



Course Description

ISS1120 | The Social Environment | 3.00 Credits

The Social Environment is an interdisciplinary course with a focus on the global economic and political dimensions of societies and includes works from the Western canon. Its main objective is to promote an understanding of contemporary and historical forces that shape our social environment while engaging students in a process of inquiry and decision-making. Through this exploration, students will develop a solid foundation in the basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used to analyze past and present social, political, and economic issues.

Course Competencies:

Competency 1: The student will demonstrate knowledge of the origin of the scientific method, its connection with the social sciences, and the impact of culture in developing the unique characteristics of human behavior and societies by:

1. Analyzing the emergence of the scientific method and the influence of philosophy and religion in the development of science.
2. Differentiating between the natural and social sciences and the humanities.
3. Identifying the various disciplines labeled as social sciences and their common characteristics and unique objectives.
4. Defining the terms culture and society and finding their connection.
5. Describing the elements and complexity of culture.
6. Differentiating between culture and subculture.
7. Applying the concepts of universalism, ethnocentrism, and cultural relativity in different contexts.

Competency 2: The student will demonstrate knowledge of the basic economic concepts, the historical impact on economic theories, and the characteristics of different economic systems, especially the American system, by:

1. Defining scarcity, economic system, production, distribution, and consumption.
2. Contrasting the major characteristics of the traditional market and command economic systems.
3. Discussing the concept of money and its role in the economy.
4. Describing major economic ideas and theories and their origins and supporters.
5. Analyzing the historical events that marked their evolution
6. Recalling the most important economic indicators and their functions.
7. Discussing the problems of economic inequalities and poverty in the world and the United States and their possible solutions, as well as the ecological consequences of economic growth.
8. Comparing and contrasting these contemporary economic systems, capitalism, democratic socialism, and communism, as practiced in countries such as the United States, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the former Soviet Union, China, and others.

Competency 3: The student will demonstrate knowledge of fundamental political concepts, the most important types of political systems, especially the American government and its functioning, and the role of political orientations and ideologies by:

1. Defining government, nation, state, nation-state, and politics.
2. Classifying and contrasting different types of governments.
3. Identifying and contrasting the most important political ideologies, their origins, and supporters.
4. Differentiating various political orientations.
5. Recalling the origin and evolution of the American political system.
6. Describing the unique characteristics of the Constitution and the most important functions of the three branches of government.
7. Discussing the American political process and the role played by pressure groups and political parties at every level of government.
8. Describing the processes to elect or choose the highest political leaders in the United States.
9. Analyzing the struggle of women, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other groups to obtain their political rights.
10. comparing and contrasting other major political systems, such as those of Great Britain, the former Soviet

Union, and China, with those of the United States.

Competency 4: The student will demonstrate knowledge of the global dimension of societies and their relations and interactions by:

1. Discussing the role of geography in global relations.
2. Identifying on a map the location of the world's states.
3. Identifying fundamental concepts in international relations such as nation-state, sovereignty, balance of power, balance of terror, diplomacy, international law, collective security, international organization, and foreign policy.
4. Identifying the forces contributing to peaceful versus violent relations between nations.
5. Analyzing the complexity of international economic relations, especially trade, and the role played by governments, currencies, tariffs, multinational corporations, and other organizations.
6. Describe the role of worldwide and regional international organizations in global affairs using the origin and scope of the United Nations and other similar organizations as examples.

Learning Outcomes:

- Solve problems using critical and creative thinking and scientific reasoning.
- Formulate strategies to locate, evaluate, and apply information.
- Create strategies that can be used to fulfill personal, civic, and social responsibilities.