

TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
Larkspur, California

Course of Study

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Submitted by David Minhondo, Lisa Kemp

I. Overview

- Contemporary Issues
- Lisa Kemp/David Minhondo
- Redwood, Drake and Tam
- Semester
- Social Studies Elective
- 10th*, 11th, 12th (*with approval/recommendation of counselor and/or 9th grade social studies teacher)
- This course is being submitted for possible UC approval as an elective.
- This course is not an integrated course, however the topics of study may overlap with disciplines such as science, economics or sociology.
- No pre-requisites

II. Introduction

Course Overview: The overarching goal of Contemporary Issues is to provide students with a critical lens that can be applied to the interpretation and understanding of current international and domestic events. Students develop critical thinking and evaluative skills with regard to understanding current conflicts and societal dilemmas. Within the social studies program, the elective course in Contemporary Issues will complement and reinforce the knowledge of basic concepts acquired by students in World History, United States History, Government, and other social studies courses. In addition, the Contemporary Issues class reinforces and expands values analysis and skill development. This class is a general class which is designed to introduce students to a variety of perspectives concerning Contemporary Issues. Among social studies classes, this class is unique in that: it allows more in-depth probing; it integrates virtually all of the social studies disciplines, rather than being oriented toward a single discipline; it develops analytical skills to a maximum; it promotes an understanding of other cultures and other points of view as well as critical thinking particularly as it relates to how we learn about events from the media. Students critical thinking will be developed

through the examination of the media, analysis of conflicts and societal dilemmas, the gauging of multiple viewpoints with the purpose of creating informed and balanced opinions, the use of multiple rhetorical devices and medium in the presentation of arguments, and the ability to propose meaningful, thoughtful, and evidence-based solutions.

III. Course Content

Learning Outcomes and Unit Plan (Stage 1, Desired Results; Stage 2, Evidence; Stage 3, Learning Plan):

Identify the major units of instruction for the course. For each unit, provide:

- Units of Study including Activities, Assessments, and Instruction
 - **Unit 1: The Media and Bias**
 - Learning Goals
 - Students will understand that the Media is influenced by a variety of factors which can affect our understanding of news and events
 - Students will understand that bias is inherent in anyone's perspective, including that of the media
 - Summary of Activities: To engage in the type of critical thinking students will be required to access throughout the semester, the first unit of study is designed to help students acquire/access various levels of critical thinking by analyzing issues surrounding modern day media. Analysis, identification of bias and sensationalism, as well as the roots of biases, both personal and those that exist in the media are the overarching goals of the unit. Students will utilize a scaffolded graphic organizer to analyze coverage surrounding a single news event by reading extensively from multiple sources to expose the leanings, biases, and the underlying beliefs that shape the understanding and responses to the events. Students will determine their ideological beliefs by taking a political assessment and use the outcome to explore the roots of their personal biases through written reflection. Students will be able to draw parallels between media coverage and the manner in which society(ies) reacts to specific events.
 - Assessment Evidence: Comparison of coverage across media outlets. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the media, bias, and the effect on the popular understanding of an event by evaluating how different media outlets cover the same event. Students will be provided with a number of assessment options to show learning that reflect different, yet applicable, multiple intelligences sets and allow student to

convey understanding in a manner that suits their chosen intelligence(s) style.

- Instruction, sample activity: Students will learn about the evolution of media coverage of wars from Vietnam to the Afghanistan/Iraq War by watching, listening to and reading excerpts from news coverage of some events. Students who struggle accessing texts are supported by vocabulary legends/keys. Class discussion and simulation of decision-making about media coverage of conflicts also assist students to develop a deeper understanding of the role the media plays in affecting political and military choices in war. [See Appendix A & B]
- ***Subsequent units, whether selected by students or the teacher, should fit the following criteria:***
 - Topic is current
 - Topic involves a controversial or debatable issue
 - Topic is accessible to 16 - 18 year-old students, perhaps with teacher assistance
 - As a whole, the selection of unit topics should concern local, national and international issues
- **Unit 2: Analysis**
 - Learning Goals: Students will develop analytical skills by analyzing a current event from multiple sources, determining its historic roots, as well as compare and contrast currently proposed solutions to determine the best course of action to fix/solve the issue.
 - Summary of Activities: Students will begin to analyze a current event by examining coverage of the event and identifying current key players, figures, and agents of change. Students will then gain deeper understanding of the modern event, by analyzing its historic roots.
 - Assessment Evidence: With a historical and current understanding of the event and the key players/agents of change, students will analyze currently proposed solutions to fix or solve the problem, as well as both decide and substantiate which course of action, or combinations therein, would most adequately address the problem while explaining how/why other solutions would not work as well. Students will be provided with a number of assessment options to show learning that reflect different, yet applicable, multiple intelligences sets and allow student to convey understanding in a manner that suits their chosen intelligence(s) style.
 - Instruction, sample lesson: Students would determine the who/what/where/when/why of a current terrorist act or crime against

humanity. In order to establish a linguistic foundation, accessible by all students, the class participants collaborate on a class glossary of terms relevant to the topic of study. Students would then explore the historic roots surrounding the event to gain deeper understanding of the rift/conflict from each group(s) or individual(s) perspective. For students struggling with the skill of analysis, scaffolded graphic organizers and models will be used to assist all students with developing ways to conduct analysis of topics and information. Then, students would examine possible solutions to the conflict proposed by agents of change (people, government, NGOs, etc.) and both determine and justify a particular solution. [See Appendix C]

