



Contemporary Issues Curriculum

Board Approved: March 21, 2024

Course Information

Course Description:

This social studies elective course is designed to examine current social issues affecting our students. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to use multiple avenues to develop informed opinions, while being able to propose solutions to contemporary issues.

This course will involve students with the issues, problems, and events in our world today. State, local, national, and international issues will be highlighted on a continuing basis. Emphasis will be placed on the inter-relationship of concepts from the various social sciences - psychology, sociology, economics, and political science - and how they relate to the issues and events mentioned above. Students will continue to develop skills in organizing materials, note-taking, communicating, research, and critical thinking.

Transfer Goals:

- **Developments and Processes**-- Identify and explain historical developments and processes.
- **Sourcing and Situation**--Analyze sourcing and situation of primary and secondary sources.
- **Claims and Evidence in Sources**-- Analyze arguments in primary and secondary sources.
- **Contextualization**-- Analyze the contexts of historical events, developments, or processes.
- **Making Connections**--Using historical reasoning processes (comparison, causation, continuity and change), analyze patterns and connections between and among historical developments and processes.
- **Argumentation**--Develop an argument.

Curriculum Standards: [Missouri Learning Standards - Social Studies 9-12](#); [Missouri Learning Standards - English Language Arts K-12](#)

Curriculum Resource(s): N/A

**Priority standards indicated in bold*

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Unit 1: Social Issues

Timeframe: 5-6 weeks

Unit Description: This unit will focus on the political spectrum, individual rights, national security, media bias and influence, and economic decision making.

Enduring Understandings:

- The views of the American people span a wide range of points along the political spectrum.
- Various forms of media play a significant role in shaping public opinions.
- Societies must balance the rights and responsibilities of individuals with the common good.
- Government plays a major role in determining policies.
- Analyzing and evaluating information is critical for problem solving.
- Formulating hypotheses based on a variety of information and source materials enhances problem solving.
- Determining cause and effect relationships is essential.
- Communicating clearly and effectively with both the written and spoken word is essential.
- Technology is a tool used for collecting, organizing, creating, and presenting information.

Essential Questions:

- How do political parties reflect and influence the range of viewpoints along the political spectrum?
- What contemporary issues reflect the division of the American people along the political spectrum?
- What is the effect of media bias and propaganda on decision making?
- How can we discern between fact and opinion as presented in various forms of media?
- How has the evolution of technology influenced public opinion?
- How do we balance the rights of the individual versus the rights of society?

Unit 1 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
SL1A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions. I can work collaboratively with peers to make decisions, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
SL1B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can delineate a speaker's argument and claims by evaluating the speaker's point of view, reasoning, and evidence.

**Priority standards indicated in bold*

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas. ● I can actively incorporate others into the discussion, and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
<u>SL1C</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives including those presented in diverse media, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, resolve contradictions when possible, and determine what additional information or research is needed.
<u>9-12.GV.4.GS.A</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can evaluate the role and influence of contemporary political parties on government. ● I can evaluate the roles and influence of political parties and interest groups.
<u>9-12.GV.4.G.A</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can analyze state and federal electoral results to determine the influence of social, regional and demographic characteristics ● I can explain the importance of the following principles of government since Reconstruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ majority rule and minority rights ○ constitution and civil rights ○ checks and balances
<u>9-12.GV.1.PC.B</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can examine the origins and impact of social structures and stratification on societies and relationships between peoples and governments.
<u>9-12.GV.1.CC.D</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can develop compelling questions about government, determine helpful resources and consider multiple points of views represented in the resources.
<u>11-12.RL.1.A</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can draw conclusions, infer, and analyze by citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including where the text leaves matters uncertain. ● I can cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
<u>11-12.RL.2.B</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can analyze a case in which recognizing point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is implied.
<u>11-12.W.2.A</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can follow a writing process to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, style, and voice are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience; self-select and blend (when appropriate) previously learned narrative, expository, and argumentative writing techniques.

Priority standards indicated in **bold*

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<p><u>11-12.W.3.A</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
<p><u>11-12.W.1.A</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can conduct research to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; gather multiple relevant, credible sources, print and digital; integrate information using a standard citation system.

