Restoring Women to World Studies
A Document-Based Question Curriculum Unit for Grades 9–12
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Welcome!

In much of the social studies—especially courses focused on world history, geography, and culture—there has been a long-standing awareness that the experience of women has been left out of the narrative. Recent changes in state, national, and Advanced Placement educational standards have sought to remedy this omission by calling for the inclusion of women’s studies in the social studies curriculum. However, the most widely available resources tend to focus on the experience of women in Western Europe and North America. Restoring Women to World Studies: A Document-Based Question Curriculum Unit for Grades 9–12 seeks to address these new requirements and the current regional bias in available resources. The unit is based on the 2007 Hemispheres Summer Teachers’ Institute Restoring Women to World Studies. That four-day workshop explored the situation of women—historical and contemporary—in Latin America, the Middle East, Russia, East Europe and Eurasia, and South Asia. The training sessions discussed the contributions of notable women to historical and artistic movements, talked about concepts of gender roles and gendered spaces, looked at issues that are driving women’s movements today, and examined the greater context in which all of these take place.

In this unit, we have sought to address the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and National Geography Standards that explicitly deal with gender roles and social structures but also standards that address citizenship, processes of historical change, social movements and cultural differences. In addition, this unit draws on primary source readings and images to strengthen students’ skills in working with primary source materials. Each case study is laid out in a Document-Based Question (DBQ) format so that students can cite, interpret, and evaluate sources; consider point of view; and use historical evidence to develop and support a thesis.

The unit begins with a PowerPoint that introduces the notion of gender as a key social category and patriarchy as an important organizing structure in many societies and cultures. The unit then examines these concepts within case studies from the four regions. Each case study is meant to encourage students to address questions about gender roles in the different societies, either in a particular historical moment or how they evolve over time. In addition to responding to each case study, students can analyze and compare the different primary source documents within the case studies by considering the following questions and their answers:

• How do women in patriarchal societies experience gender norms and ideals?
• How do women in patriarchal societies create change within the established order of society?

It is our hope that, with Restoring Women to World Studies, students will be able to better appreciate how gender functions within different societies at different times; understand how it both shapes individual lives and offers individuals opportunities to shape society; see similarities in women’s experiences as well as differences; and appreciate that experiences of gender are influenced by other categories of identity (class, race, ethnicity, etc.) and are not frozen or merely restrictive but changing and challenged by women who respond to traditional understandings of gender roles and hierarchies.

We welcome feedback and comments on the unit and your experience using it in the classroom. Please do not hesitate to contact us at hemispheres@austin.utexas.edu.
Standards Alignment

This Curriculum Unit Address The Following Standards in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS):

113.22 (Social Studies Grade 6)
(1) History. The student understands that historical events influence contemporary events. The student is expected to: (B) analyze the historical background of selected contemporary societies to evaluate relationships between past conflicts and current conditions.

(2) History. The student understands the contributions of individuals and groups from various cultures to selected historical and contemporary societies. The student is expected to: (A) explain the significance of individuals or groups from selected societies, past and present.

(13) Citizenship. The student understands that the nature of citizenship varies among societies. The student is expected to: (A) describe roles and responsibilities of citizens in selected contemporary societies including the United States; (B) explain how opportunities for citizens to participate in and influence the political process vary among selected contemporary societies; and (C) compare the role of citizens in the United States with the role of citizens from selected democratic and nondemocratic contemporary societies.

(15) Culture. The student understands the similarities and differences within and among cultures in different societies. The student is expected to: (C) analyze the similarities and differences among selected world societies.

(18) Culture. The student understands the relationship that exists between artistic, creative, and literary expressions and the societies that produce them. The student is expected to: (A) explain the relationships that exist between societies and their architecture, art, music, and literature; (C) describe ways in which societal issues influence creative expressions.

113.33 (World History Studies)
(1) History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in world history. The student is expected to: (A) identify the major eras in world history and describe their defining characteristics; (C) apply absolute and relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods.

(17) Citizenship. The student understands the significance of political choices and decisions made by individuals, groups, and nations throughout history. The student is expected to: (A) evaluate political choices and decisions that individuals, groups, and nations have made in the past, taking into account historical context, and apply this knowledge to the analysis of choices and decisions faced by contemporary societies; and (B) describe the different roles of citizens and noncitizens in historical cultures, especially as the roles pertain to civic participation.

(18) Citizenship. The student understands the historical development of significant legal and political concepts, including ideas about rights, republicanism, constitutionalism, and democracy. The student is expected to: (C) identify examples of political, economic, and social oppression and violations of human rights throughout history, including slavery, the Holocaust, other examples of genocide, and politically-motivated mass murders in Cambodia, China, and the Soviet Union; (D) assess the degree to which human rights and democratic ideals and practices have been advanced throughout the world during the 20th century.

