

Multicultural Studies

Description:

Multicultural Studies offers students in grades eleven and twelve an opportunity to investigate and learn the significant aspects of the history, culture, and contemporary experiences of a range of racial and ethnic groups of people. It seeks to involve students in the analysis of the richly diverse mix of peoples that defines United States' society today. By beginning to understand and appreciate the myriad of cultures that exist in our country, students will hopefully perceive cultural similarities, accept cultural differences, and begin to sense their position within the American community. The course is based on the premise that it is the blending of various cultures within our society meshed with the crucially important development of tolerance for differences that will permit our society to endure. Students will engage in a thematic approach to multiculturalism through the study of literature, history, economics, religion, sociology, government, and current issues; they will explore such concepts as ethnocentrism, racism, assimilation, cultural pluralism and self-esteem. Students will acknowledge and utilize a multiplicity of perspectives and interpretations to define culture as well.

Resources:

Students will be provided with various supplemental materials such as primary and secondary sources as well as oral history interviews, research projects, videos and other multimedia resources to supplement class discussions.

Expectations for students

Students will be expected to acquire a better understanding of the elements of a multicultural society, where they fit in within a multicultural society, understand how the actions and events in which they are involved impact a multicultural society. Students should also obtain the skills required to be more accepting of a multicultural society. Students will be required to respect opinions of others.

Units of Study:

Unit I – Affirming Identity

Unit II – Creating a Multicultural Society

Unit III – Celebrating Culture

Unit IV – Race Relations

Methods of Evaluation

Students will be assessed through various mediums including but not limited to tests, papers, projects, oral presentations and daily participation.

Unit I: Affirming Identity

Objectives:

- Define culture
- Describe the elements of culture
- Analyze the elements of culture by looking at oneself and others
- Define subculture
- Identify subcultures within a culture

Essential Questions:

- What is culture?
- What elements do you use to define culture?
- How does your culture define who you are?
- How do different subcultures exist within a culture?
- Should there be a common American culture?

Recommended Assessments

Personal culture paper – Students will write a paper that addresses the elements of culture and how they shaped their identity and influenced their values.

Who I Am Shoebox – Students will present items that represent their culture by creating a visual utilizing a shoebox.

Creating a Culture – Students will be required to use the elements of culture to create their own society. Students will then present their culture in oral presentation format to the class.

Unit II: Creating a Multicultural Society

Objectives:

- Describe and analyze the history of immigration
- Trace the pattern of immigration
- Compare and contrast the different immigrant experiences
- Study and discuss restrictions on immigration (laws and quota systems)
- Define or determine what is meant by legal and illegal immigration
- Cite examples of forced and voluntary immigration
- Discuss politics of immigration
- Define and discuss ethnic identity
- Understand and discuss the role of politics and its influence on immigration laws throughout American history and opinions changed today.
- Define various terms such as: ethnocentrism, cultural pluralism, amalgamation, assimilation, adaptation, cultural integration, cultural diffusion, cultural conflict, cultural acceptance, ethnic diversity and acculturation
- Define and apply varying proposals with regard to American multiculturalism: salad bowl, melting pot, and patchwork quilt
- Define and apply cultural relativism
- Explore examples of cultural relativism
- Define culture shock and reentry shock
- Discuss culture shock that results from interaction between immigrants and natural born Americans

Essential Questions:

- What role does politics play in immigration?
- Should immigration be restricted?
- Is America really the “land of opportunity”? (forced v. voluntary immigration)
- What happens when unique elements must function as a whole?
- How did the U.S. become a multicultural society?
- Did our forefather intend for the U.S. to be a land of immigrants?
- How culturally diverse is the U.S.?
- Are all parts of the world represented in the U.S.?
- How do peoples’ perceptions determine their reaction to different cultures?
- How has immigration affected American culture? (i.e. music, food, language, etc.)
- Should all Americans have to speak a common language?
- Are Jews a race or an ethnic group?
- Do some cultural practices violate the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights?
- Is there a common American culture?

Recommended Assessments

Patchwork Quilt – Students will create a piece of a “quilt” that represents who they are. Students will then be required to work as a whole to piece together the different sections resulting in one unified class “quilt”.

Illegal Immigration Board Game – Students will create a board game that shows the positive and negative scenarios of illegal immigration.

Where Do I Fit In? – Students will complete research to discover where their ancestry lies on the immigration spectrum. Students will present their findings in class in power point format.

U.S. Immigration Policy Project – Students will write a theoretical immigration policy. Students will include their proposals focusing on immigration restrictions or absence of as well as possible quotas. Proposals will be presented in class and debated among students.

Unit III: Celebrating Culture

Objectives

- Reexamine the elements of culture with a focus on religion
- Choose a culture and research the different elements of culture within the U.S.
- Create an interactive presentation with visuals and required factual information and descriptions
- Compare and contrast holidays, traditions, etc. in the country of origin versus the U.S.
- Participate in cultural festivals
- Describe the history and cultural values of their assigned culture

Essential Questions

- Do cultural rites of passage become Americanized?
- How do various groups celebrate their cultures?
- What is the importance of religion in celebrating culture?

Recommended Assessment

Celebration Presentations – Students will be expected to choose a culture and conduct research on that culture using the aforementioned elements as a guide. They will then create an informational, visual, participatory presentation spotlighting a celebration of that chosen culture.

Unit IV: Race Relations

Objectives:

- Describe, define and apply stereotype, prejudice, racism, discrimination and hate.
- Compare and contrast institutionalized racism and cultural racism
- Define and discuss minority group, majority group and ethnic group (settlement patterns, contributions and impact on society)
- Understand and discuss socioeconomic of certain cultures and the impact it has on race relations
- Describe, compare and contrast various forms of discrimination (apartheid, genocide, expulsion, segregation, and selective inclusion)
- Discuss the differences between unequal treatment and distinctive treatment
- Explain race relations through theories (pluralism, power and stratification, unified theory)
- List minority groups
- Compare and contrast how minority groups have been discriminated against and how they reacted (i.e. Civil Rights Movements)
- Describe and discuss the obstacles Latinos face within their own community (ex. hierarchy)
- Define and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of affirmative action

Essential Questions:

- What is a stereotype?
- How do stereotypes originate?
- How accurate are stereotypes?
- Why are stereotypes so prejudiced?
- Do stereotypes breed hate?
- What is prejudice?
- What elements lead one group to be prejudiced against another?
- What is discrimination?
- How do stereotypes and prejudices lead to discrimination?
- What groups experience discrimination the most and why?
- How does discrimination lead to hate?
- Are we still a segregated society?
- Is affirmative action really discrimination?
- Do we have religious conflicts in the U.S.?
- Is it possible to eliminate prejudice in America?
- How can we create a multicultural society that does not discriminate?
- What role does socioeconomic play in race relations?

Recommended Assessment

History of Intolerance in America – Students will conduct research on an assigned minority group who has experienced intolerance in America. They are to focus on treatment of that group throughout American history, the group's reaction to intolerance, legislation passed to protect the group and their acceptance in society today.

Hate Groups in America - Students will understand the existence of hate groups in the United States by conducting research to discover their general geographic locations, the goal and mission of the groups versus the practices of the actions of the group and government reaction, i.e. laws.

Eliminating Prejudice in America – Students will create an advertisement, song, skit, game, or a learning tool that could be used to teach tolerance and acceptance.