○ **Unit 3: Decision Making**

- Learning Goals: Students will develop an understanding of factors that influence decision-making at some of the different levels of societal institutions.
- Summary of Activities: Through direct instruction, student inquiry and group research, students develop an understanding of a current problem or issue. Students then participate in a simulation of negotiations to explore potential solutions to the problem or issue.
- Assessment Evidence: The simulation performance task challenges students to develop their own solutions, an argument for their choices and a set of criteria for deciding which of their classmates' ideas to incorporate in their own plan. Students will be provided with a number of assessment options to display their plan that reflects different, yet applicable, multiple intelligences sets and allow student to convey understanding in a manner that suits their chosen intelligence(s) style.
- Instruction, sample activity: In order to establish a linguistic foundation, accessible by all students, the class participants collaborate on a class glossary of terms relevant to the topic of study. [As an example, in a study of the 2016 presidential election] Students individually research one of the several candidates running for office then create a presentation to "sell" their candidate to the class. Simultaneously, students develop criteria for candidates from the perspective of various elements of the electorate. In an editorial piece, students respond to the criticisms of their candidates with substantive evidence of the inaccuracy of the criticisms. [See Appendix D]
- Regardless of topic of study to provide students with opportunities to develop decision making criteria, students will collaborate and use peer review to hone their decision making skills. Student choice will also

further ensure that students enter the project from a “position of strength.”

- **Unit 4: Argumentation**

- Learning Goals: Students will develop arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence, while continuing to examine personal morals and values.
- Summary of Activities: Through direct instruction, student inquiry, group research and individual reading, students explore a current source of debate. Students then develop arguments in writing as well as speech to express their preference for a specific stance on the issue.
- Assessment Evidence: A strong argument introduces precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establishes the significance of the claim(s), distinguishes the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and creates an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
Students develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- Instruction, sample activity: [As an example, in a study of gender parity] students research how women are promoted and/or oppressed in several cultures around the world through both laws and customs. In order to establish a linguistic foundation, accessible by all students, the class participants collaborate on a class glossary of terms relevant to the topic of study. Following their research, students examine the origins and evolution of women's rights and roles in American history and society. Students present an analysis and comparison of texts from the society they studied and the reflection of gender bias as they surface in the texts and images. [See Appendix E]
- Differentiation Strategy: The collaborative nature of activities related to argumentation assist even struggling students with selecting the best evidence for an argument.

- **Unit 5: Agents of Change**

- Learning Goals: To show enduring understanding, students will use knowledge and skills from the previous units to explore a topic of their choosing.

- **Summary of Activities:** Students will identify a current issue, examine its coverage (or lack thereof), and determine the historical roots of the issue in order to apply decision making and argumentative skills to propose an original solution, as well as anticipate desired outcomes, to the problem.
- **Assessment Evidence:** Students will deliver a thorough presentation of their topic and associated solution to a large group setting utilizing visual, oral, and multi-media. Proposals will be scrutinized and questioned by audience in order to provide feedback on solutions. Students will be provided with a number of assessment options to display their proposals that reflect different, yet applicable, multiple intelligences sets and allow student to convey understanding in a manner that suits their chosen intelligence(s) style. Students engage in a reflection process to reflect on feedback.
- **Instruction Sample Activity:** Students will select a local, national, or international issue to research and propose a variety of solutions to address the problem. Students begin by conducting extensive research on the topic by reading, watching, listening, and analyzing coverage from a variety of sources. Students will then propose written a three tiered solution to the problem: local, national, and international. The entirety of associated research and solution proposals will be transferred to a visual medium and presented to the class, which will act as a body of concerned citizens who will offer feedback and either approve or deny the solution(s). [See Appendix F]

IV. Instructional Materials: Suggested textbook(s), materials, equipment and resources

- The instructional materials change each semester as this course is concerned with current events and thus students will use news applications such as Flipboard, online media sources such as CNN Student News, and materials from print and online media outlets such as *The New York Times*, BBC news and *The Economist Magazine*, among others.

BOT Approved: 5/14/85

Revised: 12/13/16

Appendix A - Unit 1 Sample Assessment

Contemporary Issues - Unit 1: The Media - Final Project

Project Objective: In groups of two - four, identify a problem, analyze it by examining coverage from various sources, and then develop a way to use the media to address the problem in a positive way.

Overview: The final project for Unit 1, "The Media", is broken in to three separate parts. Each portion of the project is designed to access the lessons that took place throughout the unit.

- 1) **Grouping** - Select one to three classmates from the class. Together, identify a current issue you are interested in researching. Have that issue approved by the teacher before moving on to the article comparison.
- 2) **Article Comparison** - Comparing three articles covering the same topic on the same day, but from three separate news organizations to point out that flaws in that coverage across the mainstream media, and
- 3) **A hypothetical media solution** - Imagining that you are a respected, experienced journalist working for a media network (ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, etc.), which includes a news wing, propose a way that the media could/should best address the problem **in a positive way**.

Activity 1: Grouping

- Group Member 1 & 2

- Group Member 3 & 4

- Topic

Activity #2 - Article Comparative: Prove that the problem really exists! Activity 2 will NOT be presented.