(20) Culture. The student understands the relationship between the arts and the times during which they were created. The student is expected to: (B) analyze examples of how art, architecture, literature, music, and drama reflect the history of cultures in which they are produced.
Standards Alignment

(21) Culture. The student understands the roles of women, children, and families in different historical cultures. The student is expected to: (A) analyze the specific roles of women, children, and families in different historical cultures; and (B) describe the political, economic, and cultural influence of women in different historical cultures.

This Curriculum Unit Addresses the Following Theme in the Course Description for Advanced Placement World History

4. Systems of social structure and gender structure (comparing major features within and among societies, and assessing change and continuity)

What students are expected to know:
• **Foundations, 8000 BCE–600 CE**: Classical civilizations: social and gender structures
• **1450-1750**: Gender and empire (including the role of women in households and in politics)
• **1750-1914**: Changes in social and gender structure (tension between work patterns and ideas about gender). Major comparisons: Compare the roles and conditions of women in the upper/middle classes with peasantry/working class in western Europe.
• **1914-present**: Social reform and social revolution (changing gender roles; family structures; rise of feminism)
Madre = Resistencia: Mothers of the Disappeared in Chile and Argentina
Mothers of the Disappeared in Chile & Argentina

In Latin America, the 1970s were a difficult period during which military regimes ruled many countries. As democratically elected governments faced increasing economic problems (e.g., falling prices for primary exports, growing unemployment) and intensifying social unrest, the military stepped in to take control. In Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, the military’s efforts to keep control of their countries led to “dirty wars,” in which they violently repressed those who opposed them. Elections were cancelled, free speech was suppressed, and citizens lived in fear of government reprisals. Perceived enemies of the regimes were taken from their homes, often in the middle of the night, for questioning; after being tortured, some were released to spread the word, but many were never seen again. Within these states of fear, mothers rose up: in Chile and Argentina, mothers of the “disappeared” (desaparecidos) pressured their governments to find out what happened to their children.

In Chile, socialist president Salvador Allende, elected in 1970, implemented policies (price freezes, wage increases) that were popular with the masses, but caused high inflation and unrest among the elite. People took to the streets, both to protest and to support Allende’s government. In 1973, in the midst of the Cold War, the military staged a coup to oust Allende and save their nation from Communism. General Augusto Pinochet assumed power, which he held until 1989, and began a repressive regime that attempted to silence all opposition.

During Pinochet’s rule, at a time when challenging him was not only dangerous but almost suicidal, groups of women organized to oppose his dictatorship. They were mothers of the disappeared who wanted answers about their missing sons; nearly 10,000 people—mostly men—were taken and never seen again during the Pinochet dictatorship. These women used their traditional roles as mothers to protest the government. The government encouraged women to be domestic and passive, and they supported socially-accepted gender roles for women; mothers could mourn their children, protect their families, and even protest the regime without facing the punishment that their children faced.

Mothers in Chile organized sewing workshops to create arpilleras, traditional Chilean tapestries, that told their stories. The arpilleras often depicted their lost children, or scenes of government violence; they served as a call for justice. The Catholic Church supported the production of the arpilleras, and helped smuggle them out of Chile to be sold and exhibited abroad. The creation of arpilleras served as a method of collective grieving, as women gathered to sew and share their stories. Most importantly, they served as testimony to the violence and repression imposed by Pinochet. Where others were not allowed to voice their opposition, the government was not able to silence the mothers, whose work brought international attention to the human rights abuses in Chile.

In Argentina, Juan Perón returned to the presidency in 1973 after almost two decades in exile following his expulsion from office. When he died in 1974, his wife Isabel, who has been vice president, assumed the presidency with disastrous results. Isabel, a former nightclub dancer, was out of her element: the economy was a mess and inflation was rampant, guerrillas attacked the police and military, and the middle class was afraid. In 1976, the military stepped in to take control of the situation. Thus began what came to be known as the “Dirty War” in Argentina: the military’s “war against subversion” included arrest, detention, torture, murder, and the disappearance of 10,000–30,000 Argentineans between 1976–1983.
In 1977, mothers, who had met in government offices where they begged for answers as to the whereabouts of their children, formed a support group and began to organize weekly marches in Buenos Aires’s Plaza de Mayo, in front of government buildings. These women were mostly housewives, with no political experience. They marched in silence, carrying photos of their missing children and wearing white kerchiefs on their heads. As with Chile, these women were still functioning in accepted gender roles as guardians of their families. The government could do little to stop them without calling further attention to their abuses. However, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, as they became known, still faced persecution: some were harassed, and three mothers were disappeared.

The silent marches brought worldwide attention to the atrocities being committed in Argentina. The mothers won several peace prizes and became an internationally recognized human rights group. It is believed that the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo helped bring about the end of the dictatorship, and they continue to fight today to bring to justice those who were responsible for the atrocities committed during the Dirty War.
Source 1: Traditional *arpillera* from Peru, 1990s

Comprehension Exercise:
1. Does this look like a craft that would be done by women or men? Explain your answer by both using details from the image and discussing what you think of as traditional activities for men and women.
Source 2: Arpilleras created by Chilean women’s collectives, 1973–1985
Three arpilleras: detail from Todas las formas de lucha (All Types of Struggle), candelight solidarity vigil at church, and political prisoners.
Comprehension Exercises:
2. How is the first arpillera (Source 1) different than the others (Source 2)? How is it similar?
3. What message were the women who made the arpilleras in Source 2 trying to get across? Use details from the images to support your answer.
Source 3: Illustration of a traditional cueca, the national dance of Chile, and arpillera of the cueca sola, 1973–1985

During the dictatorship, mothers and wives of the disappeared would dance the cueca sola—alone, without the traditional partner—as a way of protesting the government. The arpillera reads: absence is endless, and I plead for awareness.

Source 4: Excerpt from Sting’s song, “They Dance Alone (Cueca Solo),” 1987

Why are there women here dancing on their own?
Why is there this sadness in their eyes?
Why are the soldiers here
Their faces fixed like stone?
I can’t see what it is that they despise…

It’s the only form of protest they’re allowed
I’ve seen their silent faces scream so loud
If they were to speak these words they’d go missing too
Another woman on a torture table what else can they do

They’re dancing with the missing
They’re dancing with the dead
They dance with the invisible ones
Their anguish is unsaid
They’re dancing with their fathers
They’re dancing with their sons
They’re dancing with their husbands
They dance alone
They dance alone


Comprehension Exercises:

4. Why do you think the cueca sola was seen as a form of protest? Why do you think it was necessary to protest in this unspoken way? Support your answer using evidence from the documents.

5. Considering all four sources, do you think that the mothers of the disappeared were successful in bringing attention to the horrors of the Chilean dictatorship? Why or why not?
Source 5: Photographs of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, 1977 and 2005
The sign in the 2005 photo reads: 30,000 Detained—Disappeared—PRESENT.


Source 6: First-hand account of the initial organization of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in 1977, published in 2002

Toward the end of September 1977, we are already more than fifty women, and our feelings grow closer with our growing numbers. Every time there are more of us. Every time we feel stronger and less afraid. Every time we feel safer together. But every time there are more children missing. At the benches on the side of the Plaza [de Mayo] we feel defiant, almost invincible for a few minutes. The truth is, they [the police, the authorities] don't know what to do with us. If there is anything left in their hearts, it is the line from all those macho tangos about “my poor old lady.” That keeps us safe for the moment. They think that we are crazed by grief, that we’ll last until we get tired of standing there with all our varicose veins or until one of us has a heart attack.


Comprehension Exercises:
6. How do the women visually convey their role as mothers? Looking at the images, how effective do you think their protest tactic was? Why?
7. Why do you think that the government left the women alone? Support your answer citing evidence from the documents.
Source 7: Excerpt from U2’s song, “Mothers of the Disappeared,” 1987

Midnight, our sons and daughters
Were cut down and taken from us
Hear their heartbeat
We hear their heartbeat

In the wind, we hear their laughter
In the rain, we see their tears
Hear their heartbeat
We hear their heartbeat


Comprehension Exercise:
8. Considering all of the information from this case study, why do you think that mothers in both Chile and Argentina received attention from international music icons? What effect do you think the songs had on their struggles? Explain your answer.
Additional Resources (all available from the LLILAS Outreach Lending Library):


About Hemispheres

Created in 1996, Hemispheres is the international outreach consortium at the University of Texas at Austin. Hemispheres utilizes University resources to promote and assist with world studies education for K–12 and postsecondary schools, businesses, civic and non-profit organizations, the media, governmental agencies, and the general public.

Comprised of UT’s four federally funded National Resource Centers (NRCs) dedicated to the study and teaching of Latin America; the Middle East; Russia, East Europe & Eurasia; and South Asia, Hemispheres offers a variety of free and low-cost services to these groups and more. Each center coordinates its own outreach programming, including management of its lending library, speakers bureau, public lectures, and conferences, all of which are reinforced by collaborative promotion of our resources to an ever-widening audience in the educational community and beyond.

Hemispheres fulfills its mission through: coordination of pre-service and in-service training and resource workshops for educators; promotion of outreach resources and activities via exhibits at appropriate state- and nation-wide educator conferences; participation in public outreach events as organized by the consortium as well as by other organizations; and consultation on appropriate methods for implementing world studies content in school, business, and community initiatives.

For more information, visit the Hemispheres Web site at: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/orgs/hemispheres/ or e-mail: hemispheres@austin.utexas.edu
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