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)
Women in the Indian Independence Movement: The Salt Protests of 1930
As part of the larger independence movement, Gandhi called for an end to the British monopoly and tax on salt in January 1930. Roughly a month later, Gandhi announced he would march to Dandi, a coastal city, to illegally manufacture salt. On the famous Dandi march through the villages of Gujarat, Gandhi started off with 70 peaceful, non-violent protesters (satyagraha). Along the way, people from villages and towns spontaneously joined the group. When the procession reached Dandi, thousands of people were walking with Gandhi. Among them were many women.

Gandhi included no women in his original group of 70 satyagraha and this drew considerable resentment from many female freedom fighters. Some wrote to him passionately urging him to invite women to participate. On the last day of the march, Sarojini Naidu, Gandhi’s close friend and a nationalist leader in her own right, insisted on joining him. Sarojini Naidu was among the most visible leaders (male or female) of pre-independent India. As president of the Indian National Congress and the first woman governor of free India, she was a fervent advocate for India, avidly mobilizing support for the Indian independence movement. She was also the first woman to be arrested in the salt march. Her presence signaled thousands of other women to join the protest. Some of the women who joined the salt march were wealthy elite women from cities, but the majority were ordinary village women. After the march to Dandi, thousands of women were breaking the salt law and leading protests all over the country. In fact, it is generally understood that the salt protest was made so successful precisely because of the many women who not only made salt, but who also sat openly in markets selling and buying it. This time marked a new level of participation by Indian women in the nationalist movement. The event is generally remembered as the first time masses of Indian women participated in the struggle for independence and marked the involvement of women from all walks of life, extending the movement out of its upper class enclave.

At first, Gandhi’s choice of salt as a symbol of protest had amused and bewildered many people—British officials, as well as members of his own Congress Party. But Gandhi recognized the symbolic power of salt and the significance of the seemingly trivial but essential details of daily living, which were often relegated to the domestic sphere of women. Salt is one of the cheapest commodities and an item that every woman buys and uses routinely almost without thought. Making salt, in defiance of British laws, became a way for Indian women to declare independence in a very personal way and in their own daily life. The action also revolutionized an understanding of the kitchen as linked to the nation; and of private, domestic space as linked to the public, political realm. This protest movement galvanized such large numbers of women into action precisely because the action, though simple, touched the everyday life of all Indian women.

The role of women in the salt protests fits into a larger understanding of the role of women in India's fight for freedom from British rule. At this time, ideas on women’s participation in the nationalist movement grew out of commonly held cultural beliefs on the nature of Indian women as essentially self-sacrificing and thus ideally suited to non-violent protest. Emphasizing these feminine qualities and their role as mothers, specifically as mothers of the nation, empowered women to find places in the public arena of protest. Gandhi and other nationalist leaders believed women were specifically well-suited to spread a message of non-violence and to bear the hardships of protest. The emphasis on the essential nature of the Indian woman created a new place for women in public life, a new self-view, where women could become agents of change in public spaces.
Source 1: Letter Sarojini Naidu wrote to her daughter Leilamani Naidu, March 4, 1921

Only remember that you are an Indian girl and that puts upon you a heavier burden than if you were an English girl born to a heritage of freedom. Remember that you have to help India to be free and the children of tomorrow to be free-born citizens of a free land, therefore—if you are true to your country’s need you must recognise the responsibility of your Indian womanhood. Nothing in your speech or action should cause the progress of Indian women to suffer, nothing in yourself should give room for wretched reactionary slave-minds to say, “This comes of giving too much education and freedom to our women.” Think over it my darling. You are not free—one is—in the sense of being a law unto yourself in defiance of all existing tradition in our country—for freedom is the heaviest bondage in one sense—since it entails duties, responsibilities and opportunities from which slaves are immune... Noblesse oblige! and the ampler the liberty the narrower the right to do as one pleases. And you my friend of delight...you must shine as a foremost gem in the crown of India’s freedom....You have in you all the seeds of true greatness: be great my little child, fulfill yourself nobly in accordance with all the profound and beautiful impulses and ideals of your nature...but always remembering that you are the symbol of India.

