

URBANDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK OUTLINE

---

COURSE TITLE:	Cultural Issues		
GRADE LEVEL:	11, 12	Elective	2 Credits/2 Semesters
PREREQUISITES:	Junior or senior status or instructor approval		

---

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Urbandale Community School District’s Cultural Issues class simulates the sounds, sights, activities, and values of the cultures studied so that students will come as close as possible to experiencing them. Field trips, guest speakers, hands-on activities, food, reflections, and discussion are regular features of the class. Students will also examine their own culture as others might view it. Students will be able to approach new cultures with comfort and sensitivity as a result of the experiences provided during the course. The Cultural Issues class is an integrated curriculum focusing on those aspects of culture, which impact relationships between people.

**CONTENT STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS:** In order that students achieve the maximum benefit from their talents and abilities, the students of Urbandale Community School District’s Cultural Issues class should be able to....

**Content Standard I Develop insight into the nature of culture.**

Benchmark Demonstrate an understanding of culture.

**Content Standard II Develop an understanding that personal identity is shaped by culture.**

Benchmark: Analyze how data and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives.

**Content Standard III Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.**

Benchmarks: Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.  
Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.

**Content Standard IV Analyze the ways cultures express themselves.**

Benchmarks: Analyze the nature of language and its impact on the development of cultural paradigms.  
Recognize the common gestures and body language of the cultures studied.  
Describe the culture reflected in the fine arts of the cultures studied.

**Content Standard V Participate in multicultural communities at home and around the world.**

Benchmarks: Experience cultures directly and indirectly.  
Encounter an unfamiliar culture with appropriate sensitivity.



**CONTENT STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS WITH INDICATORS FOR HIGH SCHOOL CULTURAL ISSUES:** The students in Cultural Issues should be able to....

**Standard I:**            **Develop insight into the nature of culture.**

Benchmark:            Demonstrate an understanding of culture.

Indicators:            Research and discuss the components of culture  
Understand and use specialized vocabulary to discuss cultural issues  
Understand that culture is something everyone has  
Describe the student's personal culture  
Use transpection to view one's own culture as it would be seen by others  
Compare and contrast cultures studied to each other and to the student's own

Assessments:        Written reflections  
Cultural luggage project  
Transpection presentations  
Parent interviews  
Interviews with those of other cultures  
Transpection final

**Standard II:**        **Develop an understanding that personal identity is shaped by culture.**

**Benchmark:**        **Analyze how data and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives.**

Indicators:            Describe the student's own "cultural lenses"  
Ask the same questions of people from several cultures to compare and contrast answers.  
Ask the same questions of people from the same culture to compare and contrast answers.  
Use the metaphor of "cultural luggage" to discuss those aspects of our own culture which may be useful or weigh us down when we are in another culture.  
Read and analyze cross-cultural dialogues in which cultural miscues occur.

Assessments:        Cultural luggage project  
Interviews  
Written reflections



**Benchmark:** Analyze how names are used in various cultures to express personal heritage.

Indicators: Examine multicultural names, which reflect religious heritage  
Examine multicultural names, which reflect family heritage.  
Discuss ways in which typical U.S. names reflect individuality.  
Become aware of common Asian last names and the cultures they tend to come from.

Assessments Names quiz  
Name presentation to class

**Standard III:  
Benchmark:** Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.  
Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

Indicators: Identify and observe tangible products of the cultures studied such as types of dwellings, equipment, tools, clothing, furniture, fine art, crafts, games, religious items, etc. and discuss the perspectives they represent.  
Experience, discuss, and analyze food of the cultures studied.  
Produce artwork, crafts, or graphic representations similar to those enjoyed or made by the cultures studied and discuss the perspectives they represent.  
Experience, discuss, and analyze expressive products of the cultures studied.

Assessments: Written reflections  
Cultural luggage project  
Participation in classroom activities  
On-line quiz comparing Asian cultures

**Benchmark:** Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.

Indicators: Learn about and participate in cultural activities such as games, story telling, dramatizations, and celebrations.  
Identify, examine, and discuss various patterns of behavior interaction typical of the culture studied.  
Identify, examine, and discuss connections between cultural perspectives and socially approved behavior patterns.  
Identify the impact of religion on cultural paradigms and behaviors.



Analyze the impact of Confucius on modern Japanese and Chinese thought.

Assessments: Written reflections  
Cultural luggage project  
Participation in class discussions  
Participation in cultural activities  
Three religions comparison test  
Five pillars of Islam test

**Standard IV:** Analyze the ways cultures express themselves.

**Benchmark:** Analyze the nature of language and its impact on the development of cultural paradigms.

Indicators: Describe oral and written language and its role in cultures studied.  
Describe the role of folk tales and proverbs in the cultures studied.

Assessments: Cultural luggage project

**Benchmark:** Recognize the common gestures and body language of the cultures studied.

Indicators: Identify the meaning of gestures and body language from various cultures  
Examine gestures and body language, which have different meanings in different cultures

Assessments: Cultural luggage project  
Gestures/Body language quiz

**Benchmark:** Describe the culture reflected in the fine arts of the cultures studied.

Indicators: Listen to and discuss music from the cultures studied.  
View and analyze photographs and prints of fine art from the cultures studied  
View and analyze authentic art from the cultures studied.

Assessments: Cultural luggage project  
Written reflections



**Standard V. Participate in multicultural communities at home and around the world.**

Benchmark: Experience cultures directly and indirectly.

Indicators: Read and discuss descriptions of various types of “shock” caused by entering new cultures.  
Listen to speakers describe their own culture.  
Participate in cultural simulations and cultural events.  
Observe firsthand unfamiliar religious centers.  
Visit ethnic restaurants

Assessments: Written reflections  
Class participation  
Cultural luggage project  
Interviews

**Benchmark: Encounter an unfamiliar culture with appropriate sensitivity.**

Indicators: Ask questions about cultures in ways that are not ethnocentric  
Learn from other cultures  
Admire aspects of other cultures, which are unlike your own  
Show interest in the culture of others  
Describe common misunderstandings between American culture and others studied.  
Describe the various challenges encountered when visiting other cultures  
Demonstrate an understanding of the potentially offensive and/or uncomfortable issues in the cultures studied.

Assessments: African presentation  
Written reflections  
Original questions  
Check lists for sensitivity while interacting with others  
Sensitive questions quiz



Resources: Classroom sets are available for the following titles:

*Cross-Cultural Dialogues*

Craig Storti  
Intercultural Press, Inc.  
1994

*Understanding Arabs: A Guide for Modern Times*

Margaret K. Nydell  
Intercultural Press, Inc.  
2006

*Figuring Foreigners Out*

Craig Storti  
Intercultural Press, Inc.  
1999

*American Ways*

Gary Althen  
Intercultural Press, Inc.  
2003

*Life Times:*

*New Beginnings*

*Growing Up*

*Wedding Days*

*Journey's End*

Anita Ganeri  
Evans Brothers Limited  
1998

No student enrolled in the Urbandale Community School District shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in the District's programs on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, religion, marital status, ethnic background, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socio-economic background. The policy of the District shall be to provide educational programs and opportunities for students as needed on the basis of individual interests, values, abilities and potential.

