**Rationale**

Our unit is designed to be a thematic approach to the Cold War. It takes students through several geographic regions to explore the key events, figures and effects of the Cold War from different perspectives. In order to promote the use of Historical Imagination, this unit focuses on a media approach, encouraging students to look at the Cold War through the lens of various media genres. Throughout the unit, students will engage with the critical question, **“To what extent did media affect perspective during the Cold War?”** Students will be asked to analyze various media pieces to display their knowledge of Cold War events, figures and social and political contexts, as well as an understanding of the perspectives of different regions and/or groups of people during the Cold War.

The Culminating activity for this unit, which will be presented to students in the introductory classes, involves students responding to the critical question in essay format and supporting their response with media text analyses. Using the skills that students have developed throughout the unit and the knowledge that they have gained about the Cold War, students will analyze media pieces with consideration of perspective, bias and historical events. These analyses will be embodied in the creation of a website.

Given the more modern content and many skills required for this unit, it should be placed in the latter half of the course. By the conclusion of this unit, students will understand the Cold War and media’s role in it, and the perspectives of the various countries involved in the Cold War.

**Image of the Learner**

Our unit is designed for a Grade 12 University Class. The students in the hypothetical class attend a school with fairly high OSSLT scores and with a graduation rate that is higher than the provincial average. Although the class represents a high level of academic achievement, there are several accommodations to consider in the classroom. Most of the students in the school are from families who are new to Canada. As such, there is a strong need for an ESL focus in instruction. Additionally, there are two students in the class who have a diagnosis of high functioning Autism and have IEPs. In order to accommodate the diverse learners present within this course, this unit has been designed to accommodate various learning needs and styles, including ELLs and IEPs, by using differentiated instruction, current events, ESL strategies, creative controversy, cooperative learning and by incorporating additional material for students who express interest in surpassing curriculum requirements.

In addition, this school has a strong emphasis on media awareness (Media Literacy and Effective Web Research), however it currently does not offer a Media Course. As such, our group incorporated school and student interest in media into our unit. In particular, we emphasize proper utilization of the Internet as a resource for media as well as historical information.

**Design Process**

When designing this unit, our team employed a design-down planning strategy. Immediately, our group was interested in creating a unit focusing on the Cold War. Not only did we have some expertise in this historical event, we felt it would be especially beneficial for students because it encapsulates political, economic, social and ideological history, and can be integrated with current events, media and discussion of geographical perspective. We first consulted the Ontario curriculum document for grade 12 university “World History: The West and the World”, and decided what skills and knowledge we wanted students to gain from the Cold War unit. Following this, we designed our culminating activity and the smaller activities that would be required to help students gain the necessary skills and knowledge. In order to encourage the multiple perspectives required for the culminating activity and to include national histories that represented the diversity of students, we arranged the unit thematically by geographical region. Each group member created their own activity/activities and led various other aspects of finalizing the unit plan, such as managing the presentation, creating the front matter, managing resources, managing assessment and evaluation and managing the formatting, editing and printing of the.

Our group worked well together in order to accomplish the various parts of the unit planning. For example, one defining moment of our unit planning occurred after all of the activities were collaborated, and our group decided to modify our culminating activity to eliminate any possible confusion and better engage students throughout the unit. The expectations and general thrust of the assignment was still consistent with the original design down approach but we felt that the new structure was more reflective of our group’s work. We worked closely as a group to ensure that this revised Culminating Activity was still reflective of design down principles and that it fit with all group members’ work. Although we had a variety of ideas, all members were respectful of different opinions and were happy with the final product.