Introduction to the Social Sciences

Pasco eSchool: 2014-2015

Subject: Interdisciplinary and Applied Social Studies.
Course Length: 32 Weeks-Full Year (Y)

Credits: 1.0
Grade Level(s): 9, 10, 11, 12

Overview

Using content from Big History, Intro to the Social Sciences is a 9-12th grade course that discusses Social Science disciplines while exploring 13.9 Billion years of history from the Big Bang and the creation of the universe to modern day. This interdisciplinary study includes the following content area strands: American History, World History, Earth Space Science, Economics, Geography, Humanities, Civics, Government, as well as Math and Language Arts. The primary content emphasis for this course pertains to the study of the scope, focus and methodology of the social sciences through the study of big history questions and themes. Big history explores how we are connected to everything around us and where we may be heading. It provides a foundation for thinking about the future and the changes that are reshaping our world through problem solving and inquiry based learning.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Classify different categories of the social sciences and possible careers within the discipline.
- Articulate a coherent narrative of the Universe, from the Big Bang to today. This narrative should incorporate multiple disciplines, and include details from small- and large-scale aspects of the story.
- Make use of complex scientific and historical facts in constructing explanations of the universe.
- Evaluate key historical and scientific concepts from a variety of scholarly disciplines.
- Identify ones community and humanity as a whole within the big history narrative of the Universe.
- Evaluate, analyze, and justify the validity of their own and others' claims.
- Conduct rigorous historical investigations by framing researchable problems, finding relevant sources of information across a range of disciplines and formats, analyzing and evaluating evidence, and constructing narratives, explanations, and arguments.
- Critically read, synthesize, and analyze primary and secondary historical, scientific and technical texts, and other resources.
- Communicate big history ideas, evidence, narratives, explanations, and arguments to a variety of audiences through individual or shared writing, speaking, and other formats.

Course Structure

The course is divided into two sections and a total of 10 units that span 13.7 billion years.

Segment One: Formations and Early Life

- Unit 1: Introduction to the Social Sciences and Big History Investigation: What are the branches of Social Science? Why look at things from far away and from close up?

Course Themes

Thresholds

Big history looks at eight points in time where we see massive leaps forward in both human and nonhuman history. These "thresholds" include the first stars, the formation of the Earth, the development of the human species' ability to learn collectively, and the development of agriculture. As social scientists, we will examine these thresholds, what it took to cross it, and what immerged on the other side.

Scale

Big history deals with many different scales in time and space: huge and tiny objects, such as galaxies and atoms; short and long events, from events that lasted a billionth of a second to those that span billions of years. To understand big history, it is important to grasp these different scales in time and space, see the relationships between them, and recognize how different scales enable diverse ways of seeing.

Claim Testing

Studying the past is difficult in part because events that didn't take place in the present cannot always be easily verified. All scholars, whether they are historians, biologists, or astronomers, must justify the claims they make about the past. Focusing on four main claim testers: authority, evidence, intuition, and logic, this course will help students to learn to evaluate whether something is true or not and identify what researchers use to identify these sources.

- Unit 2: The Big Bang
  Investigation: When and why should people change their minds?
- Unit 3: Stars & Elements
  Investigation: How do new points of view pave the way for progress?
- Unit 4: Our Solar System & Earth
  Investigation: When and why do people accept a theory?
- Unit 5: Life
  Investigation: How and why have people misused Darwin's ideas?

Segment Two: Humans

- Unit 6: Early Humans
  Investigation: How does language make humans different from other animals?
- Unit 7: Agriculture & Civilization
  Investigation: Was farming an improvement over foraging?
- Unit 8: Expansion & Interconnection
  Investigation: What can two diseases tell us about how our world has changed?
- Unit 9: Acceleration
  Investigation: To what extent has the Modern Revolution been a positive or a negative force?
- Unit 10: The Future
  Investigation: Are humans still evolving?

Course Standards

Because this is an interdisciplinary course, content aligns with an incorporates both the Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS) and Mathematics Florida Standards (MAFS) as well as Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in a wide range of subjects and skills including:

- World History
- American History
- Geography
- Humanities
- Health (literacy concepts)
- Economics
- Civics and Government
- Earth Space Science
- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12
- Standards for Speaking and Listening
- Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subject.

For a full list of standards and themes, please visit
http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewCourse/Preview/618#

Collective Learning

Collective learning means sharing what you have learned with others so that the knowledge available to everyone increases over time, from generation to generation. Collective learning is unique to our own species and explains why human technologies have become increasingly powerful. Understanding the concept of collective learning helps us understand

Big History Big Picture Questions

Big history requires students to examine big questions. In this course, students get to participate in the important and exciting work of exploring, developing, and testing big answers.

- How has the Universe and life within it grown more complex over the past 13.7 billion years?
- How do we know what we know about the past?
- How can we judge claims about the past?
- Why does what we "know" change over time?
- How does what happened during the early days of the Universe, the Solar System, and the Earth shape what we are experiencing today?

Instructor Contact Information

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