- A. Research/Analysis: Find three recent (past four weeks - present day) articles/videos about the same topic from three different sources (article/video should be similar in length and detail to do an adequate comparison):
 1. Print out, read, and (optional) annotate the three articles, looking for similarities and differences in language, perspective, and bias. The complete steps "b" - "d"
 2. Compare Text Language (Bias/Spin):
 - a. Analyze the Headlines - Compare article Headlines & significance of the different words/phrasing used (i.e. what biases are exposed)

- b. Analyze the context - Compare description(s) of Key Figures/Topics and the significance of using those words
 - 3. What perspectives are offered in each story? (Bias/Spin)
 - a. Who gets interviewed/how often are they referenced
 - b. Are perspectives balanced, (i.e. seem to provide equal voice to all parties) or do they focus on one group more than another
 - 4. Infer the reasons each article uses that language/spin and what they hoped to gain by projecting that message.
 - a. Is it Sensationalist? (Sell Ads) Or, is it Propaganda? (Sell Ideas/Ideology) Or is it neutral? (Balanced reflection of facts)? Back up your claim with evidence (reference language, nuance, perspectives offered, etc.)
 - 1) Article 1?
 - 2) Article 2?
 - 3) Article 3?
- B. Deliverable: Choose one of the options below: (**I am open to alternatives, if you have an idea check with me*)
 - 1. Creating a formal writing piece: Each main requirement ("2"- "4") needs minimum one paragraph of text, or three paragraphs total. Writing should include quotes from all three articles and other empirical evidence that proves your claim(s) are substantive.
 - 2. Creating a PowerPoint: Each sub requirement ("a, b," etc.) needs a minimum of one slide, or six slides total including a title. All slides must be bullet-pointed. There must be a use of at least four visuals (pictures or video)
 - 3. Create three separate political cartoons, each one should highlight the bias, or lack therefore, exposed in each article analysis. On the back of each cartoon should be a two to three sentence summary of what the cartoon exposes by explaining the picture and symbols/images used in the cartoon.

Activity #3 - A hypothetical media solution - Imagining that you are a respected, experienced journalist working for a news organization, create a business proposal for a group of new producers that proposes a way the media could/should best address **the problem you analyzed in activity two** in order to create positive change for that issue.

- A. Questions that should be answered in your proposal presentation include:
 - 1. What is the nature and scope of the problem?
 - a. Who is affected?
 - b. Why has it gone unresolved?
 - 2. Show a historical pattern.
 - a. Go to <https://news.google.com/newspapers>
 - b. Evaluate the media coverage of the issue to-date, by reviewing media coverage from the last two - six months.
 - 1) Select "Search Tools" --> "Any Time" --> Select your range
 - 2) Search for your story using specific key words

- 3) Skim through headlines and identify three - four patterns of bias you identify (reference specific headlines/news agencies)
3. Encourage the Media producers to take up the story...Explain to them why more and consistent information ensure more effective attention to the problem?
 - a. What resolution/change are you seeking?
 - b. How do you hope to use this media organization to help bring about this change?
4. Create a plan that the media organization can begin to implement immediately:
 - a. How should the news media cover the issue? How often? What mediums?
 - b. How should the media use technology to enhance media coverage? (I.e. Social Media)
5. Predict what will occur:
 - a. What unintended consequences (1 to 2) should the media prepare for in focusing attention on the issue? (Could be negative or positive)
 - b. What positive change do you predict will occur as a result of your plan?
 - 1) Effect on other media?
 - 2) Effect on government(s)?
 - 3) Effect on individual citizens?

Activity #3 - Deliverable Options: You are required to present your solution to the class using one of the following methods:

- A. Oral Presentation with Graphics - Create an oral presentation that maps out the requirement. Either projected or on poster paper, there should be images, graphs, charts, etc. that relate to and enhance the different parts of your oral presentation. Information should be on note-cards/separate paper and should NOT be on the screen/paper where your images are.
- B. Website: Use a website builder, such as www.wix.com, to create a website dedicated to communicating your action plan to both the producers of the media organization and society as a whole. There should be a main introductory page, and five additional pages, one for each numbered requirement. You will use the website as the main aid in your presentation.
- C. Create a formal written proposal complete with cover page and minimum one-paragraph explanation for each numbered requirement (minimum five paragraphs). Bring no less than 15 copies of the proposal for distribution.
- D. Student Choice Option - Requires Teacher approval

Appendix B - Unit 1 Sample Lesson

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1fzom38nfwHXvDyXOjEdSeHwvkUxAieb6CQFjFfXk5-8>

The Pentagon's Dangerous Views on the Wartime Press

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD/AUG. 10, 2015

The Defense Department earlier this summer released a comprehensive manual outlining its interpretation of the law of war. The 1,176-page document, the first of its kind, includes guidelines on the treatment of journalists covering armed conflicts that would make their work more dangerous, cumbersome and subject to censorship. Those should be repealed immediately. Journalists, the manual says, are generally regarded as civilians, but may in some instances be deemed “unprivileged belligerents,” a legal term that applies to fighters that are afforded fewer protections than the declared combatants in a war. In some instances, the document says, “the relaying of information (such as providing information of immediate use in combat operations) could constitute taking a direct part in hostilities.”

