Contemporary World Studies

I. Course Overview

A. UC/CSU “a-g” Subject Area: World History
B. Grade Level: 9th-10th
C. Credits: 5
D. Pre-Requisites: none
E. Course Description

This one-semester course examines contemporary issues facing the non-European regions of the world. The central topics of globalization, nation-building and social justice will all be taught. A fourth unit, Current Event, allows teachers the flexibility to address breaking issues of the day. Three to four countries will be explored as case studies within the regions of Latin America, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

II. Course Purpose

A. Goals

Students will gain an understanding of major issues related to globalization, nation-building and social justice in the contemporary world. To do so, students will learn the historical context in which these issues developed. Students will learn of the values, customs, and histories of people around the world, and will be more responsible and informed members of their communities.

Students will be able to:
- identify the major human and physical geographic characteristics of selected regions;
- understand the concept of globalization and its mechanisms;
- debate the positive and negative impacts of globalization on particular countries;
- understand the concept of nation-building in the context of the post-WWII world;
- identify factors that have aided or prevented the stability of particular nations;
- understand the concept of social justice;
- identify patterns of social injustice in particular countries;
- give examples of attempts to remedy issues of social injustice.

B. California State Standards for Social Studies

This course generally follows the state standards in Grade 10: World History, Culture, and Geography: The Modern World.

Standard 10.9  Students analyze the international developments in the post-WWII world.

Standard 10.10  Students analyze instances of nation-building in the contemporary world in at least two of the following regions or countries: the Middle East, Africa, Mexico and other parts of Latin America, and China.

In addition, the course addresses the Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills for grades 9 to 12, including Chronological and Spatial, Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View and Historical Interpretation.
C. Course Outline

Unit 1: Globalization

This unit will focus on the causes and effects that globalization has had on a selected country. It will be important to guide students in understanding how globalization has had positive and negative outcomes on economic development and on the daily lives of people. A base knowledge specific to the region should be established before students engage in an investigation of one or more specific case studies.

Essential Question: Have the costs of globalization outweighed the benefits?

Case Study: Mexico

Large-scale societies existed in Mexico prior to the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs that began in 1519. While the Spanish generally mixed with native peoples, creating a mestizo nation, inequalities based on notions of race and class persisted. After achieving its independence from Spain, Mexico struggled in the 1800’s and 1900’s with revolution, political corruption, war and the disenfranchisement of its rural, native and poor populations. In its recent history, especially since NAFTA, Mexico has experienced economic growth, but has contended with civil unrest, economic inequality and an illegal drug trade.

Students will be able to:
• identify major human and physical geographical characteristics of Mexico;
• give examples of native cultures, focusing on the Aztec Empire and its subjugation;
• understand the creation of a mestizo nation and the colony of New Spain, which emphasized Spanish dominance;
• identify key events in Mexico’s modern history, focusing on independence, the Mexican Revolution, nationalization of the economy and the rise of PRI;
• explain NAFTA and the changes that have taken place in Mexico since it’s signing;
• discuss whether Mexico’s linkage to the economies of wealthier nations and the profits gained by the state and large/transnational corporations outweigh the struggles of small farmers, indigenous people and the urban poor;
• give examples of resistance to globalization, focusing on the Chiapas rebellion;
• discuss the relationship between economics and emigration from Mexico to the United States;
• explain the causes and effects of the drug trade and human trade;
• reflect on their own roles as consumers in a globalized world.

Case Study: China

For centuries, China was a dominant regional economic and cultural force. In the 19th century, the weaknesses of the Qing Empire and the impact of European imperialism had a major impact on China’s political, social, and economic conditions. During the 20th century, China’s struggle with civil war and the Japanese invasion during WWII led to the creation of a communist state. In recent years, China’s attempt to modernize its economy has led to its increased role in global politics and world trade. Driven by a massive labor force, China is poised to make a significant economic impact on the world as it competes for resources, markets, and political influence with other countries of the world.
Students will be able to:

- identify major human and physical geographical features of China;
- discuss the history and consequences of European and Japanese imperialism in China;
- explain the economic and political factors that led to the formation and growth of the Communist party, including Japanese imperialism, WWII and the Civil War;
- detail the elements and effects of the communist system established by Mao Zedong;
- explore how the government’s modernization program in the post-Mao era changed China’s economic, political, and social structure;
- describe how China’s growth precipitated its need for resources and its entrance into world politics;
- explain the impact of China’s increased role in world politics and trade;
- identify how the exploitation of labor has developed as a result of China’s modernization;
- identify how globalization has raised the standard of living in China;
- identify how industrialization has impacted the physical environment.

