Period 6
Accelerating Global Change and Realignments
c. 1900 to the Present

Key Concept 6.1. Science and the Environment

- Rapid advances in science altered the understanding of the universe and the natural world and led to the development of new technologies. These changes enabled unprecedented population growth, which altered how humans interacted with the environment and threatened delicate ecological balances at local, regional, and global levels.

I. Researchers made rapid advances in science that spread throughout the world, assisted by the development of new technology.
A. New modes of communication and transportation virtually eliminated the problem of geographic distance.
B. The Green Revolution produced food for the earth’s growing population as it spread chemically and genetically enhanced forms of agriculture.
C. Medical innovations (such as the polio vaccine, antibiotics, and the artificial heart) increased the ability of humans to survive and live longer lives.
D. Energy technologies including the use of petroleum and nuclear power raised productivity and increased the production of material goods.

II. During a period of unprecedented global population expansion, humans fundamentally changed their relationship with the environment.
A. As human activity contributed to deforestation, desertification, and increased consumption of the world’s supply of fresh water and clean air, humans competed over these and other resources more intensely than ever before.
B. The release of greenhouse gases and other pollutants into the atmosphere contributed to debates about the nature and causes of climate change.

III. Disease, scientific innovations and conflict led to demographic shifts.
A. Diseases associated with poverty (such as malaria, tuberculosis and cholera) persisted, while other diseases (such as the 1918 influenza pandemic, Ebola and HIV/AIDS) emerged as new epidemics and threats to human survival. In addition, changing lifestyles and increased longevity led to higher incidence of certain diseases (such as diabetes, heart disease and Alzheimer’s disease).
B. More effective forms of birth control gave women greater control over fertility and transformed sexual practices.
C. Improved military technology (such as tanks, airplanes and the atomic bomb) and new tactics (such as trench warfare and firebombing) led to increased levels of wartime casualties (such as Nanjing, Dresden and Hiroshima).

Key Concept 6.2. Global Conflicts and Their Consequences

- At the beginning of the 20th century, a European-dominated global political order existed, which also included the United States, Russia, and Japan. Over the course of the century, peoples and states around the world challenged this order in ways that sought to redistribute power within the existing order and to restructure empires, while those peoples and states in power attempted to maintain the status quo. Other peoples and states sought to overturn the political order itself. These challenges to, and the attempts to maintain, the political order manifested themselves in an unprecedented level of conflict with high human casualties. In the context of these conflicts, many regimes in both older and newer states struggled with maintaining political stability and were challenged by internal and external factors, including ethnic and religious conflicts, secessionist movements, territorial partitions, economic dependency, and the legacies of colonialism.
I. Europe dominated the global political order at the beginning of the 20th century, but both land-based and transoceanic empires gave way to new states by the century’s end.
   A. The older, land-based Ottoman, Russian and Qing empires collapsed due to a combination of internal and external factors (such as political and social discontent, technological and economic stagnation, and military defeat).
   B. Some colonies negotiated their independence (such as India and the Gold Coast from the British Empire, and West Africa from the French Empire).
   C. Some colonies achieved independence through armed struggle (such as Algeria and Vietnam from the French Empire, and Angola from the Portuguese Empire).

II. Emerging ideologies of anti-imperialism contributed to the dissolution of empires and the restructuring of states.
   A. Nationalist leaders and parties (such as the Indian National Congress, Ho Chi Minh in French Indochina, and Kwame Nkrumah in British Gold Coast) in Asia and Africa challenged imperial rule.
   B. Regional, religious and ethnic movements (such as Muhammad Ali Jinnah in British India, the Quebecois separatist movement in Canada, and the Biafra secessionist movement in Nigeria) challenged both colonial rule and inherited imperial boundaries.
   C. Transnational movements (such as communism, Pan-Arabism and Pan-Africanism) sought to unite people across national boundaries.
   D. Movements to redistribute land and resources developed within states in Africa, Asia and Latin America, sometimes advocating communism and socialism.

III. Political changes were accompanied by major demographic and social consequences.
   A. The redrawing of old colonial boundaries led to population displacement and resettlements (such as the India/Pakistan partition, the Zionist Jewish settlement of Palestine and displacement of Palestinians, and the division of the Middle East into mandatory states).
   B. The migration of former colonial subjects to imperial metropoles (i.e., major cities in the former colonizing country) maintained cultural and economic ties between the colony and the metropole even after the dissolution of empires (such as South Asians to Britain, Algerians to France, and Filipinos to the United States).
   C. The proliferation of conflicts led to genocide or ethnic violence (such as Armenians in Turkey during and after World War I, the Holocaust during World War II, and the Tutsi in Rwanda during the 1990s).