The manual warns that “Reporting on military operations can be very similar to collecting intelligence or even spying,” so it calls on journalists to “act openly and with the permission of relevant authorities.” It says that governments “may need to censor journalists’ work or take other security measures so that journalists do not reveal sensitive information to the enemy.” Allowing this document to stand as guidance for commanders, government lawyers and officials of other nations would do severe damage to press freedoms. Authoritarian leaders around the world could point to it to show that their despotic treatment of journalists — including Americans — is broadly in line with the standards set by the United States government. One senior Pentagon official, who was asked to explain when a journalist might be deemed an “unprivileged belligerent,” pointed to the assassination of the Afghan military commander Ahmad Shah Massoud in September 2001. That example is preposterous because Mr. Massoud was killed by assassins who posed as television journalists and hid explosives in a camera. They were not, in fact, journalists.

The manual’s argument that some reporting activities could be construed as taking part in hostilities is ludicrous. That vaguely-worded standard could be abused by military officers to censor or even target journalists.

Equally bizarre is the document’s suggestion that reporters covering wars should operate only with the permission of “relevant authorities” or risk being regarded as spies. To cover recent wars, including the civil war in Libya in 2011 and the war in Syria, reporters have had to sneak across borders, at great personal risk, to gather information. For the Pentagon to conflate espionage with journalism feeds into the propaganda of authoritarian governments. Egypt, for

instance, has tried to discredit the work of Western journalists by falsely insinuating that many of them are spies.

Even more disturbing is the document's broad assertion that journalists' work may need to be censored lest it reveal sensitive information to the enemy. This unqualified statement seems to contravene American constitutional and case law, and offers other countries that routinely censor the press a handy reference point.

Of the 61 journalists killed last year, 59 percent died covering wars, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, which published a critical analysis on the Pentagon's new manual. The wording of the Pentagon document sounds more like something out of Putin's Russia. How did such a document come into being? Was a...

"The Defense Department's new manual on the law of war could severely hinder the work of journalists covering armed conflicts"? A classic...

In earlier documents on the law of armed conflict, the American military has offered more sensible guidance on the treatment of journalists. A guidebook published in 2012 by the United States Army Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School says that journalists should be protected as civilians "provided they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians."

A spokesman for the National Security Council declined to say whether White House officials contributed to or signed off on the manual. Astonishingly, the official pointed to a line in the preface, which says it does not necessarily reflect the views of the "U.S. government as a whole."

That inane disclaimer won't stop commanders from pointing to the manual when they might find it convenient to silence the press. The White House should call on Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter to revise this section, which so clearly runs contrary to American law and principles.

1. --How does this argument compare to the examination of the relationship between the media and the military during the First Gulf War?

Appendix C - Unit 2 Sample

ISIS Project

Option 1 - Extend Your Knowledge of ISIS

Task: Research an aspect of ISIS and its organization structure.

Suggested Areas for Research:

- Leadership
- Implementation of Sharia Law
- Role of Women
- Rescuing of Yazidi's
- Recruitment of Young Men
- Defectors
- Idolatry
- Wahhabism
- The Role of the Kurds
- Funding
- Other topics, with teacher approval

Requirements:

1. Come up with 1-3 focus/research questions
 - a. Get the question(s) approved by Mr. Minhondo
2. Explanation of the research focus or question
3. Background information related to the question
 - a. Why your group was interested in the topic/question
 - b. Background related to recent history surrounding your topic/focus question
4. Answer to your question/focus area
5. Video/Visual/Political Cartoon aid with questions
6. Discussion Questions that touch on the larger theme or issue

Option 2 - Compare ISIS

Task: Compare ISIS to another historical or current terrorist organization

Suggested Organizations include, but are not limited to:

- Al - Qaeda
 - Al Nusra Front (Syria)
 - Al Shabaab (Somalia)
- PKK (Kurdish Workers Party, Turkey)
- KKK (Ku Klux Klan, U.S.A)
- IRA (Irish Republican Army, Ireland)
- ETA (Basque Nationalist Liberation Movement, France & Spain)
- Shining Path (Communist Party of Peru, Peru)
- Hezbollah (Shi'a Islamist Militant Group - Lebanon)
- HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement, Palestine)
- FARC (Armed Revolutionaries of Columbia, Columbia)

Requirements: Research and present findings/comparatives on the following -

1. Origin
 - a. Where are they located
 - b. Background - When, how and why did the group begin
 - c. Secular or Religious?
 - d. Rise to prominence - How did they become known?
2. Goals
3. Leadership
4. Tactics used to achieve goal(s)
 - a. Preferred terror methods
 - b. Recruitment
 - c. Funding
 - d. Role of Women?
5. Updates:
 - a. CURRENT GROUP - Who is trying to fight this group? Why? Success? Failures?
 - b. HISTORICAL GROUP - Who defeated this group, how...why? OR Why did the group come to an end?

Option 3- Resolve ISIS in Syria

Task: Investigate the current resolution process to find out how to resolve ISIS in Syria. Then, create a fictional plan that would potentially solve both the ISIS terrorist group's power in the region and what a post-war Syria would look like.

