

Syllabus

The Contemporary World, Semester A

Course Overview

The Contemporary World, Semester A, is a single-semester course designed to strengthen your knowledge about the modern world. In the first unit, you will explore how geography can help you gain a better understanding of the world and its people. In the second unit, you will learn about the influence of culture on the world. In the third unit, you will discover the relationship between art and society and study migration and population distribution. In the last unit, you will learn about the effect of physical processes on the environment and look at the ways people have adapted to and modified physical environments.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to do the following:

- Explain how geography is used to understand the world and its people.
- Analyze spatial organizations of people, places, and environments.
- Describe physical and human characteristics of places and regions.
- Analyze the role of culture and science and technology in contemporary societies.
- Explain the relationship between the arts and society.
- Examine the impact of geographic factors on the use and development of economic resources.
- Describe the characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations.
- Describe the uses and distribution of natural resources throughout the world.

General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Complete basic operations with word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.
- Understand the basics of spreadsheet software, such as Microsoft Excel or Google Spreadsheets, but having prior computing experience is not necessary.
- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
- Communicate through email and participate in discussion boards.

For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.

Credit Value

Contemporary World A is a 0.5-credit course.

Course Materials

- Notebook
- Computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft Excel or equivalent

Course Pacing Guide

This course description and pacing guide is intended to help you keep on schedule with your work. Note that your course instructor may modify the schedule to meet the specific needs of your class.

Unit 1: Geographic Thinking

Summary

In this unit, you will explain how geography is used to understand the world and its people. You will analyze spatial organizations of people, places, and environments. You will also analyze geographic, political, and cultural divisions within the United States and of different countries and regions. Finally, you will describe physical and human characteristics of places and regions.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
1 day: 1	Syllabus and Plato Student Orientation <i>Review the Plato Student Orientation and Course Syllabus at the beginning of this course.</i>	Course Orientation
3 days: 2–4	Geography Tools <i>Explain how geography is used to understand the world and its people.</i>	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 5–8	Map Skills <i>Analyze spatial organizations of people, places, and environments.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 9–12	The United States: Regions, States, and Cities <i>Analyze geographic, political, and cultural divisions within the United States.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 13–16	Countries and Regions of the World <i>Analyze geographic, political, and cultural divisions of countries and regions.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 17–20	Physical and Human Characteristics <i>Describe physical and human characteristics of places and regions.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 21–25	Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 1	Unit Activity/ Discussion
1 day: 26	Posttest—Unit 1	Assessment

Unit 2: Cultures and Societies

Summary

Unit 2 includes lessons that elaborate on the impact of historical events, culture, science and technology, and cultural diffusion on contemporary societies.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 27–30	Contemporary Societies <i>Explain how historical events influence contemporary societies.</i>	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 31–34	Culture <i>Analyze the role of culture within contemporary societies.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 35–38	Science, Technology, and Society <i>Describe the influence of science and technology on contemporary societies.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 39–42	Cultural Diffusion <i>Explain the impact of cultural diffusion on contemporary societies.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 43–47	Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 2	Unit Activity/ Discussion
1 day: 48	Posttest—Unit 2	Assessment

Unit 3: Human Systems

Summary

In Unit 3, you will describe how social institutions affect contemporary societies. You will explain the relationship between the arts and society and examine the impact of geographic factors on the use and development of economic resources. Toward the end of this unit, you will describe the characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 49–52	Social Institutions <i>Describe how social institutions affect contemporary societies.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 53–56	Expressions of Culture <i>Explain the relationship between the arts and society.</i>	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 57–60	Economic Activities and Geography <i>Explain how geographic factors affect the use and development of economic resources.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 61–64	Migration and Population Distribution <i>Describe the characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 65–69	Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 3	Unit Activity/ Discussion
1 day: 70	Posttest—Unit 3	Assessment

Unit 4: Environment and Society

Summary

In the last unit, you will analyze the effect of physical processes on the environment. You will describe the uses and distribution of natural resources throughout the world. Finally, you will identify ways that people have adapted to and modified physical environments.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 71–74	Physical Processes <i>Analyze the effect of physical processes on the environment.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 75–78	Natural Resources <i>Describe the uses and distribution of natural resources throughout the world.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 79–82	Human Interaction with the Environment <i>Identify ways that people have adapted to and modified physical environments.</i>	Lesson

Day	Activity/ <i>Objective</i>	Type
5 days: 83–87	Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 4	Unit Activity/ Discussion
1 day: 88	Posttest—Unit 4	Assessment
1 day: 89	Semester Review	
1 day: 90	End-of-Semester Exam	Assessment