RETHINKING THE REGION:

New Approaches to 9-12 U.S. Curriculum on the Middle East and North Africa

UNIT:
WOMEN AND GENDER

TOPIC Contemporary Realities of Women in the Middle East and North Africa	
LESSON OVERVIEW	Students will review the document "Selected Countries and Gender Inequality Index Measures" and share the facts and figures that most surprised them. Additionally, students will use this document to discuss potential challenges they think might be faced by women MENA. In this lesson, students will view a video to learn about and discuss the specific challenges encountered by women in Libya. Finally, students will discuss how women in MENA are working locally to find solutions to the challenges they confront.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	• What contemporary realities and challenges do women face in MENA? • What diversity exists among women in the region by country, social class, etc.? • How are women in MENA responding to the challenges they encounter?
LESSON OBJECTIVES	**Learners will be able to:** • Learn about diverse current realities in the region and globally. • Explore how women are challenging inequalities.
STANDARDS	**Common Core Standards** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem. **New York State Standards**

	Performance Indicators Students will: <u>Standard 2, Key Idea 1</u> • Analyze changing and competing interpretations of issues, events, and developments throughout world history <u>Standard 2, Key Idea 3</u> • Analyze the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, and religious practices and activities • Explain the dynamics of cultural change and how interactions between and among cultures have affected various cultural groups throughout the world <u>Standard 2, Key Idea 4</u> • Interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant developments in world history <u>Standard 3, Key Idea 1</u> • Understand the development and interactions of social/cultural, political, economic, and religious systems in different regions of the world

MATERIALS	• Handout titled "Selected Countries and Gender Inequality Index Measures" (one copy per student)
	 • Print out one of these world maps for students to reference (one copy per student):
	    a. http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6a/CIA_WorldFact Book-Political_world.pdf
	    b. http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/world.pdf
	 • Copies of this article for all students: "Arab women's virtual uprising goes physical" by India Stoughton: http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/arab-womens-virtual-uprising-goes-physical
	 • Computer and projector to show clip from YouTube
	 • Whiteboard/chalkboard or chart paper and markers

PROCEDURE	1. <u>**Gender Inequality Activity (30 minutes)**</u> • Distribute "Selected Countries and Gender Inequality Index Measures" and

a world map.

- Ask students to review the figures and facts on the handouts and share anything they find surprising or didn't know before.

- Ask students, "Based on this handout, what are some of the challenges faced by women in MENA?" Record answers on the board or on a newsprint/chart paper.

- Play the video *Libya: Seize Chance to Protect Women's Rights* by Human Rights Watch (1:34 min.), accessible at https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ipnTOOj8ck g.

- Ask students to discuss what challenges women in Libya face according to the video and what they are doing about them.

2. **Group Work and Article Analysis**

- Divide students into groups of 3-4 students each. Have each group review this article: http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/arab-womens-virtual-uprising-goes-physical/.

- Ask students to discuss their reactions to the article in their groups.

- Ask students to consider how women in MENA are working locally to challenge problems they identify in their societies.

- Share back in the larger group and discuss further how local groups are using media and technology to address the challenges women face.

3. **Questions for further reflection/connection to today**

- How can people support women's activism in MENA in ways that don't silence women, but rather stand with them in solidarity?

- Consider the women from MENA you have been exposed to in this lesson. How do they differ from media portrayals?

- What is the role of political empowerment/representation in advancing women's rights in MENA and elsewhere?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	- Have students explore the International Museum of Women's online exhibit "Muslima" online at http://muslima.imow.org/. Of particular interest may be

the following resources and the Muslima toolkit, available at http://muslima.imow.org/muslimatoolkit. See also the additional activity "Women Artists as Activists."

- A zine created by a Bahraini artist, entitled *Diary of a Mad Arabian Woman*, is available at: http://issuu.com/tamadher/docs/domaw_-_final_issuu.

- Interview and art of Palestinian artist Laila Shawa, available at: http://muslima.imow.org/content/political-personal.

- Video interview with Palestinian artist Laila Shawa on *face2face*: http://vimeo.com/40161384.

- Review this clip from the film *Slingshot Hip Hop*, and have students discuss how young men and women are using hip-hop to express themselves: http://www.spike.com/video-clips/l6kxrr/slingshot-hip-hop-promo-clip. If time permits, watch the entire film with students and discuss the arts, activism, gender, and youth.

- Have students watch the film *Osama* (set in Afghanistan) about a girl who dresses as a boy in order to have more freedom.

- Consider utilizing these lesson plans on Muslim women from around the world (not just MENA) in your classroom: http://www.ing.org/muslim-women-beyond-the-stereotypes. Free once you register on the site.