Requirements: Answer and present findings on the following:

Step 1 - The Proposal: What should the US do to combat ISIS in Syria?	Step 2 - Anticipate how others will respond	Step 3 - How would you counteract, mitigate, or calm each groups response?
2 Part Solution: • ISIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of Solution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Military Solution? Diplomatic Solution? Hybrid (combined) Solution? Explanation of how solution would help destroy ISIS? • Syria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision and Plan for what Syria (government) would look like after conflict is resolved? 	• ISIS Plan - How would the following respond to your plan? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISIS? Coalition? Syria? Rebel Groups? Russia/Iran • Syria Plan - How would the following respond to your plan? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coalition? Syria? Rebel Groups? Russia/Iran? 	• ISIS Plan - How would counteract needs/wants of the following groups? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISIS? Coalition? Syria? Rebel Groups? Russia/Iran • Syria Plan - How would you counteract needs/wants of the following groups? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coalition? Syria? Rebel Groups? Russia/Iran?

All Project: Other Requirements

- A. You must complete your project in a group of 3-4 people
 - a. You will receive two grades: one group grade (measured by teacher) and one individual grade (measured by your group members)
- B. Project presentations: must be well-rehearsed and delivered with the following components:
 - a. Visual Presentation Format
 - i. Posters
 - ii. Powerpoint/Google-slides
 - iii. Video
 - iv. Website
 - v. Digital storytelling, etc.)
 - vi. *If you have another creative presentation in mind (i.e. skit) let me know.*
 - b. Use of *at least* 1 form of audio - visual media (youtube video, animation, etc)
 - c. Use of *at least* 1 political cartoon OR multiple, relevant pictures
 - d. Use of *at least* 2 sources from class
 - e. Use of *at least* 2 outside trustworthy sources (web, newspaper, documentaries) (No Blogs)
 - f. Bibliography citing where information was gathered using MLA citation
- C. A minimum 1 page summary of the answer to your focus question (options 1 and 2) or explaining your plan (option 3) independently written by each member of the group
 - a. Options 1 and 2
 - i. Address the background and main players (who, what, where, when, why)
 - ii. Answer your question directly using
 1. Evidence (Quotes, paraphrasing, footnotes)
 2. Minimum 2 sources
 - b. Option 3:
 - i. Write three paragraphs, one to address each step
 - ii. Reference information, evidence that reinforces that your claims are legitimate and could potentially work (i.e. cite people or governments that would agree with parts or aspects of your plan)

ISIS Presentation Rubric

Topic

Members:

CATEGORY	10+ (ExCred)	10	8.5	7.5	6.5
Presentation	Completes all requirements and goes beyond	Well-rehearsed with smooth delivery that holds audience attention.	Rehearsed with fairly smooth delivery that holds audience attention most of the time.	Delivery not smooth, but able to maintain interest of the audience most of the time.	Delivery not smooth and audience attention often lost.
Content	Completes all requirements and goes beyond	Covers topic in-depth with details and examples. Subject knowledge is excellent.	Includes essential knowledge about the topic. Subject knowledge appears to be good.	Includes essential information about the topic but there are 1-2 factual errors.	Content is minimal OR there are several factual errors.
Sources	Completes all requirements and goes beyond	Uses 2 or more sources from inside and outside of class.	Uses exactly 2 sources from inside and outside of class.	Uses 2 or fewer sources from either inside or outside of class	Uses 1 or no sources from inside or outside of class
Requirements	Completes all requirements and goes beyond	All requirements (1 or more audio-visuals, political cartoon, and use of pictures) are met and exceeded.	All requirements (1 or more audio-visuals, political cartoon, and use of pictures) are met.	One requirement (1 or more audio-visuals, political cartoon, and use of pictures) was not completely met.	More than one requirement (1 or more audio-visuals, political cartoon, and use of pictures) was not completely met.
Visual Design	Completes all requirements and goes beyond	Makes excellent use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance the presentation.	Makes good use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance to presentation.	Makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. but occasionally these detract from the presentation content.	Use of font, color, graphics, effects etc. but these often distract from the presentation content.

Total: _____/40

Notes:

Individual Presentation Rubric

CATEGORY	10	8.5	7.25	6	0
Presentation Skills	<p>Student does all the following very well during the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Speaks Clearly · Speaks with adequate volume · Stays on Topic · Good Posture · Eye Contact 	<p>Student does most (3/5) of the following well during the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Speaks Clearly · Speaks with adequate volume · Stays on Topic · Good Posture · Eye Contact 	<p>Student does some (2/5) of the following well during the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Speaks Clearly · Speaks with adequate volume · Stays on Topic · Good Posture · Eye Contact 	<p>Student does little (1/5) of the following well during the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Speaks Clearly · Speaks with adequate volume · Stays on Topic · Good Posture · Eye Contact 	Missing
Command of the Topic	<p>Student has advanced command of their topic. They know the crucial information and convey the information seamlessly to the class.</p> <p>Student is also able to answer all questions thoroughly</p>	<p>Student has proficient command of their topic. They know most crucial information and clearly convey the information to the class.</p> <p>Student is also able to answer all questions.</p>	<p>Student has basic command of their topic. They know basic information and somewhat clearly convey the information to the class somewhat well.</p> <p>Student is also able to answer all questions.</p>	<p>Student has limited command of their topic. They know limited information and attempt to convey the information to the class somewhat well.</p> <p>Student is also able to answer all questions.</p>	Missing
Total Score:			/20		

Notes:

Research Report Rubric

CATEGORY	5	4	3	2
Quality of Information	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.
Amount of Information	All topics are addressed and all questions answered with at least 2 sentences about each.	All topics are addressed and most questions answered with at least 2 sentences about each.	All topics are addressed, and most questions answered with 1 sentence about each.	One or more topics were not addressed.
Sources	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but a few are not in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but many are not in the desired format.	Some sources are not accurately documented.
Mechanics	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	A few grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.

