Unit 2: Culture & Cultural Relativism

Content Area: **Social Studies**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **7-10 Classes**
Status: **Published**

Summary

The Sociology course is designed to engage students in critical thought about the different aspects of the society they operate in, including culture, socialization, social order, deviance, race, gender, age, ethnicity, class, and stratification. By exploring various course topics, students are able to evaluate the ways in which society has changed and remained the same overtime and the impact that they can have, both as individuals and in groups. An intergenerational studies program is also included in the course allowing students to meet with members of their community from different demographic groups and apply course topics directly.

This unit is part of the larger aforementioned course sequence and specifically focuses on culture where students will be introduced to the sociological study of culture and how it impacts a society. By the end of this unit, students will be able to distinguish between material culture and nonmaterial culture, evaluate folkways, mores and taboos, and evaluate social practices and customs.

Revised: August 2023

Standards

This unit also reflects the goals of the Department of Education and the Amistad Commission including the infusion of the history of Africans and African-Americans into the curriculum in order to provide an accurate, complete, and inclusive history regarding the importance of of African-Americans to the growth and development of American society in a global context.

This unit includes instructional materials that highlight the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in accordance with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies.

In accordance with New Jersey’s Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional materials that highlight and promote diversity, including: economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance.

The standards in this unit reflect a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary

connections across content areas including the humanities, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship.

This unit is aligned to the English Language Development (ELD) standards for kindergarten through grade 12 since multilingual learners develop content and language concurrently, with academic content in a classroom where the language of instruction is English. As a result, language learning and language as a means for learning academic content are interchangeable. The following ELD standards are relevant for this unit and course of study:

- Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes: English language learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting.
- Standard 5: Language for Social Studies: English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

9.4.12.CT.2	Explain the potential benefits of collaborating to enhance critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., 1.3E.12profCR3.a).
9.4.12.CT.3	Enlist input from a variety of stakeholders (e.g., community members, experts in the field) to design a service learning activity that addresses a local or global issue (e.g., environmental justice).
LA.RI.11-12.3	Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.7	Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
LA.RI.11-12.9	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes and rhetorical features, including primary source documents relevant to U.S. and/or global history.
9.4.12.GCA.1	Collaborate with individuals to analyze a variety of potential solutions to climate change effects and determine why some solutions (e.g., political. economic, cultural) may work better than others (e.g., SL.11-12.1., HS-ETS1-1, HS-ETS1-2, HS-ETS1-4, 6.3.12.GeoGI.1, 7.1.IH.IPERS.6, 7.1.IL.IPERS.7, 8.2.12.ETW.3).
LA.W.11-12.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
9.4.12.IML.5	Evaluate, synthesize, and apply information on climate change from various sources appropriately (e.g., 2.1.12.CHSS.6, S.IC.B.4, S.IC.B.6, 8.1.12.DA.1, 6.1.12.GeoHE.14.a, 7.1.AL.PRSNT.2).
LA.W.11-12.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
9.4.12.TL.3	Analyze the effectiveness of the process and quality of collaborative environments.
9.4.12.TL.4	Collaborate in online learning communities or social networks or virtual worlds to analyze and propose a resolution to a real-world problem (e.g., 7.1.AL.IPERS.6).
LA.W.11-12.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms

	of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. (MLA or APA Style Manuals).
LA.W.11-12.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.SL.11-12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
LA.SL.11-12.1.B	Collaborate with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and assessments (e.g., student developed rubrics), and establish individual roles as needed.
LA.SL.11-12.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.
6.1.12.CivicsDP.14.a	Draw from multiple perspectives and cite evidence to determine the extent to which nongovernmental organizations, special interest groups, third party political groups, and the media affect public policy.
6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.a	Analyze campaign speeches and debates and other sources to determine the extent to which presidential candidates' rhetoric was inclusive, expansive, stereotypical or biased.
6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.b	Create an evidence-based argument that assesses the effectiveness of actions taken to address the causes of continuing racial tensions and violence.
6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.c	Determine the influence of multicultural beliefs, products (i.e., art, food, music, and literature), and practices in shaping contemporary American culture.
6.1.12.HistorySE.14.a	Explore the various ways women, racial and ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ community, and individuals with disabilities have contributed to the American economy, politics and society.
6.1.12.HistoryCC.14.d	Evaluate the role of religion on cultural and social norms, public opinion, and political decisions.
6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a	Construct a claim to describe how media and technology has impacted civic participation and deliberation.
6.1.12.EconNE.16.a	Make evidenced-base inferences regarding the impact of technology on the global workforce and on entrepreneurship.
6.1.12.HistoryUP.16.a	Analyze the impact of American culture on other world cultures and determine the impact of social media on the dissemination of American culture.
6.2	World History: Global Studies
6.3.12.HistoryCA.12	Analyze a current foreign policy issue by considering current and historical perspectives, examining strategies, and presenting possible actions.

Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings

Essential Questions:

- What is culture?
- What differentiates one culture from another?
- How does culture influence sociological theory and study?

Enduring Understandings:

- Culture consists of material and nonmaterial culture which includes concepts such as symbols, language, gestures and values, which may be influenced by ethnocentrism, xenophobia, xenocentrism and cultural relativism.
- Thinking like a sociologist means striving to practice cultural relativism when studying other cultures.

Objectives

Students will know:

- Culture is the language, beliefs, values, norms, behaviors, material and nonmaterial objects that are passed onto future generations.
- Sociologists study how culture shapes a society and creates its norms and values.
- Values are communicated, reinforced or sanctioned through norms, folkways, and taboos.
- A society is defined by their culture, and cultural relativism dictates the realities of that society as well as the appropriate behaviors and sanctions.
- Sociologists view and study culture and how cultural values impact a society.
- Multiculturalism and assimilation are important concepts to address in terms of cultural diffusion in the study of sociology.

