Course Title: Modern Issues

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 7

Duration: Middle School Cycle

Prerequisite: None

Elective or Required: Elective

Department Mission Statement:
The mission of Social Studies in the Glen Ridge schools is to ignite students’ passion to become responsible, productive, and active citizens within a democratic society. The Social Studies curriculum will develop the students’ understanding of themselves and their environment, encompassing an awareness of the United States as part of a global society. The curriculum stresses an educational environment which teaches respect for cultural, political, gender, racial and ethnic diversity. Authentic learning opportunities will empower students with critical thinking, problem-solving, thoughtful decision-making, communication, and leadership skills. Students will study historical, geographical, social, political and economic issues that shape the world. The Social Studies program will provide students with the knowledge and understanding of the past which is essential for successfully navigating the present and future.

Course Description:
Modern Issues 7 will frame contemporary problems around the world through the lens of ten areas of critical concern (water, food, transportation, health, economy, education, energy, shelter, war, waste.) In small groups, students will choose an area to further research throughout the semester and teach their peers. Students will become familiar with a specific geographic region and people significantly impacted and activists seeking to help solve these issues. Through current event articles, documentaries, photographs, primary and secondary sources students will strengthen their reading comprehension, analysis and interpretation skills, and writing skills.
Modern Issues

UNIT ONE: The Image of the Issues

Approximate # Of Weeks: 7 weeks

Essential Questions:
● How do statistics and demographics help us better understand the world and its people?
● How do we access information that helps us better understand the areas of critical global concern?
● How do visual images help us interpret issues of global concern?

Upon completion of this unit students will be able to:
● Define demographics and statistics
● Recognize the value of cultural diversity as well as the potential for misunderstanding
● Critically analyze media to assess different viewpoints and detect bias, opinion, and stereotypes
● Contrast preconceived notions of global demographics to factual statistics
● Make personal connections to issues of global concern
● Compose specific topics for research in their assigned issue of global concern
● Summarize an article and compose a personal reflection
● Observe, analyze, and interpret a visual image
● Assess the credibility of sources by identifying bias and prejudice in documents, media, and computer generated information.
● Select, synthesize, and analyze information from a variety of sources to present a reasoned argument or position in a written and/or oral format

Common Core Standards:
● 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century: All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world.
● 6.3.8.A.1 - Deliberate on a public issue affecting an upcoming election, consider opposing arguments, and develop a reasoned conclusion.
• 6.3.8.D.1 - Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.
• 6.2.12.B.6.a - Determine the global impact of increased population growth, migration, and changes in urban-rural populations on natural resources and land use.
• 6.2.12.C.6.b - Compare and contrast demographic trends in industrialized and developing nations, and evaluate the potential impact of these trends on the economy, political stability, and use of resources.

Interdisciplinary Standards (njcccs.org)
• **Standard 9.1 21st-Century Life & Career Skills**
  All students will demonstrate the creative, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills needed to function successfully as both global citizens and workers in diverse ethnic and organizational cultures.

• **Standard 8.1 - Educational Technology**
  All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1**
  Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2**
  Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4**
  Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5**
  Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6**
  Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7**
  Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8**
  Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9**
  Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10**
  By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1**
  Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.A**
  Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.B**
  Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.C**
  Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.D**
  Establish and maintain a formal style.

• **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.E**
  Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the
argument presented.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.4**  
  Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and  
  style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.6**  
  Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and  
  present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.7**  
  Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated  
  question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused  
  questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.8**  
  Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search  
  terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote  
  or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and  
  following a standard format for citation.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.9**  
  Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and  
  research.

**Activities – include 21st Century Technologies/Research:**
- Complete “If the World were 100 People…” handout and discuss statistical  
  results
- Write in their journals for 10 minutes reflecting on one area of critical global  
  concern including: Why is this issue important to me? What experience(s) have I  
  faced in my life relating to this issue? How might this issue be of critical  
  importance to other people in the world who are different from me? Explain.
- Work in small collaborate groups to come up with 5 examples of fact based prior  
  knowledge and questions they want answered about their assigned issue of  
  global concern (KWL Chart)
- Analyze various video clips from 100 People documentary about each area of  
  critical global concern
- Research current event issue pertaining to assigned area of critical global  
  concern
- Write a summary and reflection for an current events article
- Write 3-5 observations, 3-5 analyses, and 1-2 sentences of interpretation of various visual images using the three-column OAI chart
- In small groups create a collaborative poster with images and text based research detailed your assigned area of critical global concern
- Present “Ten Areas of Critical Concern” poster/powerpoint to class
- As a class, complete “Learned” section of KWL chart detailing the ten areas of global concern

**Enrichment Activities:**
- Create a public service announcement illustrating one major issue affecting one of the ten areas of critical global concern.

**Methods of Assessments/Evaluation:**
- Exit Slips (Oral/Written)
- Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down
- Current events summary and reflection
- OIA graphic organizer
- KWL Chart
- Journal Reflective
- Poster/Display – “Ten Areas of Critical Concern”
- Multi-media Presentation
- Observation (Teacher/Small/Whole Group)
- Classwork
- Open Ended Questions
- Debates
- Revisit Essential Questions

**Resources/Including Online Resources**
- Teacher Webpage
- 100 People: A World Portrait - website
- NY Times UpFront - Magazine
- CNN Student News – website
Modern Issues

UNIT TWO: Focus of Geography: Critical Issues Around the World

Approximate # Of Weeks: 7 weeks

Essential Questions:
- How does geographical region determine the long term effects of this area of concern?
- How are the people of a particular region affected by areas of global concern?
- How is this area of concern manifested in developed countries as opposed to developing countries?

