

## *Contemporary Issues Course Syllabus*

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### **Course Information**

**0970 Contemporary Issues**

**Credit: .50**

**Semester course**

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### **Teacher Contact Information**

*Mrs. Heather Merckens, Huron High School, Room 206*

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*Office Hours: 6<sup>th</sup> Period Planning (12:44-1:34) or Upon Arrangement After School*

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### **Course Description**

Contemporary Issues is devoted to studying the historical origins and development of domestic and foreign political and social problems that confront contemporary humanity. Possibilities include regional studies (ex. AIDS in Africa or the state of affairs in the Middle East), as well as issues of global concern such as North-South relations, environmental issues, the war on terror, world poverty, sustainable development and global economic development. Specific topics to explore will be developed in conjunction with the students according to their interests and needs.

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### **Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

This course is open to grades 10, 11 & 12

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### **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes (From the Ohio Department of Education Website) Contemporary World Issues Course Syllabus**

**Theme:** The dynamics of global interactions among nations and regions present issues that affect all humanity. These dynamics include: competing beliefs and goals; methods of engagement; and conflict and cooperation. Contemporary issues have political, economic, social, historic and geographic components. Approaches to addressing global and regional issues reflect historical influences and multiple perspectives. Students can impact global issues through service learning and senior projects.

#### **Content Statements:**

1. Trade, alliances, treaties and international organizations contribute to the increasing interconnectedness of nations and peoples in the 21st century.
2. Advances in communications technology have profound effects on the ability of governments, interest groups, individuals and the media to share information across national and cultural borders.
3. Individuals can evaluate media messages that are constructed using particular tools, characteristics and conventions for unique purposes. Different communication methods affect how people define and act on issues.
4. Individuals can assess how effective communicators address diverse audiences.

5. Individuals can identify, assess and evaluate world events, engage in deliberative civil debate and influence public processes to address global issues.
6. Effective civic participation involves identifying problems or dilemmas, proposing appropriate solutions, formulating action plans, and assessing the positive and negative results of actions taken.
7. Individuals can participate through non-governmental organizations to help address humanitarian needs.

**Topic: *Global Connections***

The 21st century is characterized by changing circumstances as new economies emerge and new technologies change the way people interact. Issues related to health, economics, security and the environment are universal.

**Topic: *Civic Participation and Skills*** Individuals and groups have the capacity to engage with others to impact global issues.

**Content Statements:**

8. Beliefs about civil and human rights vary among social and governmental systems.
9. Nations and international organizations pursue their own interests on issues related to civil and human rights, resulting in both conflict and cooperation particularly as it relates to injustices against minority groups.
10. Modern instances of genocide and ethnic cleansing present individual, organizational and national issues related to the responsibilities of participants and non-participants.
11. Decisions about human activities made by individuals and societies have implications for both current and future generations, including intended and unintended consequences.
12. Sustainability issues are interpreted and treated differently by people viewing them from various political, economic and cultural perspectives.
13. International associations and nongovernmental organizations offer means of collaboration to address sustainability issues on local, national and international levels.
14. The development and use of technology influences economic, political, ethical and social issues.
15. Technologies inevitably involve trade-offs between costs and benefits. Decisions about the use of products and systems can result in intended and unintended consequences.

**Topic: *Civil and Human Rights***

There are challenges to civil rights and human rights throughout the world. Politics, economics and culture can all influence perceptions of civil and human rights.

**Topic: *Sustainability***

An increasingly global society is faced with the interdependency of ecological, social and economic systems. The functioning of these systems determines the sustainability of natural and human communities at local, regional, national and global levels.

**Topic: *Technology***

Technological advances present issues related to costs, distribution of benefits, ethical considerations, and intended and unintended consequences.

**Content Statements:**

16. Nations seek to ensure the security of their geographic territories, political Institutions, economic systems and ways of life. Maintaining security has political, social and economic costs.
17. Economic, political and social differences between global entities can lead to conflict

unless mitigated through diplomacy or cooperative efforts.

18. Individuals and organizations work within, or outside of, established systems of power, authority and governance to influence their own security and the security of others.

