October:

State Department
Speaker: Julie Kavanagh

BACKGROUND

Established in 1789 as the nation’s first executive department, the U.S. Department of State was created for the purpose of furthering U.S. foreign policy abroad. Through a team of diplomats, among those including Foreign Service officers and Civil Service officers among other significant titles, the U.S. has been able to provide assistance to U.S. citizens abroad, counter international crime and promote economic interests. All activities conducted abroad are paid for by the foreign affairs budget and their purpose includes “protecting and assisting U.S. citizens abroad, assisting U.S. businessmen in the international marketplace, coordinating and providing support for international activities of other U.S. agencies, official visits overseas and at home, and other diplomatic efforts” among many other causes. The secretary of state is in charge of supervising the department’s staff and advises the president on developments of international affairs as well as other matters.

Given the state department’s purpose and need for staff willing to serve abroad, it provides many resources for interested individuals to work in the DOS. Some of those opportunities arrive through the aid of diplomats in residence, who advise students and professionals on careers, internships, and fellowships that might be suited to that individuals interests.

Julie Kavanagh is a Diplomat in Residence at the University of Texas – Austin. She is a career Foreign service officer who joined the Department in 1990. Much of her work consists of managing policy affairs throughout China and Russia but she has served in numerous Latin American countries as well. Through her work overseas, she speaks Mandarin, Spanish, Portuguese, and conversational Russian. Her work as a Diplomat in Residence involves advising students and professionals on attaining a career at the Department of State through fellowship and internship opportunities and employment.

LET’S THINK ABOUT IT

Your SWAC leader will prompt you with questions revolving around the same idea: how has the State Department developed over the years and how might it continue to do so? Express your thoughts and contribute to discussion with your fellow peers!

(room to write your thoughts)
This lesson plan is meant as an aid for the Faculty Sponsor, President or Vice-President to lead their respective SWAC chapter in the discussion of this two weeks’ focus: The State Department.

**Kahoot! Introductory Quiz**

Kahoot! is an online Quiz platform. This small six-question quiz is to test the student’s prior knowledge of the State Department and speaker Julie Kavanagh and introduce them to the discussion to come. The quiz does not require the proctor to have a Kahoot account in order to start. Students will use an electronic device in order to answer. The link is below; click START NOW and select Classic mode. After the Game PIN is generated, students will be able to join the session by accessing kahoot.it on their computer or mobile device. Begin the quiz once all students have joined! This activity shouldn’t take more than 10 minutes.

LINK: [https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/27b3031d-83d4-45d2-9b08-15dd5dac9ce1](https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/27b3031d-83d4-45d2-9b08-15dd5dac9ce1)

**Lesson Handout**

Now is when the handouts should be passed out to students. It is split into two sections, one which covers the history of the State Department and a second which addresses the responsibility of a Diplomat in Residence. It is recommended that the handout be read aloud as a group instead of individually. Take some time after the document has been read to cover the material with the students and make sure that it has been generally understood. Ask questions to students; get them to summarize what they’ve read and make sure that the students are engaged and understanding. The reading shouldn’t take more than 15 minutes.

**Video Resources**

We have one video resource below that will go over in more detail the possible careers and duties of an individual working in the State Department. Following the link we’ve included possible questions that you can ask students to see what the students taken away from watching

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the video. This video is longer than normal (20 minutes) so feel free to break it up or include it at your convenience. Coupled with questions this segment should take no more than 25 minutes.

REPRESENTING AMERICA IN A CAREER THAT MATTERS

LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OL3DaC6RWa0

Are there any careers mentioned in the video that surprised you?
If you had the opportunity to work in the State Department, what position would you like to take?
Who in this video works closest with the President?
How do you think these careers have developed over time?
Do you think some of the positions mentioned have only been added in the last few decades?
Why might that be the case?

DISCUSSION

This shouldn’t take more than 15 minutes – total estimated meeting time: no more than 1 hour.
How has the State Department developed over the years?
Does each presidency affect the duties of those working in the state department?
Do you think there is more hostility toward foreign affairs workers in our current political state?
How has the State Department developed and evolved over the years since its beginning?
Thomas Jefferson insisted that the president should be the only channel of communication between our country and foreign nations. How do you feel this mindset would affect our nation if we had chose to abide by this way of doing and not created the Department of State? Would our foreign affairs be efficient and beneficial? What historical occurrences may have not happened or happened differently had our president been the only one handling foreign affairs?
How might a poorly staffed and operated State Department affect the US?
What careers interest you most in the state department?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Department History. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/


