

Contemporary Issues Syllabus and Interest Inventory

Overview: Until several years ago, I had not taught Contemporary Issues since the 2007-2008 school year. When I found out I would be doing so again, I was thrilled. What could be more relevant than what is going on around us at present? I want to make this a very interactive and user-friendly course. While there will be times I put my foot down and insist we deal with a specific topic of my choosing on a given day, I also want to provide you with the latitude to have a say in what we learn about and discuss. As such, given the uniqueness of this course and the lack of predictability of world events, I can't give you an outline and timeline as to what we'll be doing in any given class period or week. With that said, there are some larger topics I know we will discuss over our ninety days together. These include, but are not limited to, **the Trump administration, terrorism, climate change, race relations, the economy and jobs, health care, the role of the government in the lives of the citizens, social media and its role in driving public opinion and placing issues in the national spotlight, teen issues in an out of school, how America educates its children, issues of ethics and morality, guns, the nuclear world, terrorism in all forms, free speech, LGBT issues, America's role in the world, economically, militarily and in other ways and no doubt many more topics as they arise.**

Grading and the Class on a Daily Basis

Grading will be based primarily on work completed in the class. I envision analyzing articles and videos and answering questions related to those. Also, I anticipate assigning students topics, or allowing students to select topics of their own and to lead the class on a given day, fomenting discussion. You will be given ample notice before this is put upon you. Also, I anticipate doing at least one debate per semester. I will introduce you to the debate format and to the grading rubric. You will be given plenty of class time to prep for the debate, which includes research, writing and practicing speaking.

Expectations

Given that we are a small class, I expect you to be an active participant in the discussion and someone who asks thought-provoking questions and answers. I am requesting you bring a binder for handouts and something to write with each day. There may be times when you use your phones for research or taking polls or surveys. Thus, if you have a smart phone bring it daily. That said, it should not be used for non-academic purposes. Again, I don't anticipate assigning much work outside of the scope of the time we have together every other day. The tradeoff there is that, at the risk of redundancy, I expect heightened focus and attention to task when we are together. **Literacy** is the academic expectation for this course. As such, there will be assessments that use the Literacy rubric for grading.

Interest Inventory

Using the aforementioned issues, please indicate your level of interest in learning about each, by rating each issue on a **1-5** scale. **1** is most interested and **5** is least interested. After doing so, please construct a paragraph discussing which of these you're most passionate about and why. If it is none, select something that is not on the list, but would be useful for us to discuss regardless.

The Trump administration

election process:

terrorism:

climate change:

race relations:

the economy and jobs:

health care:

the role of the government in the lives of the citizens:

social media and its role in driving public opinion and placing issues in the national spotlight:

teen issues in an out of school:

how America educates its children:

issues of ethics and morality:

guns:

LGBT issues:

America's role in the world, economically, militarily and in other ways: