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HON 332
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Middle to Middle: Middle Georgia Students Engaging in Middle Eastern Studies

Project Summary:

“Middle to Middle” will connect Middle Georgia high school students with the culture, politics, and history of the Middle Eastern region through a series of engaging, after school activities.

Target Community:

The target community for “Middle to Middle” is students in Bibb County high schools. Currently, the project is working with Westside High School and a confirmation email for presenting the project idea to their faculty is attached in the appendices. As an update, the project idea was presented to the faculty of Westside High School on December 4 and received an enthusiastic response and commitment from the principal to the program. In addition, the program was asked by Westside High School to assist the Social Studies department and students with the upcoming National History Day as a way to begin to build relationships. This year’s NHD theme is Conflict and Compromise, which will provide an opportunity to introduce some of the issues that the program will address next year. “Middle to Middle” will require collaboration between the project and the high school teachers in order to form an appropriate and engaging curriculum for high school students. Mercer International and Global Studies (IGS) students, along with community members with a connection to the Middle Eastern region, will be recruited to teach components of the curriculum.

Project Relevance and Rationale:

Even though the Middle East is closely connected with the United States foreign policy, American youth know very little about the region. A study shows that 63 percent of young Americans cannot identify Iraq or Saudi Arabia and that 75 percent cannot locate Iran or Israel (National Geographic, 2006). Considering how involved the United States is with the Middle East, it is imperative that the coming generation understand the region. The study found a connection between knowledge and level of schooling, as many high school students are not adequately taught about the Middle East. The Georgia Standards for World History includes 83 objectives, with more than 75 percent focusing on the Western world and only one objective focusing exclusively on a modern Middle Eastern issue (Georgia Department of Education, 2016). Bibb County has 11 schools that are labeled “chronically failing,” which in turn leads to an intense focus on Milestone Testing requirements (Chronically Failing Schools List, 2017). When a school is labeled as “chronically failing,” teachers begin to focus more on math and

reading capabilities, and overlook other important educational topics such as the Middle Eastern region.

“Middle to Middle” will provide a way for students to fill the educational gap and learn more about the Middle Eastern region through monthly meetings during the school year. World History students will have the opportunity to engage in interactive learning modules that cover different topics dealing with the Middle East, and in the process, become more well-rounded individuals with exposure to world views they might not otherwise know about. The hope for this program is that it will restart each year, inviting in a new class of 11th grade World History students to join in the program.

Project Objectives:

1. Increased student knowledge and interest of the Middle Eastern region, which will be measured by a knowledge pre and post survey
2. Provide students with an educational, yet engaging, after school program, which will be measured by the level of student involvement and commitment
3. Increased understanding of the harmful nature of stereotypes, which will be measured by a pre and post survey

The main goal for “Middle to Middle” is to increase students’ knowledge and interest of the Middle Eastern region. By the end of the program, students should know more about the Middle Eastern region than they did at the beginning of the program. The hope is that students will begin to question stereotypes and that the program will serve as a catalyst for an increased interest in the Middle East and desire for continuing education of the region

Implementation Plan:

“Middle to Middle” is an after school program that will engage students in Middle Eastern culture and political affairs. In order to accomplish this, the “Middle to Middle” program will focus its attention on high school students and adapt the program throughout years to come in order to continue student engagement. Many local Bibb County high schools have been contacted, and one high school in particular, Westside, is eager to work with the “Middle to Middle” curriculum. Before implementing the full program, it is necessary to work with specific teachers in order to pilot the curriculum. The curriculum will be introduced next semester through a focus group setting in order to identify what students found engaging and what students found disengaging. This also will be a way to gauge student interest, as well as provide opportunity for tabling before school and during the lunch hour in order to see how many students outside of the pilot classrooms would be interested in such a program. An outline of the curriculum is attached in the appendices.

One problem that “Middle to Middle” might face is attendance. In general, it is difficult to encourage students in lower income schools to engage during the school day itself (Boschma and Brownstein, 2016), let alone have students participate in an educational after school program. It will require brainstorming between the faculty of the school and “Middle to Middle” associates in order to find a proper marketing plan that would engage students in the program. One such possible solution suggested by faculty at Westside High School is that this program might provide supplemental learning opportunities through the form of extra credit.

Once the curriculum has been piloted and the interest of the program gauged, the program will be fully implemented by August 2018. The curriculum will span the length of the 2018-19 school year, allotting for monthly meetings with the students to discuss new topics dealing with the Middle East. Mercer student volunteers will be needed in order for “Middle to Middle” to properly engage students. High school students can easily get off topic when it comes to small group discussions, therefore it is imperative to have Mercer students sitting in on each of the discussion groups in order to help guide discussion. “Middle to Middle” will recruit students from the International and Global Studies department by explaining the benefits of the program has for the students in the high schools, as well as other interested Mercer students. They will be able to use the hours as service and leadership hours, which many organizations require.

Budget:

\$200.00 for Middle Eastern reference books: This money will be used to purchase reference books for the pilot classrooms that will be used in developing curricular materials.

\$300.00 for printing: This money will be used for printing of curricular material, informational handouts, and promotional materials, such as posters and brochures during the implementation process.

\$250.00 for Middle Eastern food and serving materials: This money will be used when implementing the curriculum in order to produce excitement about the program and learning about the Middle East in general. Food would include small candies and easy snacks, as well as drinks. The money will also be used for plates, napkins, cups, and silverware.

\$350.00 in QEP grant money: This money will be used for both Middle Eastern food and printing of curricular material, informational handouts, and promotional materials during the piloting phase of the project.

Project Timeline

Date	Description of Task	Person Assigned
Oct 2017	Contact high school principals	Maddie Zgonc
Dec 2017	Present project to Westside faculty	Maddie Zgonc

Jan 2018	Finalize curriculum	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Jan 2018	Design pre and post curriculum surveys	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Jan 2018	Apply for IRB approval	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Mar 2018	Pilot curriculum in classrooms/focus groups	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
May 2018	Revise curriculum	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Aug 2018	Implement curriculum	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Sep 2018	Monthly meeting for “Middle to Middle”	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Nov 2018	Monthly meeting for “Middle to Middle”	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Dec 2018	Monthly meeting for “Middle to Middle”	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Jan 2019	Monthly meeting for “Middle to Middle”	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Feb 2019	Monthly meeting for “Middle to Middle”	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Mar 2019	Monthly meeting for “Middle to Middle”	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
Apr 2019	Monthly meeting for “Middle to Middle”	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
May 2019	Monthly meeting for “Middle to Middle”	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes
May 2019	Evaluate pre and post curriculum surveys	Maddie Zgonc and David Stokes

Evaluation and Dissemination:

In order to measure the success of “Middle to Middle”, surveys will be distributed pre and post program. Not only will students have the opportunity to take a survey pre and post program, but surveys will be implemented throughout the pilot phase as well. The pilot curriculum surveys will provide “Middle to Middle” with valuable insight on the needs of the students and what students responded to, as surveys will assess both methods and knowledge. The surveys throughout the actual implementation of the program will provide valuable information on what the students gained from the program as a whole. These surveys will need to be approved by the IRB.

“Middle to Middle” will disseminate the results of the curriculum to the faculty of Westside High School, as well as during “Bear Day”.

References:

Brownstein, J. B. (2016, February 29). The Concentration of Poverty in American Schools.

Retrieved December 04, 2017, from
<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/02/concentration-poverty-american-schools/471414/>

The Governor's Office of Student Achievement. (2017, January 5). Chronically Failing Schools List. Retrieved from
http://gov.georgia.gov/sites/gov.georgia.gov/files/related_files/press_release/Chronically%20Failing%20Schools%20List%2001072017.pdf

Georgia Department of Education. (n.d.). Social Studies Standards of Excellence: World History. Retrieved October 21, 2017, from <https://www.georgiastandards.org/GeorgiaStandards/Documents/Social-Studies-World-History-Georgia-Standards.pdf>

National Geographic Education Foundation. (2006). National Geographic-Roper Public Affairs: 2006 Geographic Literacy Study. Retrieved from
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/roper2006/pdf/FINALReport2006GeogLitsurvey.pdf>

Appendices:

Annotated Bibliography

Alexander, N. (2002). The question of Middle Eastern Studies. *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought*, (2), 149.

This article focuses on the evolution of Middle Eastern studies and how it is treated today. Alexander explains that the study of the Middle East began with a focus on Western ideals and modernity, but slowly transformed into an inward focus on civil society. This article will be helpful when developing a curriculum, as one can view how the curriculum itself has transformed through the years and what mistakes I should avoid when creating the curriculum.

Bloom, J. (1998). *Culture and Conflict in the Middle East: Whose Jerusalem? A High School Curriculum. Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminars Abroad, 1998 (Israel and Jordan)*.

This curriculum is divided into three parts: general introduction of the Middle East and Middle Eastern religions, deeper understanding of Judaism and Islam, and the creation of a final project. It provides educators with a daily curriculum for each part, which includes topics as well as activities. Many of these ideas are for both large groups and small groups, such as brainstorming activities and might have never been thought of when forming the new curriculum.

Educator's Resources. (n.d.). Retrieved October 21, 2017, from
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast/educators/index.html>

This webpage provides many resources for educators when teaching the Middle East, including lesson plans, timelines, and background guides. The resources are categorized into two main groups labeled “connecting question” and “explore a theme”, while also providing multimedia programs for lessons. This resource will be helpful when attempting to create categories for the curriculum and when finding videos to show to the students.

Georgia Department of Education. (n.d.). Social Studies Standards of Excellence: World History. Retrieved October 21, 2017, from <https://www.georgiastandards.org/GeorgiaStandards/Documents/Social-Studies-World-History-Georgia-Standards.pdf>

This resource outlines exactly what World History (11th grade social studies) teachers are expected to cover throughout the school year. One can see that the standards are Eurocentric, with 61 out of 83 objectives focusing on the Western world, while only one objective focuses solely on a modern Middle Eastern issue. The Georgia Standards will prove useful as I express the necessity for a Middle Eastern studies curriculum to be placed in high schools.

Lesson Plans. (n.d.). Retrieved October 21, 2017, from <https://cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/lessons>

This webpage provides educators with lesson plans for teaching certain topics on the Middle East. An educator can go on the website and search for lesson plans for different grade levels and different topics, ranging from history to current events to culture and gender. The abundance of lesson plans proves to be a good resource when attempting to create an engaging curriculum for high school students.

Lovom, M., & Dristas, V. (2017). The Mt. Lebanon Project: Partnering to Re-Envision the Teaching of World History. *History Teacher*, 50(3), 331-358).

This article explains the reason for Eurocentric history curriculums and how this particular school district overcame it and formulated a new curriculum. The article provides an implementation timeline, the actual curriculum, the challenges they faced, and the next steps that need to be taken in order to reach success. The authors provide useful insight regarding the difficulties of teaching the Middle East and what might be expected when attempting to implement a new curriculum in schools for middle and high school students.

Lovorn, M., Manning, P., & Warsh, M. A. (2017). Entering a New Era in World History Education. *History Teacher*, 50(3), 321-329.

This article provides summaries of conference material from a conference called “Researching World History in the Schools”. The material encourages the importance and benefits of a global understanding and a less Eurocentric history curriculum. While this article is a broader view of the issue, it can provide data and information needed to convince schools that the after-school curriculum is needed.

Muhtaseb, A., Algan, E., & Bennett, A. (2014). Teaching Media and Culture of the Middle East to American Students. *International Research And Review*, 4(1), 8-17.

This article highlights two complimentary Middle Eastern studies courses offered at California State University San Bernardino. The professors who taught the courses explain some of the main challenges they had teaching the material, including overcoming previous biases and competing with media coverage of the region. Not only does the article focus on the challenges,

but it also provides suggestions to overcome them that worked for these two courses, which is very helpful to know when implementing a curriculum.

Teaching Resources. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://ncmideast.org/outreach/teaching/>

The University of North Carolina and Duke University created a webpage that holds many different resources for educators when teaching the Middle East to their students. The resources provided are labeled by topic and age group and include curriculum, quizzes, podcasts, and classroom activities. This webpage will provide useful insight as I work to create an engaging afterschool curriculum for high school students.

