



# LEE ACADEMY

Lee, Maine USA

*Official Curriculum*

## World Cultures

Written 07, Rev. Summer 2008

### Course description:

World Cultures is a project-oriented introduction to four major areas of human experience: 1) geography and its impact on societies, 2) comparative religion and the role of religion in human cultures, 3) the forms of major contemporary governments, their founding principles and how political power is exercised within each, 4) economic systems and a comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of each. The course includes a variety of print and visual media, and substantial group work, research, analysis and presentation, and reading of primary source documents.

### Primary text(s) and other major resources:

*Guns, Germs and Steel*-- video and website

**A. Applications of Social Studies Processes, Knowledge, and Skills:** Students apply critical thinking, a research process, and *discipline-based processes* and knowledge from civics/government, economics, geography, and history in *authentic contexts*.

**B. Civics and Government:** Students draw on concepts from civics and government to understand political systems, power, authority, governance, civic ideals and practices, and the role of citizens in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.

**C. Economics:** Students draw on concepts and processes from economics to understand issues of *personal finance* and issues of production, distribution, and consumption in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.

**D. Geography:** Students draw on concepts and processes from geography to understand issues involving people, places, and environments in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.

**E. History:** Students draw on concepts and processes from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.

UNIT LENGTH and MLRS	OBJECTIVES	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	PROJECTS	ASSESSMENTS
<p>Unit 1 20 classes</p> <p><b>World Geography</b></p> <p><b>D1a</b> Explain that geography includes the study of physical, environmental, and cultural features at the local, state, national, and global levels and helps people to better predict and evaluate consequences of geographic influences.</p> <p><b>D1b</b> Describe the major regions of the Earth and their major physical, environmental, and cultural features using a variety of <i>geographic tools</i>.</p> <p><b>D1c</b> Analyze local, national, and global geographic data on physical, environmental, and cultural processes that shape and change places and regions.</p> <p><b>D1d</b> Evaluate the</p>	<p>Students will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ use various geographic tools (e.g., maps, graphs, charts, photographs &amp; other graphics) to describe and understand different aspects of world geography (e.g., physical, cultural, political &amp; environmental)</li> <li>■ analyze the role of geography in determining the distribution of wealth and poverty around the world</li> <li>■ identify and evaluate how technological innovation impacts the physical, economic, social and cultural environment</li> <li>■ understand Professor Jared Diamond’s theory of wealth distribution, based on “geographic luck”</li> <li>■ examine critical responses to Diamond’s theory of “geographic luck”</li> <li>■ examine and understand the difference between “evidence” and “arguments,” “facts” and “theory”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How does <u>where</u> you live affect <u>how well</u> you live?</li> <li>■ Why do some societies and people have so much wealth while others have so little?</li> <li>■ How should rich nations and people treat poor nations and people?</li> </ul>	<p>Students will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ view the “Guns, Germs &amp; Steel” video is several segments</li> <li>■ work on GGS video work sheets and study guides as homework</li> <li>■ work in groups to complete GGS video work sheets and study guides</li> <li>■ keep a journal recording “eyewitness” accounts of portions of the GGS video</li> <li>■ prepare “personal response” entries for their journals recording how they “feel” when viewing some GGS scenes</li> <li>■ use GGS to construct a technology “timeline” identifying key innovations in “weapons technology” and their consequences</li> <li>■ work in groups to locate, evaluate, and share critical responses to GGS</li> </ul>	<p>Students will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ apply Diamond’s theory by working in groups to examine how “geographic luck” impacts contemporary circumstances: students will examine how “geographic luck” affects high school students in the United States, China, and Mexico and report their findings to the class.</li> <li>■ research the arrival and consequences of Europeans on Maine’s native Americans and the impact of the Great Dying on native people, and use their research to write a “narrative story” which they will share with the class</li> <li>■ submit a personal reflection paper applying Diamond’s theory of “geographic luck” to their personal lives, e.g. looking at how “where they have lived” has affected “how they have lived” and possibilities for their future</li> </ul>

impact of change, including technological change, on the physical and cultural environment.

**D2b** Analyze the dynamic relationship between geographic features and various cultures, including the cultures of Maine and other Native Americans, various historical and recent immigrant groups in the United States, and other cultures in the world.

**A1c** Make judgments about conflicting findings from different sources, incorporating those from sources that are valid and refuting others.

**A1d** Synthesize information from varied sources, fieldwork, experiments, and/or interviews that reflect multiple perspectives.