19. The global economy creates advantages and disadvantages for different segments of the world's population.

20. Trade agreements, multinational organizations, embargoes and protectionism impact markets.

21. The distribution of wealth and economic power among countries changes over time.

22. The global economy creates interdependence so that economic circumstances in one country impact events in other countries.

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## Required Textbooks and Materials

Materials will be provided, to possibly include the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions Booklet: "Published annually, the **Great Decisions** briefing book highlights eight of the most thought-provoking foreign policy challenges facing Americans today. Great Decisions provides background information, current data, and policy options for each of the eight issues and serves as the focal text for discussion groups."

-From the Foreign Policy Association's Website ([www.fpa.org](http://www.fpa.org))

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## Classroom Materials

Students must bring their binder and readings with them daily. Watching, reading and discussing news events outside of class will also greatly benefit the student.

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## Assignments & Academic Calendar

The following is the last set of topics and content statement standards the Contemporary Issues class covered. An updated calendar of daily topics, homework and scheduled tests will be available each semester for students, since the curriculum changes with current events.

### ISIS and World Terrorism

- 2. Advances in communications technology have profound effects on the ability of governments, interest groups, individuals and the media to share information across national and cultural borders.*
- 3. Individuals can evaluate media messages that are constructed using particular tools, characteristics and conventions for unique purposes. Different communication methods affect how people define and act on issues.*
- 4. Individuals can assess how effective communicators address diverse audiences.*
- 5. Individuals can identify, assess and evaluate world events, engage in deliberative civil debate and influence public processes to address global issues.*
- 6. Effective civic participation involves identifying problems or dilemmas, proposing appropriate solutions, formulating action plans, and assessing the positive and negative results of actions taken.*

### The Wars in Iraq/Afghanistan

- 1. Trade, alliances, treaties and international organizations contribute to the increasing interconnectedness of nations and peoples in the 21st century*

*16. Nations seek to ensure the security of their geographic territories, political institutions, economic systems and ways of life. Maintaining security has political, social and economic costs.*

#### **Human Rights Violations in Africa**

*7. Individuals can participate through non-governmental organizations to help address humanitarian needs.*

*8. Beliefs about civil and human rights vary among social and governmental systems.*

*9. Nations and international organizations pursue their own interests on issues related to civil and human rights, resulting in both conflict and cooperation particularly as it relates to injustices against minority groups.*

*10. Modern instances of genocide and ethnic cleansing present individual, organizational and national issues related to the responsibilities of participants and non-participants.*

*19. The global economy creates advantages and disadvantages for different segments of the world's population.*

#### **Environmental Issues, Natural Resources & Global Warming**

*11. Decisions about human activities made by individuals and societies have implications for both current and future generations, including intended and unintended consequences.*

*12. Sustainability issues are interpreted and treated differently by people viewing them from various political, economic and cultural perspectives.*

*13. International associations and non-governmental organizations offer means of collaboration to address sustainability issues on local, national and international levels.*

*14. The development and use of technology influences economic, political, ethical and social issues.*

*15. Technologies inevitably involve trade-offs between costs and benefits. Decisions about the use of products and systems can result in intended and unintended consequences.*

#### **The Chance of Middle East Peace**

*17. Economic, political and social differences between global entities can lead to conflict unless mitigated through diplomacy or cooperative efforts.*

*18. Individuals and organizations work within, or outside of, established systems of power, authority and governance to influence their own security and the security of others.*

#### **U.S.-Russia Relations**

*20. Trade agreements, multinational organizations, embargoes and protectionism impact markets.*

*21. The distribution of wealth and economic power among countries changes over time.*

*22. The global economy creates interdependence so that economic circumstances in one country impact events in other countries.*

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#### **Grading Policy**

##### **Each quarter grade will consist of:**

70% Tests, Quizzes, and Projects/Assessments (larger and more involved than daily assignments)

30% Daily homework and summaries, class work, binder checks, and participation in/contributions to group work and daily activities

**Each semester grade will consist of:**

40% 1<sup>st</sup> quarter,  
40% 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, and  
20% Semester Exam.

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**Academic Policies**

Make-up exams, tests and homework must be completed according to school policy (in as many days as the student was absent). Students are responsible for their own make-up work.

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**Classroom Policies**

Extra credit opportunities are offered infrequently, so students should take advantage of them if and when they arise.

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