Total: _____/20

Appendix D - Unit 3 Sample

Contemporary Issues - 2016 Presidential Debate Simulation

Overview:

In partners, you will research one specific presidential candidate by examining their stance on certain issues. These issues include your individual's beliefs, record, and feelings on five specific topics listed below and other potential debatable issues. There will then be two debates, democratic and republican. During the debate, one partner will be the "candidate" and speak to the issues/questions posed by the debate moderator. The other partner will be the press agent for the candidate, sitting behind them to remind them of their beliefs and help them answer questions.

Roles

Democratic Candidates:

- Bernie Sanders
- Hillary Clinton
- Martin O'Malley

Republican Candidates:

- Jeb Bush
- Marco Rubio
- Donald Trump
- Ben Carson
- Ted Cruz
- Carly Fiorina

Moderators

- Democratic Debate
- Republican Debate

Part 1 - Research

Policy Issues up for debate:

1. Foreign Policy/Terrorism
 - a. What role(s) should the US play in the world?
 - b. What should the US approach to the Middle East look like?
2. Immigration
 - a. What is a good strategy to control immigration in the US?
3. Climate Change/Environment
 - a. What should the US do, if anything, to tackle climate change?
4. Economy
 - a. What should the US do to increase economic activity and jobs in the US?
5. Education
 - a. What can the US do to curb the cost of higher education?
 - b. Stance on Common Core Standards (National Education Standards)

Other Topics you *may* need to be prepared to discuss:

- Money in politics - defend or promote where your candidate gets their money from
- Social Stance - Abortion, same-sex marriage, crime and gun control.

Some websites that will help you prep are located below (Note - this list is far from exhaustive, so please do look at other sites, particularly your candidate's site)

- <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/tag/what-the-candidates-believe/>
- <http://www.ontheissues.org/default.htm>
- <http://presidential-candidates.insidegov.com/>
- <http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2015/06/29/whats-the-top-issue-for-2016-depends-where-you-look>
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nake-m-kamrany/priority-issues-of-the-2016-presidential-election-_b_8168294.html

Part 2 - Debate Prep

- Stance statements - Write short two - five sentence statements on your candidates for each issue to be read during the debate. If possible, include instances where they have successfully tackled this issue to lend your candidate more credibility.
- Counter Arguments - Anticipate what critiques might be offered of your stance, and place your rebuttals underneath you stance statements
- Google "Critiques of _____ (Your candidate's name)" to help you with this.

Outline of Dates:

- Monday 11.30 - Select Candidate
- Tuesday 12.1 - Research Day 1
- Wednesday 12.2 - Research Day 2/Debate Prep
- Friday 12.4 - Democratic Debate / Overview Final Project
- Monday - Republican Debate
- Tuesday - Finish Republican Debate (If needed)

Rubric:

CATEGORY	10	8.5	7	6.25
Understanding of the Issues				
Foreign Policy	The candidate clearly understood the issues in-depth and presented their information forcefully and convincingly.	The candidate clearly understood the issues in-depth and presented their information somewhat convincingly	The candidate seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented those with ease.	The candidate did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.
Immigration	The candidate clearly understood the issues in-depth and presented their information forcefully and convincingly.	The candidate clearly understood the issues in-depth and presented their information somewhat convincingly	The candidate seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented those with ease.	The candidate did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.
Climate Change	The candidate clearly understood the issues in-depth and presented their information forcefully and convincingly.	The candidate clearly understood the issues in-depth and presented their information somewhat convincingly	The candidate seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented those with ease.	The candidate did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.
Economy	The candidate clearly understood the issues in-depth and presented their information forcefully and convincingly.	The candidate clearly understood the issues in-depth and presented their information somewhat convincingly	The candidate seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented those with ease.	The candidate did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.
Education	The candidate clearly understood the issues in-depth and presented their information forcefully and convincingly.	The candidate clearly understood the issues in-depth and presented their information somewhat convincingly	The candidate seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented those with ease.	The candidate did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.
Rebuttal	All counter-arguments were accurate, relevant and strong.	Most counter-arguments were accurate, relevant, and strong.	Some counter-arguments were accurate and relevant, but several were weak.	Counter-arguments were not accurate and/or relevant
Respect for Debate Rules/Other Candidates	All statements, body language, and responses were respectful and were in appropriate language.	Statements and responses were respectful and used appropriate language, but once or twice body language was not.	Most statements and responses were respectful and in appropriate language, but there was one sarcastic remark.	Statements, responses and/or body language were consistently not respectful.

Appendix E - Unit 4 Sample

Contemporary Issues
Unit 3: Gender Inequality

Name:

For Thursday's class, research your assigned country with regard to the following then save the responses to these questions and your source citations in your folder for Contemporary Issues.

Country:

What is the dominant religion?

Is the society matriarchal or patriarchal?

What laws limit women?

What customs limit women?

Explain the extent to which women are involved in government?

Which sources did you use?

Phase II: Gather more information and prepare to teach....spread the word

How can you take facts and evidence of persecution of women and create a visual or text that draws attention to the issue of gender inequality in another country?

What are the origins and effects of discrimination and persecution of women in _____?

