

Native Americans in New England Curricular Project

Title: Native Americans, Rousseau and the French Revolution

Grade Level 11 and 12

Subject Area Focus *Social Studies/History,*

Estimated Number of Days to Complete:

Submitted by* Ted Collins

Additional Creators _____

School Monument Mountain High School

District Berkshire Hills Regional

State Massachusetts

Date Submitted 7/14/2015

*This lesson plan will be submitted for inclusion into an on-line database of curricular projects for the NEH program Native Americans in New England.

Curricular Project Summary: (Please write a brief overview summary of the curricular project in 150 words or less.)

Students will analyze the writing of Rousseau "A Discourse- Upon the Origin and the Foundation of the Inequality Among Mankind" and summarize his analysis of the lives of native Americans. Students will then read some contemporary accounts of Native Life in New England as a point of comparison to pick out similarities and differences to Rousseau. In the end students will write an analysis of what Rousseau got right and what he misrepresented in regards to his interpretation of Native Americans to France in a time of crisis and the implications of the beliefs he inspired.

Desired Results/Objectives

1. Essential Questions/Historical Questions:

Why are people often misguided in their attempts to clarify their lives with over simplified techniques in times of crisis?

2. Objectives: By the end of this project, what will students know, understand and be able to do?

Students will know...

- Rousseau's argument on the need to simplify life.
- Contemporary analysis of Native American life and societal structure.
- The Romantic (and misguided) Influence on Robespierre during the French Revolution

Students will understand...

- That all people in changing societies face similar problems
- That nature and reductionism is a place where people often turn find meaning in their lives.
- That during societal change it is difficult for individuals interpret evidence and to find their place in the world.

Students will be able to...

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of Rousseau's analysis.
- Identify evidence in primary and secondary sources to help answer historical questions.
- Develop a thesis about the appeal of Romantic Philosophy to people in a dynamic world.

3. Curriculum Standards (National, State, Local):

MA WHI.34 Describe the concept of Enlightenment in European history and describe the accomplishments of major Enlightenment thinkers, including Diderot, Kant, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire (H)

MA.3.A. Demonstrate understanding of the concept of theme by writing short narratives, poems, essays, speeches, or reflections that respond to universal themes (e.g., challenges, the individual and society, moral dilemmas, the dynamics of tradition

MA 8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of

ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

MA 9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. a. Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”). b. Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., The Federalist, presidential addresses]”).

4. Transfer Goal:

Students will be able to identify the benefits and limitations of any philosophy (or solution) in times of crisis.

Assessment/Evidence

Performance Task or Assessment used to gauge student learning: (Please describe)

Students will write a thesis oriented essay on the benefits and/or limitations of Romantic thought (as influenced by Native Americans) in addressing the problems which France faces prior to and during the French Revolution.

Pre-Assessment:

Students will identify current romantic practices in their own lives that they use when times get tough. (hikes, gardening, sewing, crafts, touchstones, consulting a wise elder, running, meditation etc.)

Formative Assessment:

- Pulling quotes from Rousseau's Discourse regarding the simple life
- Pulling quotes from contemporary analysis of Native American Life regarding behavior and wisdom.
- Identifying Rousseau's influence on Robespierre by reading particular excerpts of his biography.

Other Assessment Evidence:

- Class discussion
- Evidence of students use of Romantic solutions in their own life
- Thesis oriented essay on the appeal of Romantic Philosophy upon Robespierre and what he got right/wrong.

Learning Plan

Lesson Summaries: (add lessons if necessary)

Lesson 1: Discuss the romantic quotes that students pulled from Rousseau's Discourse and then explain conditions in France that may have made this writing very appealing to the French people of the time.

Lesson 2: Discuss contemporary accounts of Native American life and try to reconcile it with Rousseau's interpretation, which was so influential in France.

Lesson 3: Analyze anthropologic evidence of what Native American Life was 'really' like and how Robespierre (based on Scurr's biography) may have been led astray in his distilled and simplified version (which he took from Rousseau). Then try to analyze why this misinterpretation may have led the French Revolution towards the Terror Phase.

