

Curriculum Development
In the Fairfield Public Schools

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

YOUTH AND THE LAW

Board of Education Approved 03/25/2008

YOUTH AND THE LAW

Social Studies Department Scope and Sequence

This semester course is open to juniors and seniors as an elective part of the Social Studies program. Youth and the Law is a one-credit, semester course usually offered in both the fall and spring semesters. There is no prerequisite.

Statement of Purpose

Under our democratic political system, the United States has achieved a level of freedom, political stability and economic prosperity that has made it a model for other nations. Students should understand that our rights and freedoms are not accidents of history but, in large part, the result of the fundamental principles and values underlying our Constitution, laws and legal system which are driven by the individual's willingness to participate and affect outcomes. Current issues and controversies relating to law and our legal system serve as the ideal foundation of study for a student to effectively analyze our system of justice. Through this foundation and analysis students should develop an understanding of the roles that law, lawyers, law enforcement, and our legal system play in our society. These understandings will empower students with the ability and the willingness to resolve disputes through informal, and where necessary, formal mechanisms and create a greater sense of justice, tolerance, and fairness.

Design and Description

The Youth and the Law course deals with an introduction to law and the legal system and includes the study of criminal law and individual rights and liberties, torts, and product liability. This course is typically heterogeneously grouped and designed to accommodate various academic levels in the same class setting. Throughout the course of the semester students study various concepts to provide a practical understanding of law and the legal system that will be of use to students in their everyday lives. From their study and analysis students will have a greater awareness of current issues and controversies relating to law and our legal system. This should apprise students of the continuing developmental nature of our law and legal system. Their study and analysis should promote greater understanding of how unsettled matters in the law contribute to the development of the fundamental democratic principles and values that underlie our system of justice.

The course content and skill development is appropriate to eleventh and twelfth grade level and may typically be part of a student's senior year elective program. During the semester in Youth and Law students will have an opportunity to improve their skills, including critical thinking and reasoning, communication, observation and problem solving. Students will have opportunities to hone skills in reading, writing, and presenting their ideas. This semester course also seeks to encourage effective citizen participation in our legal system and expose students to the many vocational opportunities that exist within our legal system.

Course Objectives

Students should:

- describe the roles that law, the courts, lawyers, law enforcement officers and the legal system play in our democratic society and apply a practical understanding of law and the legal system that will be of use to them in their everyday lives.

- apply democratic principles to evaluate proposed resolutions of contemporary controversies currently in our legal system and describe and apply effective citizen participation in our legal system through advocacy, participation on juries, voting, and public service.
- use skills, including critical thinking and reasoning, communication, observation, and problem solving to describe, synthesize and analyze current issues related to law and our legal system.

Essential Questions

- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- How do principles in the United States Constitution impact individual, local, state and national decisions? (CT)
- How can citizens shape and influence democratic processes and government? (CT)
- Why do governments exist and how do they work? (CT)

Units of Instruction Outline

- I. Introduction to Law and the Legal System
- II. Individual Rights and Liberties
- III. Due Process and Equal Protection
- IV. Responsibility Under Law
- V. Civil Law/ Torts

Connecticut Social Studies Standards

Connecticut State Standards are met in the following areas:

- CCS1: Historical Thinking***
- CCS6: Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens***
- CCS7: Political Systems***
- CCS5: United States Constitution and Government***

Common Assessment

Course Materials

Main Text:

Arbetman, Lee P. and Edward L. O'Brien. Street Law: A Course in Practical Law 6th Ed.
 New York: West Publishing Co., 1999.
You and the Law. 1993.

Information and Technology Standards (to be added)

UNITS of STUDY

I. Introduction to Law and the Legal System

Core Topics

- Nature and sources of our law; jurisprudence
- Law and Values
- Legal interpretation
- Conflict resolution as a process

Essential Questions

- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- Why do governments exist and how do they work? (CT)

Connecticut Performance Standards

Students will:

- 7.9-10.1 evaluate the importance of developing self-government so as to restrict arbitrary power.
- 7.9-10.3 describe how constitutions may limit government in order to protect individual rights and promote the common good.
- 7.11-12.2 explain how purposes served by government have implications for the individual and society.

