

# Curriculum Outline



**Campbell High School**

Character – Courage – Respect – Responsibility

Course & Level: Contemporary Issues (Semester Course)

Department: Social Studies

Teacher: Dave Gingras

Grade level: 11-12

## Description of Course:

Contemporary Issues is offered to students with a broad interest in social issues and current events. The course may include an in-depth inspection of current national and international events, as well as a close look at some of the major social issues facing Western society in the world today. These issues may include: homelessness, immigration, healthcare, welfare, atmospheric warming, ecological issues, nuclear power and alternative forms of energy, and a war in the nuclear age.

## School – Wide Expectations:

**Campbell graduates will be college and career ready because they can:**

The school-wide expectations are incorporated into all courses at Campbell High School. Underlined words in the following text illustrate this alignment between the school-wide expectations and the course curriculum.

### Academic:

1. Read actively and critically for diverse purposes.
2. Communicate effectively using a variety of mediums.
3. Write effectively for a variety of purposes.
4. Utilize current technology and other resources to research, organize and evaluate possibilities to enhance learning.
5. Think critically, creatively and effectively in order to solve problems, and to transfer solutions to complete authentic tasks across all disciplines.

### Social:

1. Exhibit personal responsibility and initiative.
2. Understand, appreciate and respect diversity.
3. Work cooperatively in an atmosphere of mutual respect

### Civic:

1. Contribute as an active member of the community.
2. Demonstrate civic responsibilities.

## Core Competencies:

1. Apply inquiry processes to support conclusions in the social sciences. (Research competency)
2. Evaluate historical or contemporary actions of people and/or events to develop evidence-based claims. (Evaluation competency)
3. Analyze the social, political, and economic factors of historical periods. (Analysis competency)
4. Demonstrate conceptual understanding of essential topics in the social sciences. (Comprehension competency)

### **Suggested Texts and Media (Software, A/V, etc.):**

1. *Choices* Program Units: Global Environmental Problems, Responding to Terrorism, US Immigration Policy, Confronting Genocide. *Choices* is distributed by the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University.
2. Facts on File Database.
3. 2facts database.
4. Various news articles (current events) from media sources.
5. Assorted DVD's and audio files. For example: *Dead Man Walking* (death penalty), *An Inconvenient Truth* (global environmental policy).
6. Chromebook and Google Classroom

We utilize a variety of instructional resources beyond the identified textbooks and materials throughout the school year to enhance your student's educational experience. Parents/Guardians are welcome to review the available resources throughout the school year by contacting their student's teacher. Alternative assignments may be available upon request. Please contact the classroom teacher for further details.

### **Suggested Instructional Strategies:**

1. **Formal Debate:** Students will research controversial topics and engage in formal debates. Students are required to formulate an opening statement, cross examination, questions and closing statements. This allows students to focus on an issue of personal interest and to be able to defend that position coherently.
2. **Informal Debate:** Informal debates allow students to explore the various sides of contemporary issues without the confines of the traditional debate structure. During every unit, students are encouraged to discuss opposing viewpoints of contemporary issues. Students must be prepared to defend a position concisely, as well as challenge other perspectives.
3. **Small Group Work:** Utilizing small group work encourages students to work cooperatively, organize tasks and problem solve. Students are expected to work collectively on a variety of assignments including: defining "revolutionary" and "terrorist", seeking ways to balance security and freedom and discussing death penalty cases, among others.
4. **Policy Creation:** At the end of many units, students are required to formulate a policy to deal with a contemporary issue. Students must consider foreign and domestic implications of their policy from an economic, environmental, political, and humanitarian standpoint. Students will then share their policy with other members of the class, allowing them to see the advantage of working cooperatively in order to solve major issues.

### **Suggested Assessment Strategies:**

1. **Quizzes & Tests:** Teacher created tests and quizzes typically contain short answer and essay questions.
2. **Debate Rubric:** Formal debates are assessed based upon research, organization, and the ability to coherently defend arguments.
3. **Policy Rubric:** Policies are assessed by the ability to articulate reasonable solutions to contemporary issues.
4. **Journal:** May be required. This allows students to record reflections on various topics discussed and debated in class. The student is able to formulate his or her own opinions, as well as allows the teacher to assess understanding of the topics in an informal manner.
5. **Final Exam:** This is a comprehensive exam, which will cover the contemporary issues studied in class. Students should be prepared to respond to short answer/essay questions. Final exams count as 15% of the semester grade.

