

Current World Issues

Semesters: 2 **Grade(s): 9-12**

Prerequisite(s): Junior or Senior standing; Senior standing recommended; U.S. history and World history recommended.

With a strong emphasis in critical thinking skills, students learn about current events concerning the world today. Topics include human rights, civic action and responsibility, environmental issues, globalization and the economy, politics and government, social problems both local and global, and other timely topics. Students learn about logic, and faulty logic, and how to analyze various media for engaging in propaganda and faulty logic. Newspapers, magazines, television, the Internet, and other media will be utilized. Due to the nature of this course, students are encouraged to complete it with a learning group, making use of discussion forums and live online class sessions.

Current World Issues A requires students to engage in readings and discussions in each area, building a solid foundation in current issues in each area as well as logic and critical thinking skills. Current World Issues B allows students to specialize in one or more areas; they continue to apply logic and critical thinking as they engage in readings and discussions, and they create a project focused on proactively making a positive difference in their topic area of choice (in their community or beyond).

Course Competencies

Current World Issues	
Competency 1	Human Rights
Sub-Topics	1. Evaluates relationships between key ideals and historical and current realities. 2. Evaluates the effectiveness of federalism in promoting the common good and protecting individual rights. 3. Analyzes and evaluates ways of influencing national governments and international organizations to establish or preserve individual rights and/or promote the common good. 4. Analyzes information from geographic tools, including computer-based mapping systems, to draw conclusions on an issue or event. 5. Evaluates how individuals and movements have shaped contemporary world issues. 6. Analyzes how cultural identity can promote unity and division.
Competency 2	Civic Action and Responsibility
Sub-Topics	1. Analyzes and evaluates the structures of state, tribal, and federal forms of governments by comparing them to those of other governments. 2. Understands and evaluates how political systems in the United States operate. 3. Evaluates positions on a current issue based on an analysis of history. 4. Evaluates the costs and benefits of governmental fiscal and monetary policies. 5. Evaluates the breadth of research to determine the need for new or additional investigation when researching an issue or event. 6. Evaluates positions and evidence to make one's own decisions in a paper or presentation.
Competency 3	Environmental Issues
Sub-Topics	1. Evaluates the complexities of regions and problems involved in defining those regions. 2. Evaluates how human interaction with the environment has affected economic growth and sustainability. 3. Analyzes and evaluates current opportunities and obstacles connected with international migration. 4. Analyzes how the geography of globalization affects local diversity. 5. Evaluates the ethics of current and future uses of technology based on how technology has shaped history.
Competency 4	Globalization and the Economy
Sub-Topics	1. Evaluates the impact of international agreements on contemporary world issues. 2. Analyzes how economic choices made by groups and individuals in the global economy can impose costs and provide benefits.

	- Analyzes and evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of different economic systems for countries and groups of people. - Analyzes and evaluates the effects of specialization on global trade. - Analyzes and evaluates how individuals affect and are affected by the distribution of resources and sustainability. - Analyzes and evaluates the social and political factors affecting cultural interactions. - Analyzes the motives and interests behind an interpretation of a recent event. - Evaluates the ramifications of mono-causal explanations of contemporary events in the world. - Analyzes the short-term and long-term implications of decisions affecting the global community. - Evaluates the plausibility of an analysis of decisions affecting the global community. - Evaluates how the discussion and the proposed alternative resolutions changed or solidified one's own position on public issues.
Competency 5	Governments and Politics
Sub-Topics	- Compares and evaluates styles of government in terms of their effectiveness for meeting the needs of their citizens. - Analyzes and discusses current political events in the U.S. and throughout the world.
Competency 6	Logic and Critical Thinking
Sub-Topics	- Evaluates various media for instances of logical fallacies (faulty logic), including slippery slope, ad hoc, non sequitur, begging the question, denying the antecedent, red herring, either/or, affirming the consequent, and others. - Evaluates speaking to recognize Political Speak, which can include double-speak and misdirection (not answering the question but slipping in what they prefer to say). - Understands different perspectives, and analyzes how one's needs and environments (physical, social, etc) impact his or her perspective. - Understands the concept of Anomie in terms of means and goals. - Applies Maslow's hierarchy of needs in understanding social global conflicts on both a local and global scale. - Synthesizes multiple sources of information, multiple pieces of information, and multiple perspectives to create a comprehensive view of a topic. - Creates a plan for solving a problem, either in one's local community or in another location (or even on a bigger scale than a single community).