COURSE TITLE: Contemporary Issues

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

This one semester course focuses on many of the issues confronting American society in the 21st century. Topics will be studied, debated and evaluated with regards to their relevance at the time the course is being taught and their historical relevance. Potential topics include: Gun Control / School Shootings, Abortion, Illegal Immigration, Welfare, Defense Spending / Government Waste, Drug Legalization, Affirmative Action, Gay Rights, Environmental Issues, the Death Penalty, Physician Assisted Suicide, and Universal Healthcare. The course will have a seminar structure with an emphasis on discussion. Student are expected to have successfully complete primary and secondary source readings and conduct research using a variety of print, media and technological sources.

MAJOR CONCEPTS AND TOPICS:

1) Individualism, Equality, and Authority
   a) Death penalty
   b) Gun control / 2nd amendment
   c) Abortion
   d) Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs
2) Patterns of Social and Political Interaction
   a) Gay rights
   b) Marriage, divorce, and family
   c) Race relations
   d) Teen pregnancy
3) People, Places, and Environment
   a) Environmental challenges
   b) Oil and alternative energy
   c) Globalization
   d) Resource depletion
4) Cultural Development, Interaction, and Change
   a) Universal healthcare
   b) Cloning and stem cell research
   c) Steroids
5) Conflict and Cooperation
   a) Iraq / Afghanistan wars
   b) Presidential politics
   c) Media

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES COURSE COMPETENCIES
1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the events, actions and policies of our nation in relation to other peoples and governments.

2. Students will be able to explain the importance of money management, spending credit, saving, and investing.

3. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the diversity of values, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.

4. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the interactions of peoples and governments.

5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the interaction of various social groups, including their values, beliefs and practices.

6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of the United States to other countries, and the role of the United States in world affairs.

7. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and the ability to apply their knowledge of local, state, and national government through the political process and citizen involvement.

8. Students will learn about their role in a free market, how decisions that they make affect the economy, and how changes in the economy can affect them.

9. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the connections and consequences of the interactions between Earth's physical and human systems.

**SOCIAL STUDIES PROCESS SKILLS**

1. The student will understand that it is important to differentiate and make relevant connections to the past, present and future as well as to changes over time.

2. The student will understand that it is important to detect cause and effect, distinguish fact from opinion, and recognize bias.

3. The student will understand that it is important to evaluate and critique varied sources of information and to use appropriate primary and secondary sources and to use technology to acquire information.

4. The student will understand that it is important to create and test generalizations and theses.

5. The student will understand that it is important to express clear and concise personal opinion supported by evidence.
6. The student will understand that it is important to calculate effects of decisions and decision-making.

**Major Concept #1**  
**Individualism, Equality, and Authority**

**Topics:**
- a) Death penalty
- b) Gun control / 2nd amendment
- c) Abortion
- d) Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs

**Competencies:**
3. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the diversity of values, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.
5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the interaction of various social groups, including their values, beliefs and practices.
7. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and the ability to apply their knowledge of local, state, and national government through the political process and citizen involvement.

**Knowledge/Skills:**
1. SS:WH:12:5.1: Assess the impact of urbanization on the world environment
2. SS:WH:12:5.2: Examine the role and impact of religious ideas on daily life and social norms
3. SS:WH:12:5.4: Examine gender roles in societies
4. SS:HI:12:5.2: Evaluate the changing roles of gender in society
5. SS:HI:12:5.5: Analyze how religious ideas of morality have impacted social change
6. SS:CV:12:4.2: Investigate how knowledgeable and engaged citizens have acted to preserve and extend their liberties
7. SS:CV:12:4.3: Explain why the preservation of liberty requires the participation of knowledgeable and engaged citizens

**Process Skills:**
1. The student will understand that it is important to differentiate and make relevant connections to the past, present and future as well as to changes over time.
2. The student will understand that it is important to detect cause and effect, distinguish fact from opinion, and recognize bias.
3. The student will understand that it is important to evaluate and critique varied sources of information and to use appropriate primary and secondary sources and to use technology to acquire information.

4. The student will understand that it is important to create and test generalizations and theses.

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<tr>
<th>Sample Performance Assessment (SPA) #1</th>
<th>Write a persuasive essay for or against the death penalty.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topics in SPA #1</td>
<td>Death penalty, cruel and unusual punishment, racial bias</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Studies Process Skills Addressed in SPA #1</td>
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**Major Concept #2**  
**Patterns of Social and Political Interaction**

**Topics:**  
- a) Gay rights  
- b) Marriage, divorce, and family  
- c) Race relations  
- d) Teen pregnancy

**Competencies:**  
3. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the diversity of values, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.  
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**Knowledge/Skills:**  
1. SS:WH:12:5.2: Examine the role and impact of religious ideas on daily life and social norms  
2. SS:WH:12:5.4: Examine gender roles in societies  
3. SS:WH:12:5.5: Determine the basis for ranking social groups within a given culture  
4. SS:WH:12:2.3: Assess the impact of migrations of peoples on the receiving societies  
5. SS:HI:12:5.1: Explore the tensions between the values of unity and pluralism in defining our national identity
6. SS:HI:12:5.2: Evaluate the changing roles of gender in society
7. SS:HI:12:5.3: Explore attitudes toward diversity held by and groups and individuals
8. SS:HI:12:5.4: Examine the impact of social class on life in the United States
9. SS:HI:12:5.5: Analyze how religious ideas of morality have impacted social change
10. SS:CV:12:4.2: Investigate how knowledgeable and engaged citizens have acted to preserve and extend their liberties
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Process Skills:

1. The student will understand that it is important to differentiate and make relevant connections to the past, present and future as well as to changes over time.