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- describe the roles that law, the courts, lawyers, law enforcement officers and the legal system play in our democratic society.
- apply a practical understanding of law and the legal system that will be of use to them in their everyday lives.
- demonstrate the fundamental principles and values underlying our Constitution, laws, and legal system.

Focus Questions

- What is the nature and purpose of our law?
- What are the various ways our laws are made?
- How does interpretation of both the letter and spirit of our laws have impact on our everyday lives?

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- read to interpret and apply information.
- take useful notes, and organize notes in a meaningful task dependent manner.
- evaluate the quality, credibility and reliability of information.
- communicate information, resolution and solutions to authentic problems ways.

- write and present persuasively using specific supporting material from a variety of sources with appropriate citations.
- transpose and synthesize information from sources to graphic organizers.
- demonstrate effective and appropriate questioning and critical thinking skills.

Sample Assessment

- Using *The Meyer's Case: Decision at Sea* students will demonstrate a persuasive argument based on the guiding principles and skills learned in this unit.

Pacing

2 weeks

II. Individual Rights and Liberties

Core Topics

- The First Amendment
- Search and Privacy
- Fifth and Sixth Amendment Rights

Essential Questions

- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- How do principles in the United States Constitution impact individual, local, state and national decisions? (CT)
- How can citizens shape and influence democratic processes and government? (CT)
- Why do governments exist and how do they work? (CT)

Connecticut Performance Standards

Students will:

- 1.9-10.3 use primary source documents to analyze multiple perspectives.
- 5.11-12.1 apply an understanding of historical and contemporary conflicts over the Constitutional principles.

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- apply a practical understanding of law and the legal system that will be of use to them in their everyday lives.
- demonstrate the fundamental principles and values underlying our Constitution, laws, and legal system.
- synthesize both primary and secondary sources of information, and evaluate the viewpoints expressed in these sources, on the challenges facing our legal system.
- use skills, including critical thinking and reasoning, communication, observation, and problem solving to describe, synthesize and analyze current issues related to law and our legal system.

Focus Questions

- How have judicial rulings attempted to maintain a balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of society?
- How far do we go to protect individual rights under the First, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendments?

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- read to interpret and apply information.
- take useful notes, and organize notes in a meaningful task dependent manner.
- compare and contrast viewpoints from various sources.
- communicate information, resolution and solutions to authentic problems.

- write and present persuasively using specific supporting material from a variety of sources with appropriate citations.
- demonstrate effective and appropriate questioning and critical thinking skills.

Sample Assessment

- Students will take a position on the contemporary controversy expressed in Yniguez v. Arizona, et al and communicate their position with appropriate information and support.

Pacing

4 weeks

III. Due Process and Equal Protection

Core Topics

- The Civil Rights Movement
- Developing the Right to Everyman's Law
- The Patriot Acts
- Due Process
- 14th Amendment
- Equal Protection

Essential Questions

- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- How do principles in the United States Constitution impact individual, local, state and national decisions? (CT)
- Why do governments exist and how do they work? (CT)

Connecticut Performance Standards

Students will:

- 5.11-12.1 apply an understanding of historical and contemporary conflicts over the Constitutional principles.
- 5.11-12.2 analyze, using historical and contemporary examples, the meaning and significance of the ideal of equal protection under the law for all persons.
- 7.9-10.3 describe how constitutions may limit government in order to protect individual rights and promote the common good.

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- explain the fundamental principles and values underlying our Constitution, laws, and legal system.
- compare and contrast viewpoints on historical and contemporary issues and controversies.
- analyze historical and contemporary issues and controversies relating to law and our legal system.
- apply democratic principles to evaluate proposed resolutions of contemporary controversies currently in our legal system.
- use skills, including critical thinking and reasoning, communication, observation, and problem solving to describe, synthesize and analyze current issues related to law and our legal system.

Focus Questions

- Why were the provisions of due process and equal protection added to the U.S. Constitution with the Fourteenth Amendment?
- How were the provisions of equal protection applied through the courts?
- In what ways did the Supreme Court breathe life into the due process and equal protection clauses starting in the 1950s?

- What impact on civil liberties have both the legislative and judicial responses had on the individual's everyday life?

