



CURRICULUM ADAPTATION DOCUMENT PROPOSAL

Power and powers in the history of Europe: oligarchies, political participation and democracy.

Course: Secondary Education and High School

Didactic Objectives:

- To understand the varying possibilities of people to participate in societal decision making processes both in the past and today. In addition, to deliberate on the reasons for excluding segments of society from participation.
- To be able to identify and describe the possibilities and challenges of democratic structures.
- To be able to examine the changes and continuities in societal structures and in the power of aristocracy/nobility in Europe
- To develop an understanding of the way power is reflected in art and the way art is used for the purposes of obtaining and manifesting power.
- to understand that art has also a propagandic function
- To understand the mechanisms and the historical context behind such developments as the emergence of nation states.
- To be able to analyse the causes and consequences of various revolutionary movements

Contents:

This syllabus is concerned with different aspects of power in Europe and the societal structures associated with that power. The syllabus consists of five sections, which all deal with the main theme but approach it through different perspectives and historical contexts. The syllabus is not constructed chronologically as all the five sections have their own chronological structure. Thus, the five sections can be taught as an entity or as independent study units.





Position, wealth and property have had and continue to have a close relationship with political power creating different kinds of influential groups such as aristocracy, nobility and oligarchs. In the first study unit the vocabulary related to different social classes is described and defined. The many changes that have taken place in the social structure of societies are discussed.

The right to participate in democratic processes has varied considerably in the history of Europe. While the struggle to achieve universal suffrage is an ongoing one, the third study unit looks at some of the milestones reached in Europe and especially in England. A theory of oligarchical tendencies of democracy is introduced in order to give the tools to analyse the challenges that democracies have faced and continue to face. If the aim is to maintain and further develop democracy, it is vital to understand different conceptions and developmental phases of democracy. The second-order concepts of progress and decline offer useful points of reflection for considering the development of democracy.

Art has been used as a way to manifest power and as it has also been a powerful tool for propaganda. The third study unit looks at power from the viewpoint of art and aims to discuss the ways power is represented in art. The agency of artists has also changed over the centuries from anonymous authors to renowned artists with a strong influence on society. The contexts of religious art in medieval Europe, the conquest of America and the French Revolution are utilized.

The two final study units deal with the formation of and instabilities in nation states. The formation of nation states is explored from a theoretical perspective, and the differences between large and small states is considered. Tensions between social classes are discussed in relation to different protest movements. The theoretical aspects of revolution are explored in the context of The Finnish Civil War and the Russian Revolution .

Competences – Skills:

The following concepts are central for all the five sub-topics:

- power
- representation of power
- participation
- change and continuity
- progress and decline



- historical empathy

Disclaimer

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