Students will be skilled at:

- Analyzing data to produce a claim and substantiate an argument
- Interpreting data from sociological studies
- Researching evidence to support a sociological theory
- Contextualizing data in accordance with the theoretical perspectives
- Creating service learning projects that demonstrate understanding of sociological theory and apply the spirit of community learning.
- Utilizing 21st century skills to enact community learning programs
- Developing interpersonal skills through their participation in the Intergenerational Studies program.

Learning Plan

This unit includes, but is not limited to, the following learning strategies:

Culture Shock - Students will read and reflect on the lived experiences of immigrants as they explain their most memorable culture shock moments once arriving in America

"Our Culture" - Students will closely examine, discuss, and reflect on the culture of their school by creating "paper schools," applying sociological concepts

Culture Case Study - Students will read articles from NPR and The New Yorker to investigate and discuss a set of cultural norms in the China and the implications of those norms

Break a Norm Project - Students will plan and conduct their own sociological experiment, reflecting on and sharing results

Tourist Brochure Project - Students will create an inviting overview of other countries' cultures, including high, pop, and folk cultural elements

***Minari* Film Study** - Students will view the film, *Minari*, where they will apply sociological concepts as related to assimilation and cultural diffusion.

Subculture Case Study: Students will investigate and discuss the influence of dual cultural pressures of Indigenous American youth to honor their cultural roots and place in American mainstream culture

***Babies* Film Study** - Students will watch the film and take notes from the perspective of a functionalist. At the conclusion of the film, they will complete a reflection where they will be required to apply their knowledge of the functionalist perspective to the film and demonstrate their understanding of the function of cultural universals throughout the film.

Culture Interactive Notebook - Students will summarize the key concepts associated with culture in a digital format in which they investigate the concept and apply their knowledge in a variety of formats and applications.

Community Learning Project 1: Assimilation at CHS - Students will think about the challenges for a newly immigrated student to Cranford High School with little to no English skills. We will invite the ESL coordinator to speak with us about the experiences and challenges of ESL students at CHS and in general to get a better understanding of their experiences. Students will work with the ESL coordinator to develop a Welcome to Cranford basket for new students that will be adaptable to many languages for many new students that we welcome to the Cranford community.

Community Learning Project 2: Teaching Culture to Elementary Students - Students will work together in small groups to create stories that celebrate different cultures. These stories will be illustrated and detail a special holiday or important fact that will teach young students about a new culture. Students will then travel to an elementary school to read their stories to the children as a Diversity Day.

Note: Other strategies to address the learning objectives may include, but are not limited to direct instruction, think-pair-share activities, creating visual representations, debates, video analysis, Socratic seminars, small group discussions, simulations, jigsaw activities, web quests, and/or inquiry or problem based learning projects.

Assessment

When taking a Social Studies course, students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Many of the performance tasks below can be implemented as formative and/or summative assessments. As teachers strive for students to demonstrate proficiency, they will need to create additional or alternative assessments based on demonstration or absence of skill.

Formative Assessments:

- Bell Ringer Activities
- Culture Interactive Notebook

Summative Assessments:

- Film Study - Babies
- Break a Norm Project

- Key Concepts Quiz
- Subculture Case Study
- Community Learning Project 1: Assimilation at CHS
- Community Learning Project 2: Teaching Culture to Elementary Students

Benchmark Assessments:

- Open-Ended Essay: encapsulate understanding of concepts by forming a personalized and supported answer to the not-so-simple question, "How does culture define me?"
- Intergenerational Studies Program- Students meet with local Senior Citizens and discuss topics we are learning about in class that correlate to perspectives of both generations. Students can write reflections or create a podcast during the Intergenerational Studies with the school's mobile podcast equipment.

Alternative Assessments:

- Sociological Concepts Curation Project - Throughout the course, students can select key artifacts from various forms of media to highlight key sociological concepts. For each artifact, they must compose a narrative explaining how the curated piece reflects the assigned sociological concept.

Materials

The design of this course allows for the integration of a variety of instructional, supplemental, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available In addition to the materials below, the following link connects to district approved textbooks and resources utilized in this course: Core Book List .

The following are approved resources that teachers can include to further unit related objectives:

Videos:

- Minari film
- Babies film
- Symbols, Values & Norms: Crash Course Sociology #10

- Cultures, Subcultures, and Countercultures: Crash Course Sociology #11
- How Culture Drives Behaviors | Julien S. Bourrelle | TEDxTrondheim-

Articles:

- Culture Should Unite Us, Not Divide Us-Cultural diversity isn't just morally right—it also makes us smarter.
- The biggest ways TikTok has changed American culture
- Non-Americans Are Sharing The Most Confusing Aspects Of American Culture, And They Make Some Serious Points

Any additional resources that are not included in this list will be presented to and reviewed by the supervisor before being included in lesson plans. This ensures resources are reviewed and vetted for relevance and appropriateness prior to implementation.

Suggested Strategies for Modification

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Pp6EJOCsFz5o4-opzsXpQDQoa6aClW-bkRGPDRHXVrk/edit?usp=sharing

These additional strategies are helpful when learning Sociology content and skills:

- Modify reading levels of articles
- Adjust duration of direct instruction as needed
- Provide time for students to process their responses before asking for contributions during class.
- Model expectations for assignments and provide clear rubrics with detailed instructions