Case Study: Brazil

The Portuguese colonization of Brazil blended native, African and European cultures to create a unique Brazilian identity. However, Brazil has struggled for centuries with the lasting impact of slavery and economic disparity between the rich and the poor. In recent decades, physical and human resources have fueled Brazil’s emergence as a global economic force. Brazil’s natural resources, emerging democratic system, and growing middle class will have a significant effect on globalization and world politics.

Students will be able to:

- identify the major physical and human geographical features of Brazil;
- explain the role of European, native, and African cultures on the development of a unique Brazilian identity;
- identify the main events in the struggle for Brazilian independence;
- explain the impact of slavery and its abolition;
- identify the economic and social impact of industrialization and urbanization;
- describe social divisions based on race and class;
- describe the role of the military, dictatorship and police in political and economic affairs;
- describe how Brazil has managed its resources to become a developing economic superpower;
- explain how the environment has been impacted by industrialization;
- identify the government’s attempts to address political and economic inequalities;
- identify the events that have led to Brazil’s increased role on the world stage.

Case Study: India

One of the oldest civilizations in the world, India has long been a place of ethnic and religious diversity. Perhaps no other nation was as impacted by European imperialism. While the British attempted to modernize India, they created a more divided society. Through a largely-nonviolent struggle, Indians achieved their independence, only to be divided once again into multiple states. Most recently, India has emerged as a leading Asian nation in terms of democracy and economic development. However, its success has been slowed by endemic poverty, political in-fighting, urbanization and international tensions.
Students will be able to:

- identify major human and physical geographical features of India;
- identify how economic inequality is linked to religion and ethnicity;
- explain the economic, political, and social consequences of the British colonization on India;
- identify the events that led to Indian independence and partition;
- describe how urbanization, rapid population growth and environmental issues have affected India’s development;
- discuss the factors that have contributed to the rise of India as a world power;
- explain how India’s rapid industrial and technological revolutions affect globalization;
- explain how India’s emerging economy affects traditional gender and caste roles.

**Unit 2: Nation-Building**

This unit will examine some of the challenges, problems and successes of nation-building since WWII. It will be important to guide students in understanding why each region is geopolitically important to the contemporary world, enabling them to discuss contemporary conflicts, specifically those to which the United States is linked. A base knowledge specific to the country should be established before students engage in an investigation of one or more specific case studies.

**Essential Question:** What factors prevent and promote the creation of a peaceful and just state?

**Case Study: Israel/ Palestine**

Israel/Palestine was home to ancient civilizations and was the birthplace of three major religions. Like much of the Middle East, the territory known as Palestine was controlled by foreign powers until after WWII, and in 1948 the modern state of Israel was created. Since then, Israelis and Palestinians have fought over the territory, over which both groups have long-standing claims. War, violence and occupation have characterized much of the history, and unfolding events continue to contribute to the exacerbation of the conflict. This conflict is central to many of the political and diplomatic relationships in the Middle East, making its resolution both difficult and necessary.

Students will be able to:

- define the physical and human geographic characteristics of the Middle East;
- be familiar with the histories and tenets of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity;
- explain key events that have contributed to the conflict, such as the Zionist movement, the creation of Mandate Palestine, the Holocaust, the creation of Israel, the wars of 1948 and 1967, and the creation of settlements in West Bank;
- identify how demographics have changed over time in relationship to the key events;
- identify the claims that major groups have to the land and to various resources;
- identify Western and international involvement in the conflict and the reactions to these events;
- identify and explain the interest groups involved on both sides of the conflict;
- discuss the efforts toward peace and resolution;
- understand the importance of resolving this conflict in creating stability in the region.

**Case Study: Iraq**

Like much of the Middle East, Iraq was long under the influence of outside powers until the
WWII era. Once independent, Iraq suffered from instability, and the power vacuum was filled by Saddam Hussein, whose dictatorship was marked by militarism, ethnic violence, poverty and a lack of democracy. When the USA invaded in 2003, Iraq experienced another dramatic transition, and it has since struggled to form a democratic government. The development of Iraq is significant in shaping a modern Middle East as other Arab and Middle Eastern nations begin to struggle for democracy.