Upon completion of this unit students will be able to:
- Apply the five themes of geography (location, place, human environment interaction, movement, region) to their own experience
- Identify credible sources for researching
- Understand how a specific geographic area is impacted by the issues of global concern
- Organize source information and utilize index cards to record information from sources
- Assess the credibility of sources by identifying bias and prejudice in documents, media, and computer generated information.
- Select, synthesize, and analyze information from a variety of sources to present a reasoned argument or position in a written and/or oral format

Common Core Standards:
- 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century: All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world.
6.2.12.C.6.b - Compare and contrast demographic trends in industrialized and developing nations, and evaluate the potential impact of these trends on the economy, political stability, and use of resources.

Interdisciplinary Standards (njcccs.org)

- **Standard 9.1 21st-Century Life & Career Skills**
  All students will demonstrate the creative, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills needed to function successfully as both global citizens and workers in diverse ethnic and organizational cultures.

- **Standard 8.1 – Computer and Information Literacy**
  All students will use computer applications to gather and organize information and to solve problems.

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1](#)
  Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2](#)
  Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3](#)
  Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4](#)
  Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5](#)
  Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6](#)
  Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7](#)
  Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or
maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8**
  Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9**
  Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10**
  By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1**
  Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.A**
  Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.B**
  Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.C**
  Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.D**
  Establish and maintain a formal style.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.E**
  Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.B**
  Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.6**
  Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.7**
  Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.8**
  Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.9**
  Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.10**
  Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Activities – include 21st Century Technologies/Research:**
- Create a 5 column chart (Themes of Geography) for a place in the world most heavily challenged by their area of critical global concern
- Research current event issue in specific geographical area impacted by their assigned issue of global concern
- Combine and prioritize research findings to 3-5 most relevant and connected ideas. Use transitional language to sequence and connect ideas
- In small groups, create a travel guide including research based evidence and images to illustrate your area of concern in your particular geographic location. The book should include sections that correlate to the 5 themes of geography

**Enrichment Activities:**
- Write a letter to a congressman, senator, or local law maker explaining your position on a critical issue of global concern and what future plans they have to address the issue.
Methods of Assessments/Evaluation:
- Exit Slips (Oral/Written)
- Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down
- Current events summary and reflection
- 5 column Chart – Themes of Geography
- Poster/Display
- Multi-media Presentation- Travel Guide
- Observation (Teacher/Small/Whole Group)
- Classwork
- Open Ended Questions
- Debates
- Revisit Essential Questions

Resources/Including Online Resources
- Teacher Webpage
- 100 People: A World Portrait - website
- NY Times UpFront - Magazine
- CNN Student News – website
UNIT THREE: Focus on People: Targeted Populations and Activists Communities

Approximate # Of Weeks: 7 Weeks

Essential Questions:
- How are the lives of people around the world directly impacted by the areas of critical global concern?
- How are activists working to address the needs of targeted populations around the world?

Upon completion of this unit students will be able to:
- Describe how an individual or family is impacted by an area of global concern
- Identify and explain how activists or organizations are working on behalf of oppressed individuals around the world
- Define the terms NGO and nonprofit organizations
- Hypothesize an ideal outcome for an individual or family who has been adversely affected by an area of global concern
- Participate in a mock interview

Common Core Standards:
- 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century: All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world.
- 6.2.12.C.6.d - Determine how the availability of scientific, technological, and medical advances impacts the quality of life in different countries.
6.2.12.A.6.a - Evaluate the role of international cooperation and multinational organizations in attempting to solve global issues.

6.2.12.C.6.a - Evaluate efforts of governmental, nongovernmental, and international organizations to address economic imbalances and social inequalities

6.2.12.C.6.b - Compare and contrast demographic trends in industrialized and developing nations, and evaluate the potential impact of these trends on the economy, political stability, and use of resources.

**Interdisciplinary Standards (njcccs.org)**

- **Standard 9.1 21st-Century Life & Career Skills**
  All students will demonstrate the creative, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills needed to function successfully as both global citizens and workers in diverse ethnic and organizational cultures.

- **Standard 8.1 – Computer and Information Literacy**
  All students will use computer applications to gather and organize information and to solve problems.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1**
  Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2**
  Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3**
  Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4**
  Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6**
  Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7**
  Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8**
  Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9**
  Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10**
  By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1**
  Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.A**
  Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.B**
  Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.C**
  Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.D**
  Establish and maintain a formal style.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.E**
  Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.5**
  With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new
approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.6**
  Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.7**
  Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.8**
  Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.9**
  Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.10**
  Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Activities – include 21st Century Technologies/Research:**

- In small groups create a “character composite” poster that reflects the reality of life for an individual or family who is significantly affected by an area of global concern
- Compose a short monologue reflecting how the character’s daily life is impacted by the areas of critical global concern
- Research activists or organizations that are working to help people around the world
- Write a biographical profile (1-2 paragraphs) of the activist or organization
- In small groups, arrange a tableau (frozen image on stage) to depict ideal situation for an individual or family who has been adversely affected by an area of global concern
- Construct a list of 5-10 questions you would ask an activists or representative of an organization
● Participate in a mock interview where one student plays the role of a journalist and the other will play the role of an activist

Enrichment Activities:

● Collaborate with international students to deliberate about and address issues of global concern.

Methods of Assessments/Evaluation:

● Exit Slips (Oral/Written)
● Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down
● “Character Composite” poster
● Character Monologue
● Biographical Profile of activist or organization
● Ideal outcome Tableau
● Mock Interview
● Multi-media Presentation
● Observation (Teacher/Small/Whole Group)
● Classwork
● Open Ended Questions
● Debates
● Revisit Essential Questions

Resources/Including Online Resources

● Teacher Webpage
● 100 People: A World Portrait - website
● NY Times UpFront - Magazine
● CNN Student News – website