An email from Westside High School confirming “Middle to Middle” presentation at their December faculty meeting

From: "Robinson, Scott" <Scott.Robinson@BCSDK12.NET>
Subject: December faculty meeting
Date: November 16, 2017 at 8:19:12 AM EST
To: "maddieZgonc@gmail.com" <maddieZgonc@gmail.com>
Cc: "Daniely, Julia" <Julia.Daniely@bcsdk12.net>

Maddie,

Westside would love to welcome you to present your ideas briefly at our December faculty meeting. I am ready to work with you on some specifics. Please run any and all questions by me.

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**MIDDLE TO
MIDDLE:
MIDDLE GEORGIA
STUDENTS ENGAGING IN
MIDDLE EASTERN
STUDIES**

MODULE ONE

DIVERSITY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

PURPOSE

Offers a brief introduction to the Middle East, allowing students to have an overall understanding of the region before diving deeper into specific issues

ACTIVITIES

NAME GAME

Students will sit in a circle and state their name with an adjective that begins with the same letter as their name. Each student after that will say their name and adjective, as well as all other students' name and adjective before them.

BODY-MAPPING

Students will create a "body-map" where they create a picture using words and drawings that describe their life. This activity will introduce the idea of diversity within the group in order to understand diversity in the Middle East.

IS THIS THE MIDDLE EAST?

Students are shown pictures of places around the world and must guess whether the pictures are from the Middle East or from a different region.

