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 Addresses 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)
Russia

Women’s Work or Women’s Rights? Russia after the Revolution
Among the lofty ideals of the Russian Revolution of 1917 was the idea of equality for women. Previously, under Tsarist rule, women were always subservient to men: first to their fathers, then to their husbands. This tradition was most clearly displayed at a traditional Russian wedding where the father passed a whip to the groom to symbolize the transfer of power from father to husband. Women’s domain was the home, which for high-born women might mean directing the servants, but for low-born women meant doing the work themselves. Toward the end of the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution brought more women out of the home and into the workforce, however they often filled the most menial and unskilled positions. Furthermore, women retained all their domestic responsibilities, causing a “double burden”—work outside the home followed by chores inside the home. Lenin himself spoke several times of housework as “household slavery.”

The new Russian leaders sought to alleviate both these burdens. In an effort to make women politically and legally equal to men, they gave women the right to vote in 1917, three years earlier than in the United States. By asserting the equality of women, they sought to allow women into all levels of industry. To alleviate the burden of housework, Communist leaders called for the creation of communal kitchens, week-long nurseries to care for children, and publicly-run laundries so that women could be transformed “from the ‘wife of a person’ into a person.” They felt that, thus freed from household responsibilities, women would be free to improve themselves through social clubs, adult education, and political activism.

Unfortunately, these great societal changes didn’t catch on. Propaganda posters in the 1920s lauded the advancements made by women, yet in the 1930s they were still attempting to draw women out of the kitchens. While some articles heralded women doing men’s work, others mentioned that women nonetheless wanted to remain feminine and fashionable.

After World War II, with the population decimated due to war casualties, Stalin wanted to increase the birth rate and women were once more praised for their roles as wives and mothers. Financial rewards were given to families with three or more children, and “Hero Mothers” who bore ten or more children were honored with a medal. Through the decades, whether through personal preferences or societal pressures, the emphasis continued to alternate between supporting women’s mental and physical qualities, or their feminine and maternal roles.

While creating equal roles for women, the early revolutionaries had taken into account a woman’s maternal needs and provided by law for mandated maternity leave, physical protection from overwork (such as banning women from night shifts), and deeming certain jobs as too dangerous for women. These laws were meant to protect women from physical harm to preserve their childbearing capabilities. However, a side result of this was that women were excluded from certain fields and restricted from certain levels of responsibility. Women tended to monopolize those fields deemed acceptable—light industry, teachers, and medicine. While a majority of Soviet doctors were women, doctors were not accorded the same prestige nor did they command the magnificent salaries that they do in the West. In the late 1980s, the average doctor’s salary was roughly comparable to that of the average industrial worker. To this day, medical doctors are among the lowest paid jobs in Russia.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, women have been particularly affected by the changes in political structure and the approach to a market society. Accustomed to the “safety net” of a regulated Soviet society where jobs were guaranteed, women were shocked to discover that if they took time off for maternity or lost their jobs, they could not return to work or find a new job. As rising unemployment has swept the country, women are the first laid off and the last to be hired. According to Human Rights Watch, in the early 1990s more than two-thirds of the unemployed were women. Some Russian officials suggest that this trend toward unemployment once again benefits women by relieving them of the “double burden” by allowing them to stay home and focus on their families. But the growing number of women living below the poverty line, dependent upon ex-husbands or their own parents for survival, belies the “benefit.”

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Source 1: Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Russian revolutionary leader, in a speech delivered at the Fourth Moscow City Conference of Non-Party Working Women, 1919

You all know that even when women have full rights, they still remain fatally downtrodden because all housework is left to them. In most cases housework is the most unproductive, the most barbarous and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the woman.


Source 2: Propaganda poster “What the October Revolution Has Given to Working and Peasant Women,” 1920

The woman worker points towards a library, a cafeteria, a maternity hospital, a daycare center, a workers’ club, and an adult education center.

Comprehension Exercises:
1. What do the sources reveal about traditional roles for women in pre-revolutionary Russia?
2. Based on these sources, how did the Russian revolution seek to change traditional gender roles? Explain your answer citing evidence from the documents.
3. Is the same sort of ideal for women illustrated in both posters? Do they accurately portray the situation for all Soviet women? How can you tell? Cite specific evidence from the documents to support your answer.
Women are invading every walk of life in Russia as a result of the Communist party’s drive to “get the women out of the kitchens.” The drive was launched by Lenin who said: “Every cook should know how to run the government.”

For the encouragement of those still lingering over the cookstove the daily papers run pictures of women working side by side with men in different lines of industry. Today’s Communist Youth Pravda features prominently a picture of four husky girls in red scarfs and short skirts carrying miners’ lamps. They are members of a “shock brigade” in one of the coal mines.

A legend above the picture reads: “Women work in the USSR at the time of the fifteenth anniversary of the revolution.” Below it is explained that before the revolution the women were held down and exploited and that when allowed to work they got the meaniest jobs and the lowest wages.