Students will be able to:

• define the physical and human geographic characteristics that define the region;
• detail the ethnic and religious diversity of Iraq;
• explain the difficulties that Iraq had in gaining independence;
• understand and explain how Saddam Hussein came to rule Iraq;
• detail the social, political, and economic conditions people lived under during the rule of Saddam Hussein, and how these conditions affected their daily lives;
• recognize the key events that influenced Iraq’s relationship with the United States and the United Nations prior to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003;
• identify and debate the motives for invasion;
• explain the changes to Iraq’s political system such as leadership, representation, constitution, voting;
• detail the social, political, and economic conditions people live under after the removal of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of a new governmental system;
• explain both the positive and negative reactions of the Iraqi people to the US intervention;
• discuss the divisiveness of the US intervention of Iraq among state and non-state entities;
• identify the reasons the US continues to be involved in Iraq and make predictions about the success of democracy and capitalism in Iraq.

Case Study: Afghanistan

In many ways, Afghanistan reflects tensions between East and West, modernity and tradition, internationalism and tribalism, and urban and rural societies. Made up of various ethnic groups, Afghanistan has at times been united and at times divided over the challenges brought on by foreign interventions. When the USSR invaded in 1979, Afghan society splintered once again. After the ouster of the USSR, the fundamentalist Taliban government came to power and maintained a sense of unity at the expense of human rights. The American invasion in 2002 started Afghanistan on the path toward democracy, human rights and internationalism. Instability remains due to the presence of opposition groups, religious fundamentalism, drug trafficking and political corruption.

Students will be able to:

• define the physical and human geographic characteristics that define the region;
• identify major human and physical geographical features of Afghanistan;
• identify the cultural divisions of Afghanistan;
• describe the resistance efforts of the Afghans to foreign interventions;
• explain the effects of the Afghan Civil War and subsequent Russian invasion between 1979-1989;
• explain how the Cold War conflict led to the rise of the Mujahedeen and legitimized the warlord rule of post-invasion Afghanistan;
• explain how the subsequent warlord conflict led to the rise of the Taliban;
• discuss how the Taliban’s radical version of Islam was applied to all aspects of Afghan
Case Study: Democratic Republic of Congo

Throughout its history, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been a battleground for competing groups. European colonialism led to the exploitation of resources for private gain and the disregard of native societies. Once the Congo achieved independence in 1960, competing ethnic groups jockeyed for political and economic domination of the country’s resources. Instability, civil war and conflicts in surrounding nations have contributed to the inability of the DRC to achieve national unity.

Students will be able to:
- identify major physical and human geographical features of the Congo;
- analyze the significance of European exploration of the Congo Basin;
- list the causes and effects of the establishment of the Congo Free State under the control of King Leopold II of Belgium;
- explain how the legacy of colonialism has led to constant conflict between tribal leaders and the central government despite the intervention of the United Nations;
- describe how the conflicts between ethnic groups in Rwanda led to the First and Second Congo Wars;
- examine how natural resources continued to fuel and fund the wars of the Congo;
- assess how political, social, and economic instability in the Congo causes continued struggles for national unity;

Unit 3 Social Justice

This unit explores issues of social justice in selected countries where injustices are/were institutionalized and often violent. The efforts to address and rectify these injustices have taken a variety of forms and have achieved various levels of success. A base knowledge specific to the country should be established before students engage in an investigation of one or more specific case studies.

Essential Question: How successful have countries been in addressing the issues related social justice?

Cast Study: South Africa

Perhaps because of its geographical advantages, South Africa has long been a battle ground for various peoples. After the Dutch arrived and Europeans began to move into the interior, native groups of South Africa were increasingly marginalized and oppressed. After independence, white-dominated South Africa developed its apartheid state, which led to extreme segregation and grave inequalities. Resistance to the government culminated in the end of apartheid and the country’s first open election. To heal the historical wounds of apartheid, South Africans chose reconciliation through “truth and justice.” While South Africa is now a leader among African nations in terms of democracy and economic growth, it is still a deeply divided society in which social justice has not been universally achieved.
Students will be able to

- describe the physical and human geography of South Africa;
- detail the conflicts between native African groups and European colonists;
- explain the creation of the Union of South Africa;
- trace the roots of apartheid;
- describe how petty and grand apartheid were imposed and maintained;
- describe the resistance to apartheid by groups and people such as PAC, ANC, Steven Biko, Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu.
- describe the international reaction to apartheid;
- explain how the apartheid system came to an end and was replaced by a democratic system;
- explain how the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were used to address the legacies of social injustice;
- assess the impact and success of transitional justice on social justice, human rights and reconciliation.