**A1b** Select and apply research methods that are appropriate for the purpose of the inquiry.

**A1g** Develop a clear well-supported position.

UNITS	OBJECTIVES	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	PROJECTS	ASSESSMENTS
Unit 2 20 classes  <b>World Religions</b>	Students will . . .  ■ explore the meaning of “religion” and examine the role religion plays in human culture	■ How does what we believe affect how we act?	Students will . . .  ■ work in groups to discuss what religion means to them, and what role it plays in their	Students will . . .  ■ work in groups to research one of the five religious traditions, using a research

**A1b** Select and apply research methods that are appropriate for the purpose of the inquiry.

**A1d** Synthesize information from varied sources, fieldwork, experiments, and/or interviews that reflect multiple perspectives.

**A2a** Develop individual and collaborative decisions/plans by considering multiple points of view, weighing pros and cons, building on the ideas of others, and sharing information in an attempt to sway the opinions of others.

**B3a** Analyze the constitutional, political, and civic aspects of historical and/or *current issues* that involve unity and diversity in Maine, the United States, and other nations.

**A1i** Select and use appropriate tools, methods, and sources from government, history, geography, economics, or related fields, including *ethical reasoning skills*.

**A1e** Utilize media relevant to audience and purpose that extend and support oral, written, and visual

and society

- compare five of the world's great religious traditions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism
- use primary sources, including sacred texts, to understand various religious beliefs and practices
- investigate conflicts within religious traditions and their consequences
- examine consequences of religious conflict, esp. in Iraq and the Middle East
- compare the practice of "separation of church and state" (e.g., the United States) with the practice of "theocracy" (e.g. Iran)
- investigate how religious beliefs find expression in people's actions, especially their treatment of women, children & "non-believers"

- How do "fact" and "faith" differ? How does religious belief differ from scientific theory?
- How does cultural bias and historic prejudice influence our perception and understanding of religious traditions?
- How do religious beliefs impact social, cultural and political outcomes?

lives

- write a personal "credo" responding to the prompt "I believe . . ." that sets forth a basic statement of their own personal "truths"
- work in groups to examine how religious differences affect life in five contemporary settings--Afghanistan, Darfur, Gaza, Iraq & Kashmir—and present their findings to the class
- work in groups to compare how five of the world's great religious traditions treat women, children, and "non-believers," and present their findings to the class
- discuss in groups the role of religion in public life in five nations—Britain, China, India, Iran, and the United States—and discuss as a class the "right" relationship between government and religion

"worksheet & checklist" to help direct and organize their research

- work in groups to organize and prepare their findings to share with the class, using a "presentation checklist" to help direct and organize their preparation
- present their research, using various media incorporating appropriate use of music, dress, cuisine, scents, ritual, and graphic images

communication.				
UNITS	OBJECTIVES	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	PROJECTS	ASSESSMENTS
<p>Unit 3 20 classes</p> <p><b>World Politics</b></p> <p><b>D1a</b> Explain that geography includes the study of physical, environmental, and cultural features at the local, state, national, and global levels and helps people to better predict and evaluate consequences of geographic influences.</p> <p><b>D1b</b> Describe the major regions of the Earth and their major physical, environmental, and cultural features using a variety of <i>geographic tools</i>.</p> <p><b>D1c</b> Analyze local, national, and global geographic data on physical, environmental, and cultural processes that shape and change places and regions.</p> <p><b>B3b</b> Analyze the <i>political structures</i>, political power, and political perspectives of diverse cultures, including those of Maine and other Native Americans, various <i>historical and recent immigrant groups</i> in Maine and</p>	<p>Students will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ review physical and political geography basics, e.g. US states and capitals, continents and oceans, and nations</li> <li>■ identify key differences between different forms of contemporary governments, e.g. unitary and federal, representative and non-representative, socialist and free market</li> <li>■ examine the founding principles of political regimes, and primary documents like constitutions</li> <li>■ explore how political power is acquired, used, maintained, and transferred</li> <li>■ examine how people’s lives are affected by political power</li> <li>■ compare the impact of media and technology on contemporary governments</li> <li>■ identify the importance of trans-national organizations (e.g. OPEC, international corporations, the EU, and the UN)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How does the use and abuse of political power affect the lives of ordinary people?</li> <li>■ How does a nation’s culture and history, as well as its political ideas, affect its government’s form and policies?</li> <li>■ How should a nation use its power to advance the interest of its people internationally?</li> </ul>	<p>Students will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ work in groups to understand the “five major themes” of physical geography</li> <li>■ use the “five themes” to describe themselves “geographically”</li> <li>■ review basic geographic facts in order to compete as teams in an in-class internet “geography quiz”</li> <li>■ work in groups using a standard “check list” to research governmental structure and politics of one of six countries: Great Britain, China, Iran, Russia Saudi Arabia &amp; the United States, and report their findings to the class</li> <li>■ select one of the five countries the class has studied as the “best place to live in the future,” and present an argument to the class supporting the choice including the criteria and data used in making the choice</li> </ul>	<p>Students will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ work in groups to devise a new “Plan of Government” for Lee Academy and “frame” a new “constitution,” setting forth: (1) a “preamble” of guiding principles, (2) a description of the way decision-making power will be organized, and-- if desired— (3) a “Bill of Rights” listing privileges which cannot be violated</li> <li>■ decide which groups or “constituencies” comprise “Lee Academy” (Who has a stake? Who is entitled to participate in “governing?”)</li> <li>■ organize and hold a school-wide referendum among students to determine which plan has the most support</li> </ul>

the United States, and those of various world cultures.