IV. Military conflicts occurred on an unprecedented global scale.
   A. World War I and World War II were the first “total wars.” Governments used ideologies, including fascism, nationalism and communism, to mobilize all of their state’s resources, including peoples, both in the home countries and the colonies or former colonies, for the purpose of waging war. Governments also used a variety of strategies, including political speeches, art, media and intensified forms of nationalism, to mobilize these populations.
   B. The sources of global conflict in the first half of the century varied, and included imperialist expansion by European powers and Japan, competition for resources, and the economic crisis engendered by the Great Depression.
   C. The global balance of economic and political power shifted after the end of World War II and rapidly evolved into the Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as superpowers, which led to ideological struggles between capitalism and communism throughout the globe.
   D. The Cold War produced new military alliances, including NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and promoted proxy wars in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

V. Although conflict dominated much of the 20th century, many individuals and groups – including states – opposed this trend. Some individuals and groups, however, intensified the conflicts.
   A. Groups and individuals challenged the many wars of the century (such as Picasso in his Guernica, the antinuclear movement during the Cold War, and Thich Quang Duc by self-immolation), and some promoted the practice of nonviolence as a way to bring about political change (such as Mohandas Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela in South Africa).
   B. Groups and individuals, including the Non-Aligned Movement, opposed and promoted alternatives to the existing economic, political and social orders (such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa,
the participants in the global uprisings of 1968, and the Tiananmen Square protesters that promoted democracy in China).

C. Militaries and militarized states often responded to the proliferation of conflicts in ways that further intensified conflict (such as the promotion of military dictatorship in Chile, Spain and Uganda, and the buildup of the “military-industrial complex” and weapons trading).

D. More movements (such as the IRA, ETA and Al-Qaeda) used violence against civilians to achieve political aims.

Key Concept 6.3. New Conceptualizations of Global Economy, Society and Culture

- The 20th century witnessed a great deal of warfare and the collapse of the global economy in the 1930s. In response to these challenges, the role of state in the domestic economy fluctuated, and new institutions of global governance emerged and continued to develop throughout the century. Scientific breakthroughs, new technologies, increasing levels of integration, changing relationships between humans and the environment, and the frequency of political conflict all contributed to global developments in which people crafted new understandings of society, culture, and historical interpretations. Institutions of global governance both shaped and adapted to these social conditions.

I. States responded in a variety of ways to the economic challenges of the 20th century.

A. In the communist states of the Soviet Union and China, governments controlled their national economies (such as the Five-Year Plans and the Great Leap Forward).

B. At the beginning of the 20th century in the United States and parts of Europe, governments played a minimal role in their national economies. With the onset of the Great Depression, governments began to take a more active role in economic life (such as the New Deal, and the fascist corporatist economy).

C. In newly independent states after World War II, governments often took on a strong role in guiding economic life to promote development (such as Nasser’s promotion of economic development in Egypt, and the encouragement of export-oriented economies in East Asia).

D. In a trend accelerated by the end of the Cold War, many governments encourage free-market economic policies and promoted economic liberalization in the late 20th century (such as the United States beginning with Ronald Reagan, Britain under Margaret Thatcher, China under Deng Xiaoping, and Chile under Pinochet).

II. States, communities and individuals became increasingly interdependent, a process facilitated by the growth of institutions of global governance.

A. New international organizations formed to maintain world peace and to facilitate international cooperation (such as the League of Nations, the United Nations, and the International Criminal Court).

B. Changing economic institutions (such as the International Monetary Fund [IMF], World Bank, World Trade Organization [WTO], and multi-national corporations) and regional trade agreements (such as the European Economic Community, the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA], the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN], and Mercosur) reflected the spread of principles and practices associated with free-market economics throughout the world.

C. Movements throughout the world protested the inequality of environmental and economic consequences of global integration (such as Green Peace, the Green Belt movement in Kenya, and Earth Day).

III. People conceptualized society and culture in new ways; rights-based discourses challenged old assumptions about race, class, gender and religion. Examples include:

- the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights as it sought to protect the rights of children, women and refugees
- global feminist movements
- the Negritude movement
- Liberation Theology in Latin America
- Islamic renewal movements in Egypt and Saudi Arabia
In much of the world, access to education, as well as participation in new political and professional roles, became more inclusive in terms of race, class and gender. Examples include:

- the right to vote and to hold public office granted to women in the United States (1920), Brazil (1932), Turkey (1934), Japan (1945), India (1947) and Morocco (1963)
- the rising rate of female literacy, and the increasing numbers of women in higher education, in most parts of the world
- the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1965
- the end of Apartheid
- caste and reservation in the Indian Constitution of 1949

IV. Popular and consumer culture became global. Examples include:

- Reggae
- Bollywood
- World Cup soccer
- the Olympics