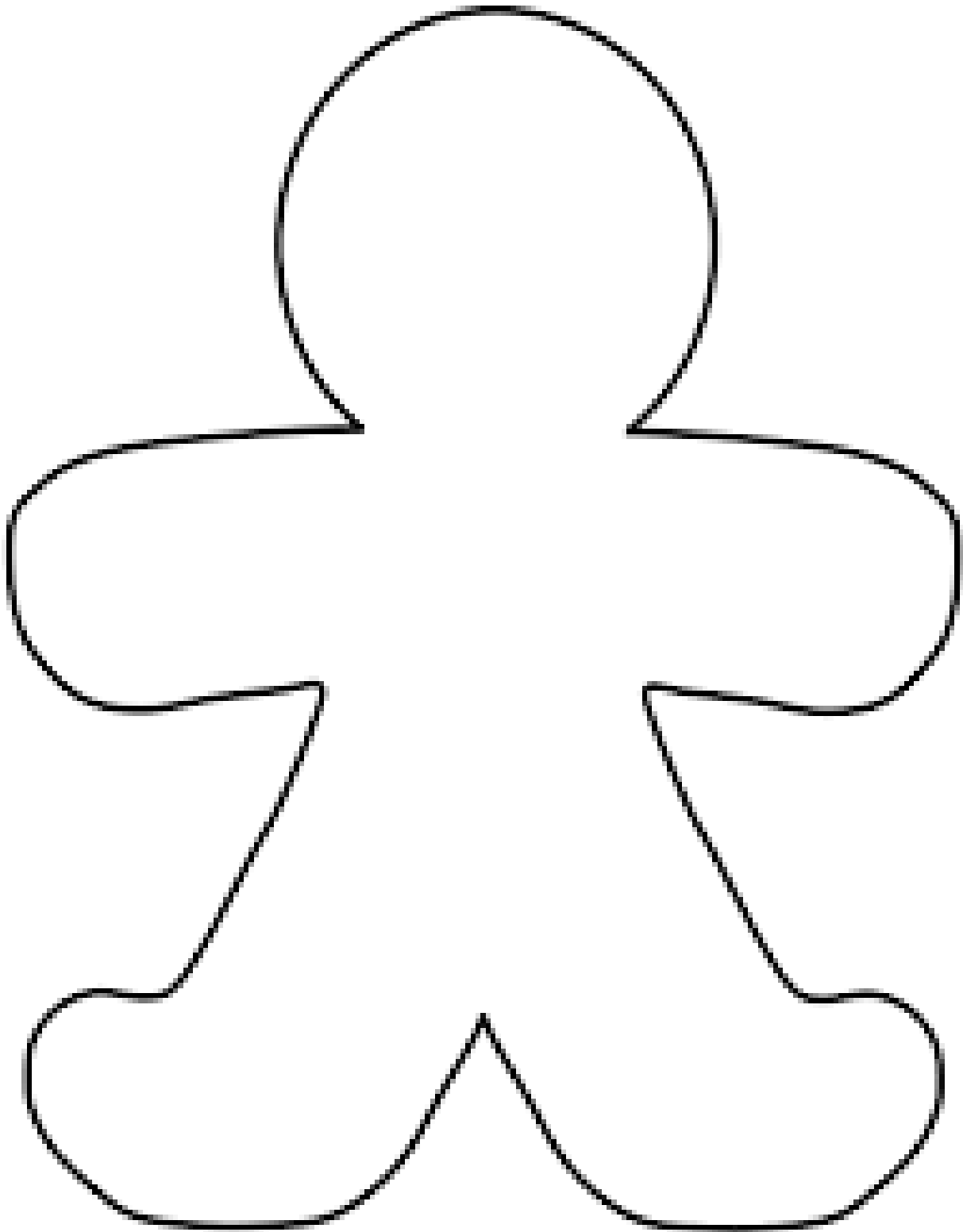
PRESENTATION

Students are presented with 10 minutes of information about the diversity of the Middle East (presentation attached)

DISCUSSION

After small group discussion, the group will come together to debrief what they discussed in their small groups.

BodyMap



MODULE TWO

RELIGION

PURPOSE

Offers an introduction to the different religious ideologies and how religion plays a centralized role in both public and private life in the Middle Eastern region.

ACTIVITIES

JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, OR ISLAM?

Students split into groups and are given pieces of paper that have descriptions related to each of the three religions. They must organize the pieces of paper into the categories correctly. Whichever group finishes the activity first wins (descriptions and categories attached)

PRESENTATION

Students are presented with 10 to 15 minutes of information about the different religions presented (presentation attached)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Students are in groups of 4 to 5 with a Mercer student serving as a facilitator and will discuss a short article about Middle Eastern religions for 20 minutes (questions attached)

DISCUSSION

After small group discussion, the group will come together to debrief what they discussed in their small groups.

Judaism, Christianity, or Islam?

Judaism	Christianity	Islam	All
Oldest monotheistic religion	Holy text is the Bible	Holy text is the Qu'ran	Monotheistic
Holy text is the Torah	Belief in a three dimensional God	Jesus is a prophet	Abrahamic religion
Celebration of Yom Kippur	Jesus is the Son of God	Founded in Mecca	Identifies Jerusalem as a historic Holy site
Celebration of the Passover	Celebration of Easter and Christmas	Follows the teachings of the Five Pillars of Faith	Focuses on the treatment of people
Follows 10 commandments and 603 laws	Focus on faith over works	Protects the belief of the other two main monotheistic religions	Belief in heaven and hell

MODULE THREE

THE ARAB SPRING

PURPOSE

Provides students with a basic understanding of the complexity of the Arab Spring and the continued effects that it has on the world

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVISM POSTER

Students create their own poster focusing on any activism issue they choose in order to introduce the idea of protest in the Middle East.

VIDEO

Students will view a short video explaining the basics of the Arab Spring

PRESENTATION

Students are presented with 10 minutes of information about the Arab Spring that delves deeper into the topic (presentation attached)

NARRATIVE CREATION

Students will create a short story, poem, song, acrostic, etc. explaining the Arab Spring. This activity is meant to be less structured and engage students in free writing.

DISCUSSION

After the narrative creation, the group will come together to either read or summarize their work to the class.

MODULE FOUR

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

PURPOSE

Offers an introduction to Middle Eastern political life and the diverse political systems present in the Middle Eastern region

ACTIVITIES

VIDEO

Students are shown a short video offering easily understandable background information about the conflict.

PRESENTATION

Students are presented with 10 to 15 minutes of interactive information about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that delves deeper into the topic (presentation attached)

DEBATE

Students will be assigned to represent either Palestinian or Israeli people and debate why their people group deserves to govern the geographic area. The purpose of this exercise is to show the emotionally charged conversation that a land-conflict can create, as well as demonstrate that no matter what side one looks at, all groups of people desire a place to call home.

