c. Students will learn that these two ethics may be interdependent or in conflict, depending on the issue at hand.
- **Unit IV: Ethics in Contemporary Issues**
  - a. Students will understand that ethics provides a philosophical framework for thinking critically about contemporary issues.
  - b. Students will learn how to research a challenging ethical question.
  - c. Students will apply ethical reasoning and concepts to a contemporary issue.

## **Standards**

### **Connecticut Core Standards**

Adopted in 2010 | English Language Arts Standards, History/Social Studies, Grade 11-12 at <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/>

### **Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks**

Adopted in February 2015 | Pages 101 through 131 at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Social-Studies/ssframeworks.pdf>

### **DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRY**

- INQ 9–12.1 Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.
- INQ 9–12.2 Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

- INQ 9–12.3 Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a supporting question.
- INQ 9–12.4 Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge. INQ 9–12.5 Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

## DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY CONCEPTS AND TOOLS

(See below, beginning with “Civic and Political Institutions”)

## DIMENSION 3: EVALUATING SOURCES AND USING EVIDENCE

- INQ 9–12.6 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- INQ 9–12.7 Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the sources.
- INQ 9–12.8 Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantially from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.
- INQ 9–12.9 Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.

## DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS AND TAKING INFORMED ACTION

- INQ 9–12.10 Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.
- INQ 9–12.11 Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical)
- INQ 9–12.12 Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- INQ 9–12.13 Critique the use of claims and evidence in arguments for credibility.
- INQ 9–12.14 Critique the use of the reasoning, sequencing, and supporting details of explanations.
- INQ 9–12.15 Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

- INQ 9–12.16 Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.
- INQ 9–12.17 Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms, schools, and out-of-school civic contexts.

(applicable DIMENSION 2 main concepts are listed below)

### Civics and Government: Civics

#### Civic and Political Institutions

- CIV 9–12.3 Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order.
- CIV 9–12.5 Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.
- CIV 9–12.6 Critique relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets.

#### Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles

- CIV 9–12.7 Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with others.
- CIV 9–12.8 Evaluate social and political systems in different contexts, times, and places that promote civic virtues and enact democratic principles.
- CIV 9–12.9 Use appropriate deliberative processes in multiple settings.
- CIV 9–12.10 Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

#### Processes, Rules, and Laws

- CIV 9–12.12 Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.
- CIV 9–12.13 Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.
- CIV 9–12.14 Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

### Civics and Government: History

#### Perspectives

- HIST 9–12.1 Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

## Civics and Government: Economics

### Economic Decision-Making

- ECO 9–12.1 Analyze how incentives influence choices that may result in policies with a range of costs and benefits for different groups.

## Modern World History: History

### Change, Continuity, and Context

- HIST 9–12.3 Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

### Perspectives

- HIST 9–12.4 Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- HIST 9–12.5 Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

### Causation and Argumentation

- HIST 9–12.14 Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.
- HIST 9–12.15 Distinguish between long-term causes and triggering events in developing a historical argument.
- HIST 9–12.16 Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.
- HIST 9–12.17 Critique the central arguments in secondary works of history on related topics in multiple media in terms of their historical accuracy.

### Global Interconnections: Changing Spatial Patterns

- GEO 9–12.7 Evaluate how changes in the environmental and cultural characteristics of a place or region influence spatial patterns of trade and land use.
- GEO 9–12.8 Evaluate the consequences of human-made and natural catastrophes on global trade, politics, and human migration.

## **Greenwich Public Schools Vision of the Graduate**

- Pose and pursue substantive questions
  - Students will develop and explore their own research question regarding an ethical issue.
- Critically interpret, evaluate, and synthesize information
  - Students will critically interpret, evaluate and synthesize information by analyzing a variety of primary and secondary sources and by conducting historical research. This source evaluation and research will allow students to gain a variety of historical perspectives.
- Explore, define, and solve complex problems
  - Students will apply historical knowledge to critically analyze current problems and issues.

- Communicate effectively for a given purpose
  - Students will be evaluated on their ability to communicate effectively through a variety of methods. Through persuasive writing assignments, class discussions and presentations, students will continue to develop and improve their communication skills.
- Advocate for ideas, causes and actions
  - Students will evaluate past advocacy successes and failures and determine when others have chosen to fight for causes and taken action. Case studies in Ethics, for example, will be used to evaluate advocacy successes and failures.
- Generate innovative, creative ideas and products
  - Students will demonstrate their mastery of curriculum objectives with innovative projects. Students will explore answers to essential questions through creative and varied assignments with research structured by the use of GPS research process.
- Collaborate with others to produce a unified work and/or heightened understanding
  - Students will learn to collaborate with one another while working in structured groups in a variety of cooperative learning activities in order to create a final product.
- Contribute to community through dialogue, service, and/or leadership
  - Through the study of different world leaders and political systems, students gain the skills they need to evaluate qualities of an effective leader.
- Conduct themselves in an ethical and responsible manner
  - Historical situations will be analyzed so students gain perspective and information in order to conduct themselves in a responsible manner.
- Recognize and respect other cultural contexts and points of view
  - Through the teaching of cultures from around the world students will recognize and respect other cultural contexts and points of view. By developing an understanding and empathy for others, students will appreciate differences and similarities between themselves and others.
- Pursue their unique interests, passions and curiosities
  - Students will have choice in many assignments and will be able to pursue their interests culminating in the Capstone project.
- Respond to failures and successes with reflection and resilience
  - Students will reflect on their writing and group work, in order to analyze what they did well and where they can improve. Frequent and constructive feedback by teachers will be used to insure continuous reflection and refinement.
- Be responsible for their own mental and physical health
  - Social studies classes will help students develop study skills, and reduce stress through organization and planning.

## Resources

### Required Resources

- *Crito*, by Plato
- *An Introduction to the Principle of Morals and Legislation* by Jeremy Bentham, from *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues (Seventh Edition)*, edited by Barbara Mackinnon
- *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Remarks by President Obama at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize

### Suggested Resources

- *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues (Seventh Edition)*, by Barbara MacKinnon
- *Euthyphro*, by Plato.
- *The Book of Job*, from The Old Testament.
- *The Sermon on the Mount*, from The New Testament.
- *Comparative Religious Ethics: A Narrative Approach*, by Darrell J. Fasching and Dell deChant.
- *Ethical Issues in Six Religious Traditions*, edited by Peggy Morgan and Clive A. Lawton – 2nd edition.
- *Ethics & World Religions: Cross-Cultural Case Studies*, edited by Regina Wentzel Wolfe and Christine E. Gudorf.
- *Looking at Philosophy: The Unbearable Heaviness of Philosophy Made Lighter*, by Donald Palmer – 3rd edition.
- *The Ethics of the Penn State Scandal* (Nov. 14, 2011), Minnesota Public Radio News, (<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2011/11/14/midmorning2>).
- *Utilitarianism*, by John Stuart Mill.
- *Recalculating Happiness in a Himalayan Kingdom*, by Seth Mydans; The New York Times, May 7, 2009.
- *Ethics: The Essential Writings*, edited by Gordon Marino.
- *A Practical Companion to Ethics*, by Anthony Weston. 2011, Oxford University Press, New York.
- *A Defense of Abortion*, essay by Judith Jarvis Thomson.
- *Why Abortion is Immoral*, essay by Don Marquis.
- *The Wrongfulness of Euthanasia*, essay by J. Gay-Williams.
- *Active and Passive Euthanasia*, essay by James Rachels.
- *Reflections on the Guillotine*, essay by Albert Camus.
- *The Ultimate Punishment: A Defense*, essay by Ernest Van Den Haag.
- *How to Argue About the Death Penalty*, essay by Hugo Bedau.
- *The Wisdom of Repugnance*, essay by Leon R. Kass.
- *Illegal Beings: Human Clones and the Law*, essay by Kerry Lynn Macintosh.
- *What is a Terrorist?*, essay by Jean Bethke Elshtain.
- *The Triumph of Just War Theory (and the Dangers of Success)*, essay by Michael Walzer.
- *Famine, Affluence, and Morality*, essay by Peter Singer.
- *Globalization and Its Discontents*, essay by Herman E. Daly.

- *Principles of Earth Democracy*, essay by Vandana Shiva.
- *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, by Steven Pinker.
- *Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique*, essay by Ramachandra Guha.
- *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson.
- *All Animals Are Equal*, essay by Peter Singer.
- *Speciesism and the Idea of Equality*, essay by Bonnie Steinbock.