Sarojini Naidu, Selected letters, 1890s to 1940s, ed. Makarand Paranjpe (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996), 156–157.

Source 2: Gandhi on women and satyagraha

I have suggested...that woman is the incarnation of ahimsa. Ahimsa means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved...Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity...And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for that nectar. She can become the leader in satyagraha which does not require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith.

Women in the Indian Independence Movement

Source 3: Sarojini Naidu (lower right) accompanying Gandhi at end of march to Dandi, 1930

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Gandhi_Salt_March.jpg

Comprehension Exercises:
1. Compare Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu’s view of Indian women. How are they similar? How do they differ?
2. Do Gandhi and Naidu think that Indian independence will change the roles of Indian women? If so, how will women’s roles change?
3. List qualities of women that make them suited or not suited for political protest. Support your answer with examples from the documents.
Source 4: Interview with Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, nationalist leader, participant in salt protests and sister-in-law of Sarojini Naidu

Even though only a few women were chosen officially to take part in the salt satyagraha with which the Indian revolution opened on the morning of April 6, 1930, by sunset of that first day it had turned into a mass movement and swept the country.

On that memorable day thousands of women strode down to the sea like proud warriors. But instead of weapons, they bore pitchers of clay, brass and copper; and instead of uniforms, the simple cotton saris of village India.

...Women young and old, rich and poor, came tumbling out in their hundreds and thousands, shaking off the traditional shackles that had held them so long.

Valiantly they went forwards without a trace of fear or embarrassment. They stood at street corners with little packets of salt, crying out: “we have broken the Salt Laws and we are free! Who will buy the salt of freedom?” Their cries never went unheeded. Every passer-by stopped, slipped a coin into their hands and held out proudly a tiny pinch of salt.


Source 5: From lecture of woman writer and columnist Dr. Shakuntala Narasimhan, who describes Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

When Gandhiji announced his satyagraha, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was one of the two women (along with Avantikabai Gokhale) chosen for inclusion in the front line unit of seven volunteers at Bombay. The volunteers arrived at the beach, a sea of humanity...and began to boil seawater in small pans to make salt. She made small packets of the salt thus made and sold it to collect money for the aatyagraha movement. She went to the share market and auctioned her packets to the highest bidders. She then came up with a cheeky idea. She went inside the (High) court premises and held up a packet of salt and asked a startled magistrate if he would not buy “the salt freedom” and even the freedom movement. That was Kamaladevi; defiant and daring, but always with a touch of cheeky humour. (Unfortunately) there are no records of what the magistrate’s response was.

Source 6: Manufacturing contraband salt at the beach in Madras


Source 7: Women bringing brine to salt pans in Vile Parle Camp, Bombay during the civil disobedience movement, 1930

Comprehension Exercises:
4. Describe different classes or categories of women that participated in the independence movement.
5. Describe the attributes of the women from photographs in this section and the previous one. What are they wearing? What are they doing? How do their appearance and actions differ from those of the men in the photographs? Describe differences among the women pictured as well.
6. Which group of women does nationalist leader Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay focus on most in her account? Why do you think she concentrates her attention on this group?
Source 9: Excerpt from the autobiography of Bombay governor Frederick Sykes, 1942

Most remarkable of all was the attitude of the women. Many Indian ladies of good family and high intellectual attainments volunteered to assist in picketing and salt-making. Congress [The Congress Party of M.K. Gandhi] has no scruples in making use of them, knowing well the embarrassment which they would cause to the authorities.


Source 10: Government of India Official Report, 1930

…[T]housands of them, many being of good family and high educational attainments, suddenly emerged from the seclusion of their homes and in some instances from purdah, in order to join Congress demonstrations and assist in picketing; and their presence on these occasions made the work the police were required to perform particularly unpleasant.


Comprehension Exercises:

7. How do British officials react to women’s participation in the 1930s Salt Protests? Describe what they say citing the documents.
8. Describe different classes or categories of women that participate in the movement. What group of women are the British most concerned with in their accounts?
9. How do the British accounts differ from Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay’s description of the salt protests in the previous section? List differences citing the documents. What might account for the differences?
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/
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