Priority standards indicated in **bold*

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Unit 2: Economic Issues and Affairs

Timeframe: 4-5 weeks

Unit Description: This unit focuses on the impact of economic factors on contemporary issues around the world. Students will understand the impact of government policies on local, national and international economies and the effects of globalization.

Enduring Understandings:

- Different economic systems answer the basic economic questions of what, how, and for whom.
- Scarcity, supply and demand, opportunity costs, incentives, and local laws and customs affect the production and cost of goods.
- That government policy can impact the economy on a local, national and international level.
- Economic inequalities exist and various viewpoints on how best to address this lead to conflict.
- Technology and trade have led to a more global economy with numerous positive and negative effects.
- Analyzing and evaluating information is critical for problem solving.
- Formulating hypotheses based on a variety of information and source materials enhances problem solving.
- Determining cause and effect relationships is essential.
- Communicating clearly and effectively with both the written and spoken word is essential.
- Technology is a tool used for collecting, organizing, creating, and presenting information.

Essential Questions:

- What is economics?
- What is scarcity and how does it impact economic decision making?
- What is the difference between needs and wants?
- How do government policies impact local, national and international economies?
- How do groups and/or institutions influence economic decisions?
- How do government policies impact issues surrounding economic equality?

**Priority standards indicated in bold*

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Unit 2 Standards	
STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
9-12.GV.4.GS.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can evaluate the roles and influence of political parties and interest groups.
9-12.GV.4.G.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can analyze state and federal electoral results to determine the influence of social, regional and demographic characteristics I can explain the importance of the following principles of government since Reconstruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> majority rule and minority rights constitution and civil rights checks and balances
9-12.GV.1.PC.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can analyze how the roles of class, ethnic, racial, gender and age groups have changed in society, including causes and effects
9-12.GV.1.CC.D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can develop compelling questions about government, determine helpful resources and consider multiple points of views represented in the resources.
11-12.RL.1.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
11-12.RL.2.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can analyze a case in which recognizing point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is implied.
11-12.W.2.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can follow a writing process to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, style, and voice are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience; self-select and blend (when appropriate) previously learned narrative, expository, and argumentative writing techniques.
11-12.W.3.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
11-12.W.1.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can conduct research to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; gather multiple relevant, credible sources, print and digital; integrate information using a standard citation system.

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Unit 3: International Issues and Affairs

Timeframe: 4-5 weeks

Unit Description: This unit focuses on conflicts and collaborations in the world today and how these interactions influence people, groups, and institutions around the world.

Enduring Understandings:

- The global distribution and consumption of resources and services affects international affairs.
- United States national security and global humanitarian concerns influence American foreign policy.
- Geographical conditions and cultural differences are examples of complex factors that influence nations conflicting views of similar situations.
- That solutions to global issues may involve individual, national, and international approaches
- Analyzing and evaluating information is critical for problem solving.
- Formulating hypotheses based on a variety of information and source materials enhances problem solving.
- Determining cause and effect relationships is essential.
- Communicating clearly and effectively with both the written and spoken word is essential.
- Technology is a tool used for collecting, organizing, creating, and presenting information.

Essential Questions:

- To what extent should the United States play a role in global conflicts and humanitarian crises?
- What are the varying factors which influence national security?
- What are the current threats to national security?
- How does public opinion affect foreign policy?
- How does political partnership shape American foreign policy decisions?
- How do geographic conditions lead to conflict between nations?
- How do past events shape current conflicts?

Unit 3 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
9-12.GV.4.GS.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can evaluate the roles and influence of political parties and interest groups.

**Priority standards indicated in bold*

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9-12.GV.4.G.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can analyze state and federal electoral results to determine the influence of social, regional and demographic characteristics ● I can explain the importance of the following principles of government since Reconstruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ majority rule and minority rights ○ constitution and civil rights ○ checks and balances
9-12.GV.1.PC.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can analyze how the roles of class, ethnic, racial, gender and age groups have changed in society, including causes and effects
9-12.GV.1.CC.D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can develop compelling questions about government, determine helpful resources and consider multiple points of views represented in the resources.
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