Learning Activity Details:

LESSON 1

Materials/Resources Tools: A Discourse: Upon the Origin and the Foundation of the Inequality Among Mankind

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions: Be familiar with Rousseau's writing and understand how he influenced late 1700's France and know how he influence Robespierre in particular.

Historical Question/Essential Question: Why Romantic (back to nature) Philosophy has appeal in times of crisis?

Lesson 1 Details

Lesson Opening: The students will be asked to read a particular section of Rousseau's Discourse and to pull a quote directly from the text and write a brief reaction to his interpretation of Native Americans and what he believes can be learned from them.

During the Lesson: Students contribute quotes aloud that they pulled from the Discourse which may have appealed to the French. Once quotes have been shared there will be a brief lecture on societal conditions that may have contributed to the appeal of romantic thought at the time of the French Revolution: Infant Mortality, an Insulated Monarchy, lack of voice in among the populous

Lesson Closing: Students will be asked to write a short reflection on the why Romantic thought as inspired by Native Americans might have been very appealing to the French at the time prior to the French Revolution.

LESSON 2

Materials/Resources Tools: We Still Live Here – Film

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions: Have particular clips of the film tagged ahead of time to show aspects of native life and what it was like pre-contact.

Historical Question/Essential Question: What can be learned and what is desirable about preindustrial life for the French who are on the verge of revolt?

Lesson 2 Details

Lesson Opening: Students will watch short clips 'We Still Live Here' which includes aspects of Wampanoug life prior to contact and write a reaction in less than 20 words.

During the Lesson: Students will share their reactions with the class with a particular emphasis on what differs between Rousseau's version and the more genuine evidence they have been exposed to in this lesson.

Lesson Closing: Students will develop a short theory (in writing) of why France was so ripe for Native American cultural influence especially as it was interpreted by Rousseau. Students will be asked to do homework by reading Earth Shapers and Placemakers - Bruchac and to pull two quotes about what it was like to be a Native American based on her analysis.

LESSON 3

Materials/Resources Tools: Fatal Purity – Ruth Scurr

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions: Have particular pages tagged for students to read in Fatal Purity which illustrate Rousseau's influence on Robespierre

Historical Question/Essential Question: How does any theory lose truth as it becomes distilled?

Lesson 3 Details

Lesson Opening: Students each share one quote aloud from the Earthshapers and Placemakers that captures the essence of what they believe the true Native American experience illustrates.

During the Lesson: Students be directed to specific pages of Fatal Purity which illustrate Rousseau's influence on Robespierre just prior to the French Revolution and they will be asked to discuss if they believe if Robespierre had a fair idea of what it was really like to be an Native American. Then they will be asked what problems can come from the reduction of reality in the process of trying to gain clarity in one's own political and personal beliefs.

Lesson Closing: Students will be asked to reflect in writing (to be continued for homework) about Robespierre's interpretation of Rousseau's interpretation of what Native American life was 'really' like and how they used/misused these ideas in the process of orchestrating the French Revolution

Materials and Sources Used

What primary source(s) is/are being used (full citation)?

What secondary sources are being used (full citation)? Please annotate each source.

We Still Live Here as Nutayunean. By Anne Makepeace. Perf. Jesse Little Doe Baird. Makepeace Productions, 2010. DVD.

Annotation: A film that documents the reclamation of the Wampanoag language and gives examples of Wampanoag culture including creation stories and native practices that give clarity and meaning to life.

Bruchac, Margaret. "Earthshapers and Placemakers: Algonkian Indian Stories and Landscape." *Indigenous Archaeologies Decolonizing Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2005. 52-77. Print.

Annotation: A summary of Native Algonkian stories that gives a good look into what many natives believed regarding life, which added clarity and context to their lives

Scurr, Ruth. *Fatal Purity – Robespierre and the French Revolution*. New York: Metropolitan. 2006

Annotation: A biography of Robespierre and his influence on the French Revolution

What other curricular materials do you plan to use to support the curricular project?

Rousseau, J.J. *Harvard Classics*. New York: P.F. Collier and Sons, 1910. 168-228. Print.

Annotation: A Romantic philosophical piece that was embraced by many French including Robespierre just prior to the revolution.

Reflection

After teaching the lessons, what suggestions do you have for other teachers who might use this curricular project? TBA