

# Quincy University

## Graduate Course Syllabus

**Course Title:** *Teaching Social Studies in the Digital Age: The Library of Congress*

**Course Number:** MSE 5 LC 253

**Credit Hours:**

3 semester graduate credit hours

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**Prerequisites:**

Students must have access to...

- a. a computer with Internet connection, either at home or at school-- 56Kbs or higher (Cable, DSL, T1, etc.).
- b. a browser (Microsoft Internet Explorer-IE, Netscape 4.0 or higher)
- c. an e-mail address

**Restrictions:**

This course is relevant for all social studies educators working in secondary education, at any level of Internet skill. Those taking the course must possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and have a valid teaching certificate.

**Rationale:**

The Internet is fast becoming the most powerful technology tool in the teaching profession. Teachers can draw on a huge array of web resources to find materials upon which to build their courses. Teachers can also find a variety of great lessons from other teachers who have created their own web sites. For those teachers in the social studies content areas, one of the most exhaustive sources of such materials available is found at the *Library of Congress* website.

With the growing and often intimidating array of web-based resources for teachers comes a need for more focused training in how to use those resources. The National Center for Educational Statistics has stated that "teachers who receive technology training are more likely to feel prepared to use the Internet to teach their classes." Additionally, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education asserts that all teachers should "be able to integrate technology into instruction effectively."

Unfortunately, most teachers are still intimidated by the Internet and thus unable to exploit its power. In fact, despite the advent of the Internet and other technological advances, the U.S. Department of Education reports that an overwhelming majority of educators (80 percent) feel unprepared to integrate technology into classroom instruction. If this is true about using technology in general, then concern also increases as teachers surf the internet looking for meaningful resources, among the growing amounts available, to integrate into their curriculums. An educator who clicks on the "Teachers" link at the Library of Congress home page reads of the more than 100 primary source collections

(not individual sources, but collections of sources) and “over 7 million historical documents, photographs, maps, films, and audio recordings.” In addition, one finds on-line reproductions of the various exhibitions the Library of Congress has publicly presented over the years, as well as a wide variety of lessons, activities, tips, and strategies for using these resources. This represents one of the most in depth, detailed, and varied sites for social studies sources. At the same time, a social studies teacher might easily feel completely overwhelmed by such a vast array of resources.

Accordingly, it makes sense to help familiarize social studies teachers so they will feel more confident and enthusiastic about using this invaluable source.

**Intended Audience:**

Social studies teachers working in secondary education who are interested in re-certification credit, graduate credit and/or professional development growth units.

**Expected Student Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, teachers will:

- a. have a basic understanding of the different resources available at the Library of Congress;
- b. be able to research and evaluate Library of Congress resources that support and enhance their specific content area(s);
- c. have a sense of mastery and comfort using three of the key Library of Congress resource centers- American Memory, Exhibitions, and America’s Story;
- d. be able to apply meaningful techniques and strategies for integrating these resources into classroom instruction;
- e. understand how to use networking technologies which allow them to share information with their colleagues.

**Goals:**

Technology Goals from the "Technology Standards for All Illinois Teachers" that will be addressed through this course: (for complete listing see

[http://www.isbe.net/profprep/CASCDvr/Wd97/24120\\_coretechnology.doc](http://www.isbe.net/profprep/CASCDvr/Wd97/24120_coretechnology.doc) )

Standard 2 *Personal and Professional Use of Technology*

2D: *uses productivity tools for word processing, database management, and spreadsheet applications, and basic multi-media presentations.*

2E: *uses computer-based technologies including telecommunications to access information and enhance personal and professional productivity.*

Standard 3: *Application of Technology in Instruction*

3D: *designs, implements, and assesses student learning activities that integrate computers/technology for a variety of student grouping strategies and for diverse student populations*

Standard 5: *Productivity Tools*

5F: *identifies, selects, and integrates video and digital images in varying formats for use in presentations, publications, and/or other products*

Standard 7: *Research, Problem Solving, and Product Development*

7H: *designs and publishes simple on-line documents that presents information and include links to critical resources.*

7I: *develops instructional units that involve compiling, organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing of information, and uses technology to support these processes.*

7J: *conducts research and evaluates on-line sources of information that support and enhance the curriculum*

Social Science goals from "Social Science- A Common Core of Standards" that will be accomplished through this course: (for complete listing see [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/profprep/CASCDvr/pdfs/27200\\_socialscicore.pdf](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/profprep/CASCDvr/pdfs/27200_socialscicore.pdf) )