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<td>Topics in SPA #1</td>
<td>Individual rights; state rights; value systems</td>
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Major Concept #3
People, Places, and Environment

Topics:

a) Environmental challenges
b) Oil and alternative energy
c) Globalization
d) Resource depletion

Competencies:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the events, actions and policies of our nation in relation to other peoples and governments.
4. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the interactions of peoples and governments.
6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of the United States to other countries, and the role of the United States in world affairs.
8. Students will learn about their role in a free market, how decisions that they make affect the economy, and how changes in the economy can affect them.
9. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the connections and consequences of the interactions between Earth's physical and human systems.

Knowledge/Skills:
1. SS:HI:12:2.3: Decide to what extent democratic ideals, economic motives and empire building have influenced U.S. foreign policy in events and policies
2. SS:HI:12:2.5: Investigate United States involvement in and/or conflict with regional and international organizations
3. SS:WH:12:2.3: Assess the impact of migrations of peoples on the receiving societies
4. SS.CV:12:3.1: Discuss the impact on world affairs and the United States’ response to environmental, economic, and technological issues
5. SS.CV:12:3.2: Discuss the relationship between domestic and foreign policy
6. SS.CV:12:3.3: Discuss the impact of United States’ contributions to the ideals of democracy and representative government on world affairs
7. SS:EC:12:1.1: Examine the roles of workers and consumers in factor and product markets
9. SS:GE:12:5.1: Appraise the significance of the global impact of human modification of the physical environment
10. SS:GE:12:5.2: Explain how changes in the physical environment can diminish its capacity to support human activity
11. SS:GE:12:5.5: Explore how the use and development of natural resources use change over time
12. SS:GE:12:5.6: Evaluate the management and use of renewable, non-renewable, flow and potential resources
Process Skills:

1. The student will understand that it is important to differentiate and make relevant connections to the past, present and future as well as to changes over time.

2. The student will understand that it is important to detect cause and effect, distinguish fact from opinion, and recognize bias.

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<th>Sample Performance Assessment (SPA) #1</th>
<th>Write a persuasive essay for or against globalization.</th>
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### Cont. Issues

**Competencies addressed in SPA #1**

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the events, actions and policies of our nation in relation to other peoples and governments.

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**Major Concept #4**
**Cultural Development, Interaction, and Change**

**Topics:**

a) Universal healthcare  
b) Cloning and stem cell research  
c) Steroids

**Competencies:**

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the events, actions and policies of our nation in relation to other peoples and governments.

3. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the diversity of values, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.

4. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the interactions of peoples and governments.

6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of the United States to other countries, and the role of the United States in world affairs.

**Knowledge/Skills:**

1. SS:CV:12:3.1: Discuss the impact on world affairs and the United States’ response to environmental, economic, and technological issues

2. SS:HI:12:2.5: Investigate United States involvement in and/or conflict with regional and international organizations

3. SS:WH:12:5.5: Determine the basis for ranking social groups within a given culture

4. SS:WH:12:4.1: Analyze various systems of distributing wealth, e.g., feudalism, free market economies, or the welfare state

5. SS:WH:12:4.4: Examine the development and impact of medical innovations

6. SS:WH:12:1.4: Analyze the impact on political institutions of mass movements

7. SS:HI:12:5.5: Analyze how religious ideas of morality have impacted social change

8. SS:HI:12:5.4: Examine the impact of social class on life in the United States

9. SS:HI:12:5.2: Evaluate the changing roles of gender in society, e.g., the ideal of “Republican Motherhood” or Title IX

**Process Skills:**

2. The student will understand that it is important to detect cause and effect, distinguish fact from opinion, and recognize bias.
3. The student will understand that it is important to evaluate and critique varied sources of information and to use appropriate primary and secondary sources and to use technology to acquire information.

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States in world affairs.

SPA #1 Rubric

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Major Concept #5
Conflict and Cooperation

Topics:

- Iraq / Afghanistan wars
- Presidential politics
- Media

Competencies:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the events, actions and policies of our nation in relation to other peoples and governments.

3. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the diversity of values, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.

4. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the interactions of peoples and governments.

6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of the United States to other countries, and the role of the United States in world affairs.

7. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and the ability to apply their knowledge of local, state, and national government through the political process and citizen involvement.
Knowledge/Skills:
1. SS:CV:12:3.3: Discuss the impact of United States’ contributions to the ideals of democracy and representative government on world affairs
2. SS:CV:12:4.1: Demonstrate responsible practices within the political process
3. SS:CV:12:4.2: Investigate how knowledgeable and engaged citizens have acted to preserve and extend their liberties
4. SS:CV:12:4.3: Explain why the preservation of liberty requires the participation of knowledgeable and engaged citizens
5. SS:EC:12:5.3: Examine how various national economic policies have led to changes in the international economy
6. SS:GE:12:4.5: Demonstrate how cooperation and conflict are involved in shaping the distribution of social, political, and economic spaces on Earth at different scales
7. SS:HI:12:1.2: Analyze how religion has influenced the political life of the nation
8. SS:HI:12:2.3: Decide to what extent democratic ideals, economic motives and empire building have influenced U.S. foreign policy in events and policies
9. SS:HI:12:2.4: Determine the extent to which Manifest Destiny has been a driving force behind American ideology
10. SS:HI:12:2.5: Investigate United States involvement in and/or conflict with regional and international organizations
11. SS:WH:12:1.3: Analyze the impact of modern weapons of mass destruction on world relations during eras
12. SS:WH:12:2.2: Evaluate how military encounters have often led to cultural exchanges
13. SS:WH:12:2.3: Assess the impact of migrations of peoples on the receiving societies
14. SS:WH:12:4.5: Consider the relationship between weapons development and political or economic power

Process Skills:
1. The student will understand that it is important to differentiate and make relevant connections to the past, present and future as well as to changes over time.
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