Under the piecework system they still earn less than men, but they can do almost any kind of work that they want to. There are women bricklayers, motormen, soldiers and militiamen; women military air pilots and thousands of women factory workers. American specialists in the Stalingrad tractor plant said that the women learned how to run the complicated machines more quickly than the men and were less inclined to loaf.

Only in the top ranks of the government is there a decided preponderance of men over women. Men hold most of the high positions, although Mme. Kolontai is famous as the only woman Ambassador in the world. Premier Molotoff’s wife is the head of the cosmetics trust.

Figures announced today give the number of women workers employed in industry in 1913 as 635,000 as against 1,449,000 in 1931. Women employed in other work in 1931, exclusive of agriculture, numbered 5,859,000. Thus, the total number of women in non-agricultural work last year was 7,308,000, which is more than one-third of the total number of workers, which is placed at 18,000,000.
Comprehension Exercises:

1. What do you think Lenin meant when he said, “Every cook should know how to run the government”?

2. List the different occupations mentioned in the article that Russian women engage in in 1932. Are these jobs traditionally considered masculine or feminine?

3. As of 1932, is there a realm of work that is still not open to women in Russia? Explain your answer citing evidence from the documents.

4. What are the similarities and differences between the poster images (sources 2 and 3) and the photographs in Source 4?
Source 5: Percentage of women that predominate in particular professions in the Soviet Union, 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Percentage that are Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typists</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day-care personnel</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatricians</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarians</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashiers</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing industry</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory personnel</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwives</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone operators</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial personnel in institutions</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer operators</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in food industries</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile workers</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Source 6: Interview with a 23-year-old woman in Moscow who lives with her husband and newborn daughter, 1983

…[W]hen they leave school many girls have great plans; they want to reach out, become something, accomplish something. But once they have a family, many settle for what they have. They may want something else, but out of fatigue or a lack of choice most of them adjust to the limited possibilities offered them. Here there are very few part-time jobs, which is a shame. One has to choose between working full time and staying at home. Of course women who stay home have more time, but their horizons become narrower and they become very introverted. So even if women have certain goals from the beginning, they eventually have to give up much of what they were striving for.

Men’s goals are more centered on prestige and a good salary. In my family, for instance, both Mama and Papa wanted to get their doctorates. But then I arrived, and only one of them could devote themselves to research. Mama thought she could do hers later. But Papa didn’t finish until recently. That’s why Mama never had the chance to do research, although she wanted to very much, and had plans and ideas. But she didn’t have the time.

Human Rights Watch report on “State Discrimination Against Women in Russia,” 1995

Economic and political changes in Russia have left many Russians staggering under the burdens of rising unemployment, high rates of inflation, disappearing social services and the encroaching threats of corruption and organized crime. Women in particular are suffering the consequences of such change: they face widespread employment discrimination that is practiced, condoned and tolerated by the government...

Far from attacking sex discrimination, the government actively participates in discriminatory actions and fails to enforce laws that prohibit sex discrimination. When asked about the problem of women’s unemployment in February 1993, Russia’s labor minister, Gennady Melikyan, responded, “Why should we employ women when men are out of work? It’s better that men work and women take care of children and do housework. I don’t think women should work when men are doing nothing.” ...

Labor legislation, held over from the Soviet era, continues to restrict women’s participation in the workforce. Soviet and Russian legislation historically prohibited women from working in particularly unhealthy or strenuous posts, such as underground jobs, or in positions that interfered with their responsibilities as mothers, such as night or weekend jobs. The Soviet legislature justified such limits on women’s labor as necessary to protect women’s ability to have and to raise children.

In addition to the restrictions on where and when women can work, Russian law extends—as did Soviet law—numerous protections and benefits to pregnant and nursing women as well as women with small children. Such parental benefits are extended only to women because Russian government policies reflect society’s expectation that women are and should be primarily responsible for child care. Men are prohibited by statute from taking advantage of these benefits unless they are raising children alone. Much of this protective legislation prevents women from competing on an equal basis in the labor market and perpetuates the stereotype of women as unreliable and expensive workers. ... [M]any employers use the cost of such gender-specific regulations to rationalize pressuring women to leave the workplace. ...

In fact, some government officials applaud the consequences of women’s unemployment as creating more jobs for men and encouraging women to have more babies and reverse negative population growth. Official statements encourage women to leave work and stay at home with their children as a way of alleviating the “double burden” of working at their jobs and in their homes. As a Moscow women’s rights activist has observed, “The new catch-phrase is: ‘Let’s return women to their natural destiny.’”


Comprehension Exercises:
5. In what sort of career fields do women predominate in 1970? How does this differ from the information projected in 1932? Support your answer by citing evidence from the documents.
6. What kinds of problems do Russian women confront in Source 6 and Source 7? In your opinion, have Russian women’s roles changed since the revolution? Explain your answer citing specific evidence from the documents.
7. Compare the opinion of housework given by Russian labor minister Gennady Melikyan in Source 7 with the one given by revolutionary leader Lenin in Source 1. How do they differ?
8. How has the perception of “women’s work” changed in Russia from the earliest post-revolution years? Explain your answer using the documents.
Additional Resources:


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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