Standard 2: *The competent social science teacher understands the use of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation*

2B: *understands the strengths and weaknesses of primary and secondary sources of evidence*

2C: *understands the importance of multiple sources of information*

2G: *demonstrates the ability to compare and contrast*

2L: *analyzes data from a variety of sources before reaching a general conclusion or interpretation*

Standard 3: *The competent social science teacher understands how to use the tools of social science inquiry to conduct research and interpret findings.*

3B: *understands the use of research in reaching conclusions and developing interpretations*

3D: *gathers data, using appropriate methods and technology*

3F: *formulates appropriate questions by observing and analyzing evidence*

*Please note:* The other 27 social science goals are very specific to content areas. Students will undoubtedly do work that applies to some of these other areas as well.

**Instructional Modality/Activities:**

Much of the material for *Teaching Social Studies in the Digital Age: The Library of Congress* takes the form of easy-to-follow instructional handbooks accessed at the beginning of the course. These handbooks first familiarize students with an online tool called The *Internet Organizer*. Once technology skills are learned, the student will then be guided through specific areas of the Library of Congress web site and are provided examples of how these areas can be used. Students will complete their assignments from anywhere, at any time, as long as they have access to an Internet-connected computer. The activities require that they apply the technology and resources directly to their specific content areas. As a culmination to the course, teachers will create an online project (a virtual field trip) which will combine their technology skills with their knowledge of the resources of the *Library of Congress*.

*Online learning*

*Teaching Social Studies in the Digital Age: The Library of Congress* has been created in a user-friendly online format so teachers can learn technology and the *Library of Congress* resources in a non-threatening atmosphere with a greater degree of personal control over the learning process. This control contributes to a greater feeling of confidence in their knowledge of Internet resources and ownership over their professional development. It also reduces the perceived pressure to “learn technology” without adequate guidance on how to do so. This will allow teachers to make the greatest use of their preparation time and contribute to more lively and insightful classroom instruction.

*Using Primary Sources*

The benefits of using primary sources in social studies classroom instruction are extensive. In the Library of Congress’ “Adventures of American Mind,” teachers are told that “primary sources expose students to multiple perspectives on great issues of the past and present” and they do so by “help[ing] students develop knowledge, skills, and analytical abilities.” When students deal directly with primary sources, they are encouraged to “question, think critically, and develop reasoned explanations and interpretations of these great issues.” The *Library of Congress*’ wealth of resources are very diverse so that students can read over a personal letter or diary entry, look at a photograph or poster, read a poem, or listen to a recording while reading lyrics. To assist in this endeavor, the LOC provides many activities for teachers at all levels to engage students in the wonder of using primary sources.

*Topical Outline/Course Content*

**A. Lesson 1: Primary Sources**

Assignment 1: Learning About Primary Sources  
Reflections for Lesson 1

**B. Lesson 2: American Memory**

Assignment 1: Brainstorming  
Assignment 2: Making a Resource List  
Assignment 3: Creating a Lesson  
Reflections for Lesson 2

**C. Lesson 3: Exhibitions**

Assignment 1: Making a Resource List  
Assignment 2: Creating a Lesson  
Reflections for Lesson 3

**D. Lesson 4: America's Library**

Assignment 1: Incorporating America's Library Activities  
Assignment 2: Making a Resource List  
Assignment 3: Creating a Lesson  
Reflections for Lesson 4

**E. Virtual Field Trip Final Project**

Getting Ready for Your Virtual Field Trip  
(Content will vary depending on subject matter)  
Y. Electronic Bibliography  
Z. Additional web resources

**F. Spreading the Word**

Reflections

**G. Wrapping Up**

Internet Organizer Community  
Survey

**Evaluation:**

Course participants will be evaluated based on their performance on the assignments accompanying each lesson and on the final project.

Performance-based rubrics will be used for each lesson.

**Bibliography:**

*Contemporary References*

The Internet Organizer—an online tool developed by MindUniversity, Inc.—which allows students to post, organize and share Internet resources.

*Classic References*

Graves, Judith and Marilyn Parr. "Online Resources from the Library of Congress,"  
Social Education 67(7), pp. 394-396.

Library of Congress web resources used in the course:

Homepage: <http://www.loc.gov/>

The Learning Page: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/index.html>

American Memory: <http://memory.loc.gov/>

Exhibitions: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/>

America's Story: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/>