Case Study: Sudan

Like many territories in the region, Sudan was subject to foreign influence until after WWII. Upon achieving independence, Sudan quickly fell into bitter and long-lasting civil war. The Northern government, empowered during British colonialism, was the locus of power, but Southern Sudan was home to large amounts of oil. As peace finally came to the North and South, a new conflict emerged in Darfur. After decades of neglect, Darfur has fallen into violence between residents, some of whom are aided by the government. While outside parties have debated whether to apply the term “genocide,” hundreds of thousands have lost their homes, their livelihoods or their lives. Scarcity of resources has contributed to persistent ethnic and religious conflict.

Students will be able to:

- identify major physical and human features of Sudan;
- give examples of the inequalities that emerged under British rule;
- explain how Sudan gained independence;
- identify the issues that led to the outbreak of the civil wars;
- understand the effects of the civil wars, including the death toll and the creation of refugee populations including the “Lost Boys;”
- explain how the Al-Bashir government used violence and neglect against the South;
- explain how the South has rebelled and sought independence from the Northern government;
- discuss the current crisis in Darfur, including its effects on various populations, especially refugees and women;
- detail the methods of war used by rebel groups, the government and the Janjaweed;
- explain the roles of the United Nations, United States of America and China in the Darfur crisis;
- identify the ways that parties can help stop the crisis in Darfur.

Case Study: Rwanda

Under colonial rule, the people of Rwanda were separated into two primary ethnic groups. The minority Tutsis came to control the majority Hutus. When colonial rule ended, armed conflicts
between the two groups intensified, culminating in an attempted genocide of Tutsis by Hutu extremists assisted by government support. The country has since attempted to resolve its conflicts and prosecute its criminals in a historic attempt to address the causes and effects of one of the worst human rights abuses since the Holocaust.

Students will be able to:
- identify major human and physical geographical features of Rwanda;
- identify the ethnic groups of Rwanda, especially the Hutus and Tutsis;
- analyze the effects of European imperialism on Rwanda;
- illustrate how European colonialists exploited ethnic divisions to establish and maintain control of Rwanda;
- identify the events that led to the independence of Rwanda;
- explain how ethnic conflicts contributed to the genocide;
- explain how and why the international community failed to intervene during the genocide;
- demonstrate how Rwanda has attempted to recover from the genocide, bring the perpetrators to justice, and make sure that genocide does not occur again.

Study: Iran

Iran is one of few nations that was relatively unaffected by European imperialism. Unfortunately, its development was hampered by a strict monarchy that pursued some reform and modernization while perpetuating economic inequality. Iran’s monarchs increasingly came to be identified with privilege and Western influence, and popular discontent culminated in 1979 with a revolution that was quickly co-opted by religious leaders. The Islamic regime has given Iranians a continued sense of independence, but it has struggled with economic hardships, human rights issues and international disapproval. Popular discontent continues to be prevalent.

Students will be able to:
- identify key physical and human geographical features of the region;
- discuss the emergence of a modern “Iranian” identity and its roots in Persian culture;
- differentiate between Sunni and Shia Islam, explaining how the latter is important in Iranian identity;
- give examples of the interests of Britain and the United States in Iran during and after WWII;
- detail the relationship between the USA and the Shah, focusing on his exile;
- explain the major events of the Islamic Revolution 1978-79;
- detail the theocratic government structure that emerged after the Revolution;
- give examples of recent resistance to the government;
- give examples of issues that divide Iranians, focusing on freedom of expression, religious doctrine, militarization, modernization vs. tradition and gender equality.

Unit 4 Current Event

This unit provides the opportunity to study a region and event that is of current interest because of a sudden change such as a natural disaster, humanitarian crisis, war or revolution.

Students will be able to:
- define the human and physical characteristics of the region;
- trace the historical antecedents of the event;
- interpret the event’s history and impact through different perspectives;
• understand the possible responses and outcomes for the event from regional and global perspectives.

III. Key Assignments
• creation and analysis of physical, political and thematic maps
• current event analysis
• expository writing assignments
• analysis of primary source documents

IV. Instructional Methods and/or Strategies
• lectures
• class discussions/debates/Socratic seminars
• reading of primary and secondary sources
• research projects (in written and oral form)
• group projects (in written and oral form)
• simulations
• audio/visual presentations

V. Assessment Methods and/or Tools
• written tests and quizzes
• research projects – group and individual
• checks of classroom work
• homework assignments

VI. Textbook(s) and Supplemental Instructional Materials

Ahmad, Iftikhar et al
World Cultures A Global Mosaic
Prentice Hall 2004
ISBN 0-13-036895-4