

NJ Social Studies Network News

A Publication of the New Jersey Center for Civic Education

October 2011

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Social Studies Issues

Last June, we wrote about the need for a required middle school civics course in New Jersey. Unlike more than 30 other states, New Jersey does not require a single civics course at any time in the K-12 education of our young people. Unfortunately, many basic civic concepts were not included in the 2009 state social studies standards because of the interest in integrating civics, economics and geography within historical time periods. A required middle school civics course would fill the gap in the existing mandates to teach about New Jersey in an upper elementary grade and two years of United States history in high school. Legislative action is necessary because the State Board of Education only sets course requirements for high school graduation. To be meaningful, the mandate should also provide for the development of a sample curriculum and professional development, as was done with the Holocaust mandate.

Senator Tom Kean, Jr., the minority leader in the New Jersey State Senate, and Rep. Patrick Diegnan, chair of the Assembly Education Committee, both promised to introduce a bill to require a (minimum) semester civics course in middle school (grades 5-8) and to provide for curriculum and professional development. We patiently waited all summer for the state budget to be passed and for the smoke to clear. Still no bill (except for the very out-of-date A-1631). Their offices are probably tired of hearing from me. It is time for them to hear from you! Send an email to senkean@njleg.org, asmdiegnan@njleg.org, aswwagner@njleg.org and to your local state legislator (go to www.njleg.state.nj.us for a listing).

Support this effort to ensure that all of our students have the opportunity to obtain the knowledge, skills and attitudes for responsible citizenship. Remind your legislators that creating citizens with the knowledge, skills and desire to participate in a democratic society is the very purpose for which public schools were established. A healthy democracy depends on the participation of citizens, and that participation is learned behavior. It doesn't just happen. Add your own observations to your email. This is the start of our efforts to get social studies back in the classroom. Contact me at agardner@njclre.rutgers or 848-445-3413 if you'd like any additional information.

NJ Council for the Social Studies

Join us for the annual NJCSS conference and renew your annual membership in NJCSS with one registration form! This year's annual conference, "From Local to Global: Social Studies and the iGeneration," will be held on **Thursday, October 27, 2011**. It includes a wide variety of plenary and breakout workshops by teachers, supervisors, faculty as well as the opportunity to see the most up-to-date resources available and to talk with your colleagues. The combined conference and membership registration fee is \$65 for teachers or \$80 for supervisors for joint membership in NJSSSA. If you **ONLY** want to go to the conference and not become an NJCSS member (something we've been trying to avoid!), the conference is \$50 for nonmembers. Go to the NJCSS website at <http://www.njcass.org/index.php> to see a draft conference program and registration form.

The **Middle States Council for the Social Studies** is seeking workshop proposals for its annual spring conference. The form is available online at <http://www.msccss.net/MSCSSwebsitewebmainpage.html>. The deadline for submitting a workshop proposal is **Nov. 16, 2011**.

HOLD THE DATES:
March 9, 2012: Middle States Council for the Social Studies, Baltimore, MD
April 3-5, 2012: North East Regional Conference for the Social Studies, Sturbridge, MA

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NJ Social Studies Supervisors Association

The first NJSSSA meeting of the year will be held at NJPSA, 12 Centre Dr., Monroe, on **Oct. 20**. To register for the meeting, go to <http://tinyurl.com/3rvnp95>.

Professional Development

The Many Faces of Modern Asia, Friday, October 21. Princeton faculty members with expertise in China, India, Japan, and Southeast Asia will discuss issues resulting from rapid economic modernization including the rise of mega-cities, changes in gender roles and traditional values, and social unrest. They will also consider changes in the balance of power within Asia and between Asia and the world. The Japan speaker, just returned from a year in Tokyo, will discuss the effects of the earthquake and nuclear disaster on Japanese society. Teachers will receive lunch and a snack and six hours of professional development credit. The cost is \$15. Go to <http://www.princeton.edu/eap/> for more information and registration or email lesley86@hotmail.com with any questions.

The **Council for Economic Education** is offering a variety of one-day seminars at the HSBC National Center for Economic and Financial Education in New York City, including: *Virtual Economics 4.0 and Killer Apps for your Social Studies Teaching Kit* (K-12) **Oct. 26** (4:30-7:30 p.m.); *Teaching Financial Crises: Visiting Wall Street to Hear the Real Story* (grades 9-12) **Nov. 4**. (8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.); *Games, Simulations and Websites for Teaching Financial Fitness for Life* (grades 6-12) **Nov. 16** (4:30-7:30 p.m.) and *AP Economics: Course Updates, Best Practices, and Improving Test Results* (grades 10-12) Saturday, **Dec. 10** (9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.). For more information and to register go to <http://www.councilforeconed.org/nationalcenter/workshops.php>.

The **Rutgers Center for European Studies** will sponsor a "Teach Europe" workshop on Friday, **November 18**, for teachers of Languages, Social Studies, and Art. Participants will be exposed to innovative teaching strategies working with professors. The Teach Europe program offers yearly workshop seminars to provide participants with fair and updated information about the European Union, its multicultural nature, its economy, role and impact on today's world, and its relations with the United States. Upon completion of the program, CEUs or Credit Hours will be granted to the participants. There is no charge for attending the workshop, but registration is required at [this link](#), where the preliminary program is also available.