**B1a** Explain that the study of government includes the *structures*, functions, institutions, and forms of government and the relationship of government to citizens in the United States and in other regions of the world.

**B1b** Evaluate *current issues* by applying *democratic ideals and constitutional principles* of government in the United States, including checks and balances, federalism, and consent of the governed as put forth in *founding documents*.

**B1c** Explain how and why democratic institutions and interpretations of *democratic ideals* and *constitutional principles* change over time.

**B2d** Compare the *rights, duties, and responsibilities* of United States citizens with those of citizens from other nations.

**B2a** Explain the relationship between constitutional and legal *rights*, and civic *duties and responsibilities* in

a constitutional democracy.  
**B2e** Evaluate how people influence government and work for the common good including voting, writing to legislators, performing community service, and engaging in civil disobedience.  
**A2a** Develop individual and collaborative decisions/plans by considering multiple points of view, weighing pros and cons, building on the ideas of others, and sharing information in an attempt to sway the opinions of others.  
**A2b** Make a *real or simulated decision* related to the classroom, school, community, civic organization, Maine, United States, or international entity by applying appropriate and relevant social studies knowledge and skills, including research skills, *ethical reasoning skills*, and other relevant information.

UNITS	OBJECTIVES	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	PROJECTS	ASSESSMENTS
Unit 4 20 classes <b>Economics</b>	Students will . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ identify and understand basic economic principles (e.g.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How do basic economic structures and conditions</li> </ul>	Students will . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ work on teams to create questions for an in-class quiz on</li> </ul>	Students will . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ work as groups to discuss the economic challenges</li> </ul>

**C1a** Explain that the study of economics includes the analysis and description of production, distribution, and consumption of *goods and services* by business, and is the basis of individual *personal finance* management including saving and investing.

**C1b** Explain and analyze the role of financial institutions, the stock market, and government, including *fiscal, monetary, and trade policies*, in personal, business, and national economics.

**C2a** Analyze the role of regional, international, and global organizations that are engaged in *economic development*.

**C2c** Analyze wealth, poverty, resource distribution, and other *economic factors* of diverse cultures, including Maine and other Native Americans, various historical and recent immigrant groups in Maine and the United States, and various world cultures.

- supply/demand, free market/controlled market, price/value, scarcity/surplus, competition/ monopoly, etc.)
- understand the strengths and weaknesses of various economic systems
  - identify and understand the sources of poverty and means of wealth creation
  - investigate the economic importance of innovation and entrepreneurs
  - examine the shift from old form economies (e.g. agrarian, industrial) to new forms of economies (e.g. service, technological)
  - examine the conclusions presented in Friedman's *The World is Flat* and their consequences
  - apply economic concepts to assessing their own personal economic status
  - use economic concepts to think about their own personal economic futures

- impact the daily lives of ordinary people?
- How do individual and governmental choices affect economic outcomes?
  - How should wealth be regulated? Should those with more than enough be required to subsidize those who do not have enough?
  - How will the "economic future" be different from the past? How will it stay the same?

- basic economic terms and concepts, and compete on teams in an in-class economics quiz
- examine the success of "One Acre Capitalism" in Kenya and the relationship between poverty and wealth creation
  - apply economic criteria to evaluate the extent to which the Czech Republic, Egypt, Indonesia, Peru, Uganda, and the US are "free enterprise" systems
  - read a summary of Friedman's "The World Is Flat" and discuss its significance
  - work on teams to explore the importance of economic innovation and entrepreneurship
  - work with a partner to create an "idea" and basic "business plan" for a new "start-up" company, and present the idea to the class as possible investors

- facing high school students
- create and apply personal criteria to select a possible career choice
  - research the "costs and benefits" of the career choice, using a "checklist" to help direct and organize their research
  - make an in-class presentation of their research, which will include an opportunity for students to ask the presenter questions about the career they selected to research



<p><b>C2b</b> Compare a variety of <i>economic systems</i> and the <i>economic development</i> of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world that are economically diverse.</p> <p><b>C1f</b> Explain and apply the concepts of <i>specialization</i>, <i>economic interdependence</i>, and <i>comparative advantage</i>.</p> <p><b>C1e</b> Analyze economic activities and policies in relationship to freedom, efficiency, equity, security, growth, and sustainability.</p> <p><b>C1c</b> Evaluate different forms of money management, and the positive and negative impacts that credit can have on individual finances, using <i>economic reasoning</i>.</p>				
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