Step I: Talk with the other person who researched the country you did. Discuss two different aspects of discrimination/persecution of women. You each are to focus on a different aspect of life for women in your country.

Step II: Decide on a medium for your message. Your choices are:

Audio/Text: [Examples: news article, speech, podcast, poem, song, letter, play script]

Audio/Visual: [Examples: video, poster, print ad]

Step III: Plan your medium.

What is your message? (Go narrow....)

What facts will you incorporate into your project?

What additional questions do you have? What additional information do you need?

Step IV: Create your medium.

Rubric for Country Profile of Gender Inequality

	4	3	2	1
Evidence & Research	These projects show thoughtful discretion in use of evidence and facts by ensuring that you have used an abundance of evidence and facts which are specific and related to the message. Accurate and diverse list of sources.	These projects show clear, obvious evidence of research with specifics, but there may not always be obvious links to the message. Sources are accurately documented but there may be 1 or 2 questionable sources.	These projects show knowledge of the issues and facts associated with the plight of women in the country, but there are gaps in the evidence and choice of information. Sources are lacking in validity and/or number.	Minimal evidence of research with only a superficial treatment of the facts related to the treatment of women.
Message	Message is clear and provocative.	Message is clear and accurate to the country, but may be less provocative and/or original.	Message is vague, but suggested at more than one point in the medium.	Unclear or confused message.
Creativity	The project illustrates creativity in use of language, images, devices and/or composition. A "4" project shows originality of thought.	A clear understanding of the issue and an original delivery of the message.	Project is lacking in creativity. Only the choice of medium or composition shows an attempt at an original platform for the message.	A rote delivery of the message with little discernable originality of thought.

Appendix F - Unit 5 Sample

Being the Change (Article and Project)

Name: _____

Overview: Often times teens feel as though they have no or very little influence over things that happen in the world. Mahatma Gandhi once said that, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." What Gandhi is really trying to say is that it is not just large, big actions that cause changes, but small actions that fill up our day. Below are three mediums that allow you to create change in both big and small ways: (<http://generationon.org/teens/make-your-mark/65-ways-make-difference>)

Medium 1 - Personal Choices

Creating

1. Seniors love your artwork! Brighten walls - and smiles - at the local senior center.
2. Got a favorite game? Teach it to younger kids.
3. Win brownie points! Organize canned goods at home and take extras to a food pantry.
4. Got talent? Share it!
5. Your old backpack needs a new friend...donate it!
6. Gather up outgrown, gently worn shoes and clothes for your local Salvation Army, Goodwill, church or synagogue.
7. Party leftovers? Local soup kitchen guests are gonna love 'em!
8. Neglected stuffies in your room? Little kids at shelters are aching to cuddle them.
9. Like a challenge? Your game board skills are in demand at the senior center.
10. Friend forgot their snack? Share yours!
11. Read aloud to little kids at the library - they'll love you!
12. Dust off your old - but still good - books and give them to your school library.

Giving

1. It's your birthday! Give a gift to someone in need.
2. How about a toy drive for kids stuck in the hospital?
3. Get a haircut! And give your ponytail to Locks of Love.
4. Got old sports equipment? Bring it to your local Parks & Rec!
5. Calling all chefs! Bake cakes and donate the proceeds.
6. Feed your furry friends at the animal shelter...drop off a bag of food!
7. Time is precious. . . share a bit of yours to help others.
8. Kind words lift spirits...give a compliment and lift yours too.

Conserving

1. Compost your fruit and veggie scraps...and watch your garden BLOOM!
2. Help save a gazillion disposable water bottles...reusable bottles rule!
3. Save a tree! Use both sides of your notebook paper.
4. Reuse, recycle. Reuse, recycle. Reuse, recycle. Got it?!
5. Keep the earth cool...walk, bike or use public transportation.
6. Got energy? Pick up trash! Remember: wear gloves & work with an adult.
7. Your town doesn't recycle? Yikes! Create a program now!

8. Nourish your neighborhood green spaces...grow a community garden.
9. Like clean air? Grab your friends and plant trees.
10. Drat those petroleum-based plastic bags! Use fabric bags instead - for everything!
11. Buzz your town selectmen for more neighborhood trashcans and recycling bins.
12. Want to save energy while leaping tall buildings in a single bound? Turn off the boob tube and play outside.
13. Love surprises? Plant fall bulbs and flower seeds. . . and keep a weather eye for spring blossoms!
14. "Turn off the lights!" Make switch plate reminders for your whole house.
15. Save water and tons of \$\$\$ - turn off the water when you brush teeth!
16. Keep sturdy takeout containers for future leftovers.
17. Transform colorful magazine pages, comics and more into artful projects and gift wrappers!
18. Learn how to donate/recycle old computer stuff & post instructions at your local electronics stores.

