

## Native Americans in New England Curricular Project

**Title:** Native American Literatures 1600-present

**Grade Level** Junior American Literatures

**Subject Area Focus:** Junior American Literatures

**Estimated Number of Days to Complete:**

Submitted by\* Andrew Harris

Additional Creators \_ Kelley Brown

School Salesian High School

District \_\_\_\_\_

State \_ Richmond, CA

Date Submitted \_ July 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.)

This project is the first four lessons of a quarter unit on American Indian stories, philosophies, commentaries, and arts, from traditional and contemporary sources. The overall object is to 1) introduce students to these types of literature and art, and, by moving from older (17-19<sup>th</sup> century) forms to contemporary forms 2) break down the sense of otherness that many non-Indians may have regarding Native peoples. As well, they will gain an appreciation of the power of language to bring people together to share our common humanity, being able to apply that experience to all academic, cultural, and literary expression.

## Desired Results/Objectives

- 1. Essential Questions:** How are creation myths from American Indians similar and different from non-Indian [Christian?]  
How do diction and symbols change meaning in the same stories?  
How do American Indians harmonize contemporary culture with their traditional cultures through story and music and dance?

**Objectives:** to break down the prehistory/history division; to help students move away from Indian as fantasy; to bring in direct learning about the idea of "other"; through literature, film, and music, to have the students experience that history and its literature is a continuum, not a bifurcated reality.

**Students will know...** that there is no prehistory/history division; that the image of American Indians created through media is not representative; that history and its literature is a continuum, not a bifurcated reality; that translated materials can differ in significant yet subtle ways; that creation myths from Judeo-Christian literature and American Indian literature have similarities; that history and its literature is a continuum, not a bifurcated reality

**Students will understand...** How stereotypes of the Western Plains Indians create a sense of otherness for all contemporary Indians; that groups in power often view less powerful group, i.e. American Indians, as "other" and this limits the ways in which people understand Native stories, esp. 19th century literature, and history; that seeing groups of people, i.e., American Indians, as the other, as separate from all human beings, marginalizes them as different from the majority, therefore causing division and prejudice in all communities; that American Indians are still a vibrant, thriving, creative communities in the U.S. and can be seen in stories and literature through time.

**Students will be able to...** Visually be able to identify the stereotypical image of Indian as the Plains Dakota or Cheyenne leader with war head dress; Begin to identify and understand, through slides of portraits of Old Northwest and East Coast portraits that not all Indian regalia is the same (photos of portraits of Old Northwest and East Coast regalia collected by me from the Newberry Library in Chicago); analyze a piece of literature, i.e. "from *The Deerslayer*" and "Rip Van Winkle" using Dorris's lens looking for examples of "otherizing" within that text, and identify evidence within the text to support their analysis; Identify both traditional items of regalia and music and contemporary additions to Crow regalia and music in "Supaman: Prayer Loop Song"; analyze a piece of literature, i.e. "Voices from the Shore" (e-reader - various American Indian creation stories) and identify commonalities with Genesis

- 2. Curriculum Standards (National, State, Local):** California State Framework

**Transfer Goal:** By applying literary analysis techniques to these American Indian short stories, mythology, images, and arts, students will be able to see other cultural literature and arts as part of a human experience we all share.

## Assessment/Evidence

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

Written assignments: All students: [will all students do all three of these activities?](#)

Essay: Describe a personal experience when the student felt otherized , and apply to our literature the experience to our reading of Michael Dorris’s essay and other literature.

Interview: (transcribed from audio): Interview with a parent, grandparent, or great grandparent about their experience of being otherized, and perhaps how things have or have not changed for them over time

Video: create a video with a theme of refuting the otherizing of Richmond kids, a creation story, or a blend of traditional and contemporary music and dance

**Pre-Assessment:** Class discussion, Q and A;; exit tickets at the end of discussion or film or audio; short answer basic reading quizzes; write a creation myth describing the creation of something in contemporary times, following the form of Indian creation myths.

**Formative Assessment:** Formal essay analyzing 1) similarities and differences in different versions of three or more creation myths, with personal analysis of the statement this analysis makes about humans and the human condition, 2) a formal written and multiple choice test of the material read, 3) short essay (3 paragraphs) responding to an article in *Indian Country Today*

**Other Assessment Evidence:** individual assessment using Martha Ruddell’s informal student assessment form

## Learning Plan

### **Lesson Summaries: (add lessons if necessary)**

**Lesson 1:** Introducing American Indian Literature: American Indian images, imagined and real; contemporary non-fiction, Romantic era fiction; 2 class days

**Lesson 2:** Begin examining differences in three versions of a single Iroquois creation myth; 2 class days

**Lesson 3:** Examine Pima creation story (“The Well Baked Man”) with Christian creation story (Genesis)

**Lesson 4:** Contemporary American Indian short story “The Man to Send Rain Clouds”: examining the differences between Laguna Pueblo characters’ and Catholic priest Father Paul’s spiritual understandings, their cultural differences, and their approach to death; short video of Supaman’s “Prayer Loop Song,” describing how he blends traditional regalia, music, and dance with contemporary symbols, music, and

dance. 2 class days; examine the importance of holding on to one's traditional or original language

### **Learning Activity Details:**

#### **LESSON 1**

Materials/Resources Tools: Slide show of various portraits of American Indians from the Newberry library; maps in e-reader; essay "Indian on the Shelf" by Michael Dorris

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions: Make sure to call on students (especially reluctant or quiet or invisible ones) for responses to images, use exit tickets to check their changing ideas of images of [early?] American Indians

Essential Question: How do popular images of American Indians differ from actual realistic images of real American Indians from 18-20th century? How do our images, speech, stories create an image of any particular people as separate from humanity?

#### **Lesson 1 Details**

Day 1: Introduce quarter unit on American Indian Literature: Lecture giving basic background on why American Indians are included in American Literature course, and short history of Indian presence on North American continent; Have students describe their image of "Indian"; Slide show of portraits of various American Indians from early 19th to advertising images used up to 21st century; Slide show of maps showing locations of Indian tribes on continental U.S. at the time of European invasion, of the routes of British, French, and Dutch invasion of North America, and boundaries between colonies and Indian territory, 1793. Homework: "Indian on the Shelf," by Michael Dorris

Day 2: Short quiz and discuss homework reading of "Indian on the Shelf," observing for understanding and/or confusion; discuss personal experience of being seen and treated as the other. Homework: Read "from *The Deerslayer*," and answer study questions regarding Hurry Harry's view of the Mohican Indians (moral argument in this reading will be covered in Romanticism unit)

#### **Lesson Opening:**

Silent meditation; Lecture; poll students on their image of an American Indian;

#### **During the Lesson:**

Teacher shows slide shows, adding commentary and soliciting comments on what the students are seeing, students take notes.

#### **Lesson Closing:**

Commentary from students about what they saw, how their image of American Indian may have changed.: Relate Dorris's essay to students lives. Homework: Read three versions of Iroquois creation myths taken from 1) John Norton in the e-reader, 2) the same story translated by Kanienkehaka (Mohawk), and 3) the same story translated by the Wendat [#1 on the e-reader, #2-3 on <http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/>

Day 2:

Lesson opening: reading quiz based on study questions

During the Lesson:

Quick check of quiz responses, check for basic missed understandings; discuss study questions; check for understanding of how Dorris's essay is applicable to "from *The Deerslayer*."

Lesson Closing:

Commentary from students about what they saw, how their image of American Indian may have changed.: Relate Dorris's essay to students lives. Homework: Read three versions of Iroquois creation myths taken from 1) John Norton in the e-reader, 2) the same story translated by Kanienkehaka (Mohawk), and 3) the same story translated by the Wendat [#1 on the e-reader, #2-3 on <http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/>

## **LESSON 2**

Introduce three versions of an Iroquois creation myth, analyzing subtle differences and the different meaning taken from the differences.

Materials/Resources Tools: Introduce three versions of an Iroquois creation myth, analyzing subtle differences and the different meaning taken from the differences.

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions: Make sure to call on students (especially reluctant or quiet or invisible ones) for details of the stories.

Essential Question: How do subtle differences in diction and symbols in the same story affect meaning

### **Lesson 2 Details**

Day one: begin student led discussion of what things were created; draw focus to what each twin brought to the world; list on board the specific words that shift the meaning and depth of what each brought to the world; Day two: discuss how a few different words change the meaning of the three stories

Lesson Opening:

Silent meditation; Quick check quiz on basic details of the story; poll specific students (perhaps having been chosen the day before, depending on when in the year this unit is used) on basic details questions from the quiz

During the Lesson:

Discuss and summarize basic plot movement and creations that came about in all three stories; require correct pronunciation of characters names; call for questions that all three stories do not address regarding the creation of the world.