DISCUSSION

After small group discussion, the group will come together to debrief what they discussed in their small groups.

MODULE FIVE

REFUGEE CRISIS

PURPOSE

Provides students with an overview of the refugee crisis occurring throughout the Middle East and how it is handled in both the regional and global community

ACTIVITIES

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SIMPLE OBJECT

Students are handed a piece of paper with an outline of a suitcase. They will draw five items they would take with them if they were forced to leave all they have ever known behind. The students will then present their drawings to the group (outline attached)

PRESENTATION

Students are presented with 10 to 15 minutes of interactive information about the different refugee crises that have occurred in the past and are occurring currently (presentation attached)

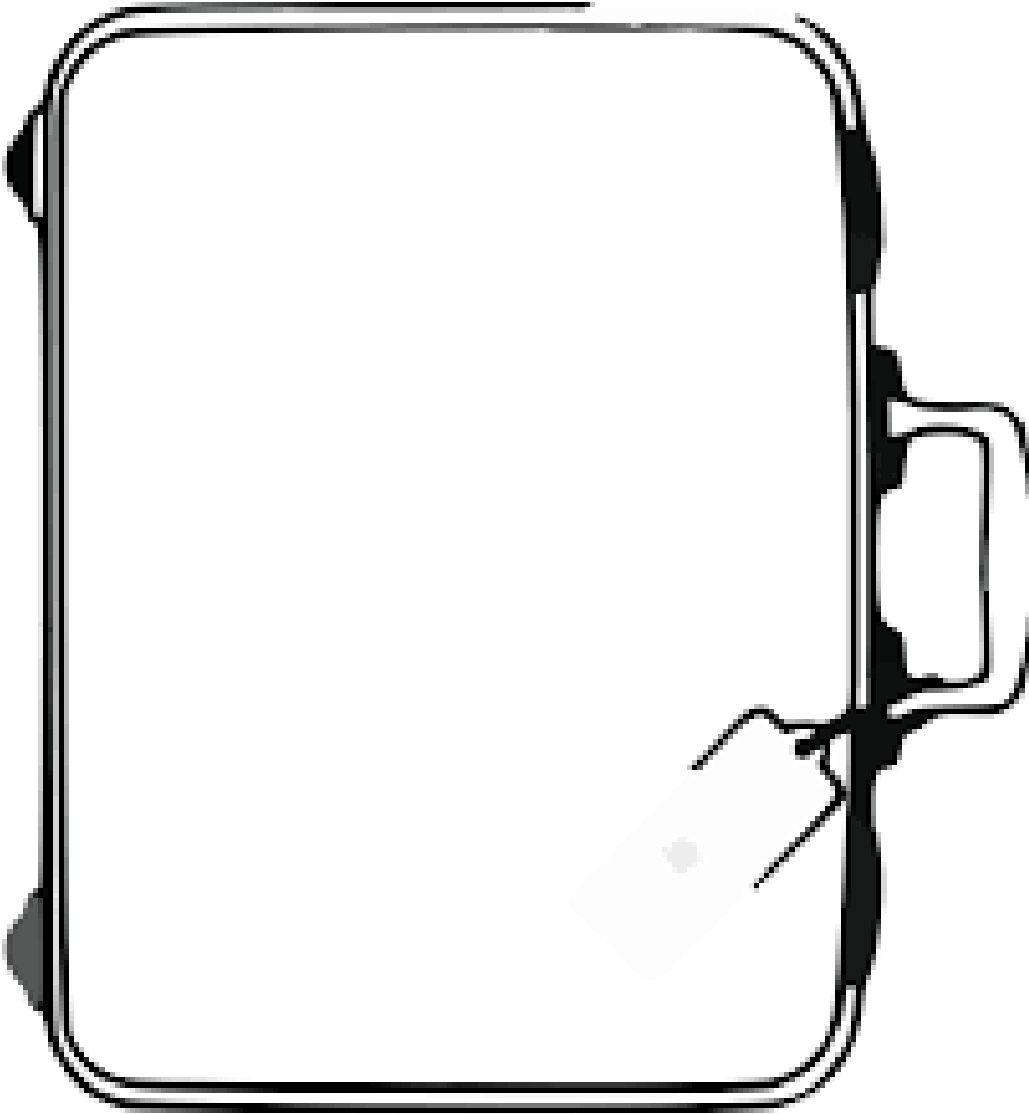
LETTER WRITING

Students will read refugee's stories and then write a letter to a refugee resettled in Georgia.