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- read to interpret and apply information.
- take useful notes, and organize notes in a meaningful task dependent manner.
- compare and contrast viewpoints from various sources.
- analyze cause and effect.
- communicate information, resolution and solutions to authentic problems.
- write and present persuasively using specific supporting material from a variety of sources with appropriate citations.
- demonstrate effective and appropriate questioning and critical thinking skills.

Sample Assessment

- Students will complete a worksheet and write a persuasive piece on affirmative action using as a springboard Tindrell v. New York (360 N.Y.S. 2d 603).

Pacing

3 weeks

IV. Responsibility Under Law

Core Topics

- General Considerations and definitions: crimes against person and property
- Criminal Proceedings: the criminal trial--arrest to sentencing and the rights of the accused
- Outcomes and Impact: adjudicatory impact and appellate rights and procedures

Essential Question

- How can citizens shape and influence democratic processes and government?

Connecticut Performance Standards

Students will:

- 6.11-12.1 evaluate whether or when their obligations as citizens require that their personal desires, belief and interests be subordinated to the public good.
- 6.11-12.3 take a position on a current policy issue and attempt to influence its formation, development and implementation.

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- compare and contrast viewpoints on historical and contemporary issues and controversies.
- describe and apply effective citizen participation in our legal system through advocacy, participation on juries, voting, and public service.
- demonstrate an ability to resolve disputes through informal and, where necessary, formal mechanisms.
- describe vocational opportunities that exist within the legal system.

Focus Questions

- What are the various types of crime as defined in our laws?
- How does a criminal trial proceed?
- What are the functions and roles of “the cast of characters” in criminal proceedings?
- How does the outcome of a criminal trial affect people both directly and indirectly?

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- read to interpret and apply information.
- take useful notes, and organize notes in a meaningful task dependent manner.
- evaluate the quality, credibility and reliability of information.
- compare and contrast viewpoints from various sources.
- analyze cause and effect.
- communicate information, resolution and solutions to authentic problems.
- write and present persuasively using specific supporting material from a variety of sources with appropriate citations.
- demonstrate effective and appropriate questioning and critical thinking skills.

Sample Assessment

- Students write a persuasive paper demonstrating their understanding of effective methods of advocacy and/or students participate in a mock criminal trial.

Pacing

3 weeks

V. Civil Law/ Torts

Core Topics

- The Idea of Torts: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow
- Types of Torts
- Resolving Tort Conflicts, In and Out of Court
- Impact of Tort Resolution: Torts and Public Policy

Essential Questions

- How does history affect our understanding of the past, present and future? (CT)
- How do principles in the United States Constitution impact individual, local, state and national decisions? (CT)
- How can citizens shape and influence democratic processes and government? (CT)
- Why do governments exist and how do they work? (CT)

Connecticut Performance Standards

Students will:

- 1.9-10.3 use primary source documents to analyze multiple perspectives
- 6.11-12.1 evaluate whether or when their obligations as citizens require that their personal desires, belief and interests be subordinated to the public good.

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- apply a practical understanding of law and the legal system that will be of use to them in their everyday lives.
- compare and contrast viewpoints on historical and contemporary issues and controversies.
- analyze historical and contemporary issues and controversies relating to law and our legal system.
- demonstrate an ability to resolve disputes through informal and, where necessary, formal mechanisms.
- synthesize both primary and secondary sources of information, and evaluate the viewpoints expressed in these sources, on the challenges facing our legal system.
- apply democratic principles to evaluate proposed resolutions of contemporary controversies currently in our legal system.

Focus Questions

- In what way may Tort law be described as private law?
- How does Tort law process and procedure differ from criminal law?
- In what ways is tort law an effective element in the resolution of conflict in our society?
- In what ways does Tort law impact the everyday lives of people?

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- read to interpret and apply information.

- evaluate the quality, credibility and reliability of information.
- compare and contrast viewpoints from various sources.
- analyze cause and effect.
- communicate information, resolution and solutions to authentic problems.
- write and present persuasively using specific supporting material from a variety of sources with appropriate citations.
- demonstrate effective and appropriate questioning and critical thinking skills.

Sample Assessment

- Students research and present an argument to support or refute money damages in a death action based on Donelon v. L.I.R.R. (1950, based on Louis Nizer's My Life In Court) and/or participate in a mock civil trial.

Pacing

3 weeks