Teaching with Primary Sources. NJCSS and the NJ Center for Civic Education have received a small grant from the Library of Congress to provide a program of professional development for NJ teachers. The professional development program will focus on the use of primary sources as part of instructional strategies promoting evidence-based learning and decision making. The first workshop will be held on Tuesday, **November 29, 2011** at Rutgers University in Piscataway, followed by two after-school workshops Jan.-May 2012. Go to http://civiced.rutgers.edu/WTP/TPS_registration_form_Fall2011.pdf for additional information and a registration form.

We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution offers supplementary materials that integrate U.S. history and government with critical thinking activities, including a simulated legislative hearing process that improves student writing and speaking skills. The curriculum enhances student understanding of the institutions of American constitutional democracy as well as the historical and contemporary relevance of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The NJ Center for Civic Education is sponsoring a workshop for NJ teachers (grades 3-12) demonstrating the *We the People* materials and teaching strategies on **November 30, 2011** at the NJ Law Center in New Brunswick. Go to <http://civiced.rutgers.edu/WTP/WTP-reg-2011.pdf> for more information and a registration form. The New Jersey State *We the People* High School Competition will be held on February 2, 2012.

Project Citizen is a process-based program that helps students to understand public policy by identifying a local public policy problem, researching the problem--including interviews with local public policymakers-- identifying possible alternative solutions, selecting a solution that is both constitutional and practical, and developing an action plan for getting their solution implemented. It is both service learning and civic education. [Click](#) to see a 5-minute demonstration and discussion by students and teachers from last year's *Project Citizen Showcase*. The NJ Center for Civic Education is sponsoring a *Project Citizen* workshop for NJ teachers grades (grades 3-12) on **December 7, 2011** at the NJ Law Center in New Brunswick. Go to http://civiced.rutgers.edu/PROJECT_CITIZEN/PC-reg-2011.pdf for more information and a registration form. We are setting up a website for an on-line Digital Portfolio Showcase starting January 1, 2012.

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Resources for Teachers

Living Voices is providing a free public performance of their new presentation, “Our Revolution: The meaning of liberty from the perspective of an African American soldier,” on Saturday, **October 22, 2011**, at 2:00 p.m. at Washington’s Headquarters in Morristown, NJ. For additional information call 973-539-2016. Living Voices has a series of live performance and video presentations available for schools. Go to <http://www.livingvoices.org/main/main.html> to see the program descriptions.

Conflict Resolution and United States History offers an engaging way to involve students in grades 5-12 in considering historical documents and multiple perspectives in order to better understand what happened in the past and why. The printed materials include a CD with primary source documents, student overheads and power points for case studies of conflicts in American history ranging from the colonial period through the 1990s as well as a DVD. Go to <http://civiced.rutgers.edu/CONFLICT/overview.shtml> for a sample lesson, 4-minute video, teacher comments and an order form. Contact civiced@njclre.rutgers.edu for additional information or questions.

Free online lessons from the **Constitutional Rights Foundation** include America’s Economic Crisis Lessons, America Responds to terrorism, *Brown v. Board* 50th Anniversary, Educating about Immigration, Educating about Intellectual Property, Election central Resources, School-based Service Learning and more. For an index of free online lessons go to <http://www.crf-usa.org/online-lessons-index/free-lessons-index.html>.

C-SPAN Classroom is a free membership service dedicated to supporting educators’ use of C-SPAN programming in their classrooms. The website, <http://c-spanclassroom.org>, provides access to hundreds of video clips which you can download and stream online, lesson plans, conference and fellowship opportunities for educators. Right now, C-SPAN is offering a FREE Presidential Timeline Poster to all new C-SPAN Classroom members. In addition, teachers and students can win prizes by competing in StudentCam, an annual documentary competition. For more information email educate@c-span.org.

Electronic New Jersey provides online access to an expanding set of curriculum units—now 23—using New Jersey history content for instruction about core themes in U. S. History for classroom teachers grades 5-12. You can access the materials at <http://njdigitalhighway.org/enj/> or <http://njdigitalhighway.org/educators.php>.

Historical Documents of New Jersey and the United States, including the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the U.S. Constitution and the New Jersey Constitution, is available for free from the New Jersey State Bar Foundation. Contact 1-800-FREELAW or www.njsbf.org to request copies for your class. The order form is also available [online](#).

iCivics is a web-based education project spearheaded by retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor designed to reinvigorate civics teaching and learning about the Supreme Court, the judiciary and how the three branches of government work together. These engaging games, lessons and other materials for upper elementary and middle school grades can be found online at <http://www.icivics.org>. Teachers of grades 5-12 may enter their classes to participate in the iCivics Impact Challenge at <http://www.icivics.org/impact-challenge-2011>. Starting October 3, registered students can begin earning points for their class by playing iCivics games. The class with the highest points when the contest ends – November 30 – will win a virtual visit from Justice O’Connor!

Making Citizens: Transforming Civic Learning for Diverse Social Studies Classrooms by Rutgers Graduate School of Education Professor Beth Rubin is now available at <http://www.routledge.com/9780415874625>. (\$34.95 paperback).

Teaching Global History: A Social Studies Approach, by Hofstra University Professor Alan Singer, offers an alternative thoughtful approach to pre-packaged textbook outlines and materials for high school classes. It is available in paperback from Routledge. Go to <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415875493>. (\$54.95 paperback).

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If you have information that you would like to share with other New Jersey social studies teachers and/or supervisors, please send it by the end of the month for the next month’s E-newsletter.

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