

Teaching World History and Global Issues with the Internet

C. Frederick Risinger

I'm writing this just after the downgrading of the U.S. credit rating, while crowds of British youth are rioting in the streets of London, unrest and civil war continues to plague the Middle East, and, frankly, the world looks like it's going to heck in a hand basket.

One of my life's favorite periods was when I team-taught 10th grade world history with a great mentor in suburban Chicago. We taught a survey of world history during the first semester and then two nine-week units titled "The Human Search for Government" and "The Human Search for Religion." We looked at all types of government throughout history and studied the history of the world's major religions. I honestly believe that those two units gave our students a better understanding of both world history and what was going on in the world at that time than did a year-long chronological world history course.

Today, state and national standards, high-stakes testing, and other factors would block this kind of curriculum planning. But I believe that social studies educators do have a responsibility to help students understand what is going on in the world today—how history (both U.S. and world history) has shaped contemporary events and issues. Global studies provides a great avenue for this, but effective global studies must be informed by knowledge and understanding of world history. That's what I've tried to do in this column. The websites I'm going to recommend include both traditional world history content and sites that focus on contemporary world issues and problems.

It's not an easy task to link both of these into classroom instruction; but, if we can do so, we're doing a great thing for our students.

My first two sites provide an intellectual stage for both world history and global studies. While they don't have lesson plans or links to other sites, they provide an understanding of the two separate, but closely-related fields. They should be read by classroom teachers, students in methods classes, and could be a foundation for professional development for all social studies educators.

The Two World Histories

www.socialstudies.org/system/files/TheTwoWorldHist.pdf

This excellent article appeared a few years ago in *Social Education*. Ross Dunn has written widely on world history and has focused on the difficult challenges of teaching that subject. Here, he discusses two approaches to teaching world history and how school faculties might have to choose between them. It makes you think about what today's students ought to learn.

The Importance of a Global Education

www.outreachworld.org/article.asp?articleid=77

This is an interview with a former colleague, Merry Merryfield, who has won both the Distinguished Scholar of Global Education and the James Becker Award for Global Understanding from NCSS. She provides a solid foundation for the role of global studies in the curriculum. She describes how the typical 9th or 10th grade curriculum can be enhanced by examining stereotypes of Muslim societies and calling student attention to world issues through multiple, sometimes conflicting, perspectives.

The sites below include lesson plans and links to other helpful sites. First, I discuss sites that are more traditional world history and then focus on those that look at global issues and world problems.

World History for Us All

worldhistoryforall.sdsu.edu/

This is a fantastic site, as we might expect from San Diego State University, where Ross Dunn (mentioned previously) taught and helped set up their program. It is a national collaboration of K-12 teachers, college instructors, and educational technology specialists. It offers "a treasury of teaching units, lesson plans, and resources." And helps teachers meet both state and national standards. Every world history teacher and every college-level methods instructor should have this site on their favorites/bookmarks. I spent almost an hour looking at their resources and it made me want to teach world history again.

Teacher Oz's Kingdom of History

www.teacheroz.com/index.htm

Ok, you have to check this one out. Tracey Osborn teaches 9th grade pre-AP world geography, 10th grade world history, and history in film at Rowlett High School near Dallas. (She is also a violinist in a symphonic orchestra.) Click on "Table of Contents" and you will find an extraordinary large set of links to just about every topic in world (and U.S.) history. The coverage of ancient civilizations is very extensive and she also deals with topics such as biography, African Americans, Native Americans, and women in history. You will enjoy exploring this site created by a fellow classroom teacher.

Women in World History

www.womeninworldhistory.com/

This site is designed and the lessons and units written by Lyn Reese, who has been working on women's history since the 1970s. It has lesson plans ranging

from women in ancient Mesopotamia to issues such as "Women and Veiling" and "Married Women's Property Rights." Other sections focus on biographies of women throughout history, and a new section titled "Connecting Women to the Silk Roads," which describes how women participated with men during this era. Even boys in the classroom will find things that will interest them and broaden their understanding.

Global Issues

www.globalissues.org/

This site doesn't have lesson plans, but it has an amazing set of essays and resources on many of the world's major global issues and problems. It is the creation of Anup Shah, who grew up in the United Kingdom and came to the United States with a degree in computer science. He feels that "most global issues are misrepresented in the mainstream media." His essays cover topics such as

global warming, the East Africa food crisis, causes of poverty, and Middle East and northern Africa unrest. This would be a wonderful site for student research on global issues and world problems. It would also be a good site for teachers to learn about these topics more broadly and in depth. I've added it to my favorites list and have gone to it several times in the past week.

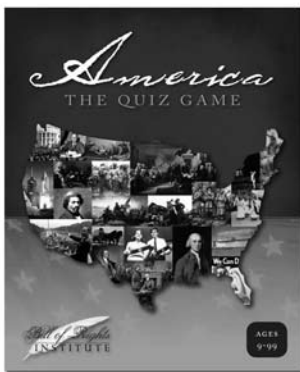
Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting

<http://pulitzercenter.org/>

I'm concluding this column with one of my favorite websites for teachers and students. The Pulitzer Center "promotes in-depth engagement with global affairs through its sponsorship of quality international journalism ... and an innovative program of outreach and education." It focuses on under-reported crises and issues throughout the world. It contains lesson plans (such as the one on Youth and Education in Afghanistan). Their Student Voices section lets our students read about Iraqi refugees in Syria, hear Kenyan students tell "what water means to me," and watch a video about young former indentured servants in Nepal. Some of the information is probably for grade 9-12 students only, but it will broaden the knowledge of teachers and other adults.

World history is taught in most U.S. schools, usually in the 6th and 9th or 10th grades. Although it isn't, it should be a required course for all young Americans. If you can incorporate concepts of global studies, and world issues into the course, you will be doing a great thing for your students' global understanding—and in a small way—for the nation. 🌐

America: The Quiz Game Will make a history buff out of you!



- 60 full-color cards with over 200 questions
- Questions quiz you on the Constitution, Founding documents, famous people, and Landmark Supreme Court Cases!

Save 20% off your entire order today!

Use promo code "SEQUIZ20"
at www.store.BillofRightsInstitute.org

Bill of Rights
INSTITUTE

200 North Glebe Road, Suite 200, Arlington, VA 22203
(800) 838-7870 www.store.BillofRightsInstitute.org

C. Frederick Risinger is retired from the School of Education at Indiana University, Bloomington. He currently is trying to learn more about Web 2.0, completing a new website, and works two shifts a week as a bartender at a local microbrewery.