DISCUSSION

After writing a letter, the group will come together to debrief what they found shocking when reading the different stories and how it felt to write a letter to a resettled refugee.

Importance of a Simple Object



MODULE SIX

WOMEN AND GENDER

PURPOSE

Offers students a proper understanding of the role of women in the Middle East, while addressing some of the stereotypes associated with the Middle Eastern region as a whole

ACTIVITIES

“WE ARE HERE”

Students are shown the short UN Women documentary project labeled “We Are Here”, which depicts the important work that women are doing for gender equality in the Middle East.

PRESENTATION

Students are presented with 10 to 15 minutes of interactive information about women and gender that delves deeper into the topic (presentation attached)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Students are in groups of 4 to 5 with a Mercer student serving as a facilitator and will discuss questions about women and gender for 20 minutes (questions attached)

DISCUSSION

After small group discussion, the group will come together to debrief what they discussed in their small groups.

MODULE SEVEN

MIDDLE EAST-UNITED STATES RELATIONS

PURPOSE

Provides students with a better understanding of the relationship that the United States has with different countries located in the Middle East

ACTIVITIES

TAGLINE

Students break up into groups to create a tagline that they believe to describe the Middle East-United States relationship.

PRESENTATION

Students are presented with 10 to 15 minutes of interactive information about Middle East-United States relations (presentation attached)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Students are in groups of 4 to 5 with a Mercer students serving as a facilitator and will answer questions about Middle East-United States relations for 20 minutes (questions attached)

DISCUSSION

After small group discussion, the group will come together to debrief what they discussed in their small groups.

MODULE EIGHT

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

PURPOSE

Allows for students to explore the different forms of foreign aid and development assistance given to the Middle East and the impact the aid and assistance has on the region

ACTIVITIES

UNITED STATES FOREIGN AID BUDGET

Students are shown a map that depicts the foreign aid that the United States gives to other countries. The map will demonstrate that the focus of U.S. efforts is in Egypt and Israel, where Western political interests lie.

PRESENTATION

Students are presented with 10 minutes of interactive information about foreign aid (presentation attached)

DEBATE

Students will be split into two sides of the Development Assistance spectrum: helping and hurting. Students will be given 5 minutes to formulate an argument and debate why Development Assistance is either helping or hurting the Middle East.

DISCUSSION

After the debate, students will gather back together and discuss the positive and negative aspects of current development assistance and what can be done to ensure the best development practices.

MODULE NINE

THE ARAB LEAGUE

PURPOSE

Offers an introduction to the Arab League, its history and current work, in order for students to understand the inner-workings of regional cooperation

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION

Students are presented with 10 minutes of interactive information about Middle Eastern collaborative work (presentation attached)

MODEL ARAB LEAGUE

Each student represents a country that is in the actual Arab League in order to better understand how diverse the Middle East is in terms of politics, and how the rest of the topics covered throughout the year influence political decisions.

DISCUSSION

After a brief Model Arab League, the group will come together to debrief what they gained from the experience.

MODULE TEN

CULTURAL CELEBRATION

PURPOSE

Provides students with a fun opportunity to engage in Middle Eastern culture after learning about the region throughout the year

ACTIVITIES

FOOD

Culturally appropriate food and drink from throughout the region will be served

GAMES

(Traditional games played in the Middle East)

DANCE

A member of the community will teach the students a traditional dance from the Middle East

TRIVIA

Students will split into two teams and participate in a trivia game that encompasses all the topics from throughout the year. The winning team will win a prize.

MUSIC

Middle Eastern music will play throughout the celebration