

Contemporary Issues Course Syllabus

Course Information

0970 Contemporary Issues

Credit: .50

Semester course

Teacher Contact Information

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

This course will be offered during school years beginning with an odd year (e.g. 2011-12, 2013-14)

Prerequisite: Open to grades 11 & 12

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.

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

“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)

Suggested Course Materials

Watching, reading and discussing news events will greatly benefit the student.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

An updated calendar of daily topics, homework and scheduled tests will be available each semester for students.

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% 1st quarter,
- 40% 2nd quarter, and
- 20% Semester Exam.

| HURON HIGH SCHOOL GRADING SCALE | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------|--|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Letter | Percentage | Points | | Letter | Percentage | Points |
| A+ | 100%--98% | 4 | | C+ | 79%--77% | 2.3 |
| A | 97%--93% | 4 | | C | 76%--73% | 2 |
| A- | 92%--90% | 3.7 | | C- | 72%--70% | 1.7 |
| B+ | 89%--87% | 3.3 | | D+ | 69%--67% | 1.3 |
| B | 86%--83% | 3 | | D | 66%--63% | 1 |
| B- | 82%--80% | 2.7 | | D- | 62%--60% | 0.7 |
| | | | | F | 59%--0 | 0 |

Course & Instructor 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.

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