Doing

1. Whip up your favorite yummy snack and present it to a soup kitchen!
2. Love history? Visit folks at the senior center and ask about the amazing things they've witnessed.
3. Want to change the world? Practice random acts of kindness.
4. Keep your brain sharp and body strong. Ask for healthy lunch options at school.
5. Say "thank you!". . . 'tis music to your teachers' ears.
6. Seeking positive change? Ask your local government officials for help.
7. Lead by your good example.
8. New kid at school? Eat lunch with them!
9. Volunteering? Invite your nearest and dearest along.
10. Have an older neighbor? Rake their leaves or shovel their sidewalk!
11. Need a cat or dog to snuggle? Visit the animal shelter.
12. Help end poverty. Check out the UN Millennium Development Goals online.
13. Make soldiers smile. . . send letters & goodies!
14. There's nothing like a warm hug...share one today.
15. Show gratitude and write thank you notes!
16. Get fit and have fun...start a neighborhood exercise group.
17. Eating healthy? Partner up to share knowledge, tips and encouragement.
18. Share a home cooked meal - and cheerful chat - with a homebound person.
19. Got a big idea? Launch it with a community event!
20. Friend on a mission? Help them!
21. Tummy grumbling at the grocery store? Buy a canned good for the food pantry box.
22. See somebody struggling with heavy bags or boxes? Lend a hand.
23. Active voters make our country great. Ensure adults in your life are registered!
24. Adorable pets await loving homes! Where? The animal shelter. . . tell your friends and family!
25. Brighten the world...smile often!

Medium 1 Questions:

- A. Are any of the choices above things that you already do? Select one or two options and explain. If not, explain.
- B. Which choices above would be interested in doing? Select one and explain why.
- C. Are there any choices above that seem unrealistic (i.e. won't change anything)? If so which and why, if not explain.
- D. Do you agree or disagree with the notion that small changes add up to larger changes? Explain

Medium 2 - Democratic Choices

1. looking for information in newspapers, magazines, and reference materials and judging its accuracy
2. voting in local, state, and national elections
3. participating in a political discussion
4. trying to persuade someone to vote a certain way
5. signing a petition
6. wearing a button or putting a sticker on the car
7. writing letters to elected representatives
8. contributing money to a party or candidate
9. attending meetings to gain information, discuss issues, or lend support
10. campaigning for a candidate
11. lobbying for laws that are of special interest
12. demonstrating through marches, boycotts, sit-ins, or other forms of protest
13. serving as a juror
14. running for office
15. holding public office
16. serving the country through military or other service
17. disobeying laws and taking the consequences to demonstrate that a law or policy is unjust

Medium 2 Questions

- A. Cross out all the above items that you are not allowed to participate in because of your age. Do you agree with age-restrictions in the democratic process or should it be open to everyone?
- B. Of the ones you can complete, which one interests you the most or seems like an option you would choose to fix a problem?
- C. Of the ones you can complete, which one does not seem like it would have that large of an effect? Explain why.

Medium 3 - Social Media:

The Top 10 ways to change the world using social media. "If I could change the world, I would be the sunlight in your universe," sang Eric Clapton. Social media empowers people to add sunlight to a shadowed universe. Here are ten ways to do it.

1. Harness the Dragonfly Effect

In *The Dragonfly Effect*, authors Jennifer Aaker and Andy Smith show how people use social media to form groups and instigate global change. The authors explain that the dragonfly has a unique ability to propel itself in any direction, as long as its four wings work in concert. This uncanny ability serves as a metaphor for how integrated acts trigger a "ripple effect," which triggers transformation and positive impact. The four components of the Dragonfly Effect include:

- Wing 1. Focus on a concrete, measurable goal.
- Wing 2. Attention grabbing messages that strengthen the signal and mute the social media noise.
- Wing 3. Engage people by making personal connections to the goal. Evoke feelings of empathy and compassion.
- Wing 4. Empower people to take action.

2. Tell a Story - Social media users sometimes use storytelling as a means of inspiring social change. Here are some of her storytelling tools:

- Put a Face on Your Cause: Animal rights, hunger, AIDS and other issues resonate when you talk about individual cases.
- Highlight Your Volunteers: They're special people. Tell their story.
- Explain Why You Do It: Tell a story about your personal connection to the cause.

- ### Medium 3 Questions:

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Being the Change Project

Task:

1. Select a **recent issue** (nation, international or local) and approve it with Mr. Minhondo before proceeding.
2. Create an **action plan** to address that issue in three ways: 1. Personal, 2. Democratic, 3. Social Media (**Note** - **Feel free to select options of your own choosing, not listed above.**)
 - a. Explain what action(s) you will/could take for **each area** in two - five sentences each
 - b. Explain or predict what result(s) will/could occur through each of your actions (remember the effects don't have to be HUGE, it could be small. . . the idea is change)
 - c. Explain what problems might occur within each medium and how you anticipate you will address them
3. Act On it! - Of the three types of action, you *must actually do* ONE action and show evidence of it (signed letter, picture of you in action, copy of a blog posting, video, etc. . .).
 - a. If you show evidence doing two or even all three actions, you can earn extra credit depending on how much effort it would take you.

Submission Requirements

- Options to submit your action plan:
 - Five Paragraph Paper (Intro, Actions you will take, predictions of effect, problems that may occur, conclude)
 - Letter to an official - Write a letter to an official in the government about your action plan and why you think the lawmaker should encourage their constituents to adopt a similar/same plan as yours and what you predict the results will be.
 - Five Page Website (Intro, Actions you will take, predictions of effect, problems that may occur, conclude) Must include pictures
 - VLOG - Video blog of your action plan.
 - Write a song/rap about your issue (personal), post it on social media (SocMed) and publish the lyrics on a political website (democratic)
- Other medium? - must be approved!
- Submission
 - Paper/Letter: Print and bring in a copy
 - Website/VLOG/Song - Upload and share