Lesson Closing:

Dictionary time defining "good," "evil," "harmony," "struggle," and add to vocabulary log

Day 2:

Lesson Opening:

review quiz and study questions for correct understanding

During the Lesson:

have students list changes in diction they think change meaning; exercise in substituting different words for the words on the list to analyze how they change meaning; Discuss the power of how a few words can make so much difference in meaning

Lesson Closing: Begin reading of Pima and Genesis creation myths; finish for homework

### **LESSON 3**

Compare/contrast two creation myths (Pima and Genesis).

Materials/Resources Tools: Pima myth in e-reader, Genesis in student Bible

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions: Check for students familiar with Christian mythology; define the word myth as used at examining Christian stories; remind students we are looking at all these stories as literature rather than fact

Essential Question: How do beliefs about creation of the world draw on similar materials even though the stories were formed 12,000 miles apart?

#### **Lesson 3 Details:**

Read aloud the specific section of Genesis, preferably from the KJV, in a stentorian voice; have a GOOD student reader tell/read “The Well Baked Man” as a story teller (requires previous prep with the student); students then list similarities and differences; question students through an exit ticket about their responses to the differences (god makes mistakes, god has a sense of humor, god needs humans - god’s lonely)

Lesson Opening:

Silent meditation; teacher led Q & A regarding students’ understanding of the word myth

During the Lesson:

Students officially define the word myth for our purposes from the class dictionary and from Joseph Campbell’s definition of the word and the teacher’s definition (both in the e-reader); stories are read; similarities are listed.

Lesson Closing:

Students begin silent writing rough drafts/ideas for a creation myth showing how a contemporary thing, natural or human made, came to be, in the style of the Pima and other creation myths, to be due in two days, with final due at the end of the unit. Homework: Read: “The Man to Send Rain Clouds,” by Leslie Marmon Silko.

## LESSON 4

Materials/Resources Tools: e-reader; youtube link to Crow Supaman's "Prayer Loop Song; youtube site [UN Youth Caucus- Intervention on Language](#)

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions: If not hip to contemporary music and dance, have students give examples

Essential Question: Do temporary American Indian stories and music meld well with older traditions, or do the blendings grate and feel disharmonious; what happens when a people or person loses their original language.

### Lesson 4 Details:

Lesson Opening: Day 1 and 2: Have students listen to traditional American Indian flute, drum, and chanting

Day 1:

During the Lesson:

Quick verbal quiz on story basics; define irony; analyze the pueblo characters' understandings of what Father Paul says, how they respond to him, ask why they let him believe they are following his Catholic understandings, and how that brings harmony to the situation;

Lesson Closing:

Discussion: student responses to the cultural differences in the story; students state their own handling of cultural differences between our school Catholicism and their own spiritual traditions, or lack thereof. Students relate their experiences of either losing or trying to hold on to their original language

Day 2:

Lesson Opening: Have students listen to traditional American Indian flute, drum, and chanting

During the Lesson:

Review the short story, the differences between cultural understandings; review any and all questions from lessons 1 – 3; show video of Supaman; list and discuss the contemporary symbols, music, sounds, and dance and how they harmonize the past and the present; view youtube video of the presentation of the UN youth caucus on aboriginal language.

Lesson Closing:

Discussion, continue: student responses to the cultural differences in the story; students state their own handling of cultural differences between our school Catholicism and their own spiritual traditions, or lack thereof. Students relate their experiences of either losing or trying to hold on to their original language

## Materials and Sources Used

What source(s) is/are being used (full citation)? Please annotate each source.

1. Dorris, Michael. "The Indian on the Shelf." *The American Indian and the Problem of History*. ed. Calvin Martin. New York; Oxford University Press, 1987. 98-105.

An essay discussing how the image of the Western Plains Indian has become the defining symbol of American Indians, and that it is a "fantasy" of American media. He discusses how images such as that create an image of Indians as somehow other than any other human, which he refutes

2. Cooper, James Fenimore. "from *The Deerslayer*." *American Literature Anthology*. Ed. Andrew Harris. Salesian High School, Richmond, CA; 2015.

The first of Fenimore Cooper's *Leather Stockings Tales*. The first three pages introduce us to Deerslayer, who, as the first American male literary hero, has become the template for subsequent male literary and film heroes. We also meet Hurry Harry, the darker side of early American literary characters, who "otherizes the Mohicans with his invective toward them without having ever lived with them.

3. Harris, Andrew. *Photo Collections from the Newberry Library*. n.p. 2012.

A collection of photos of portraits of various, mostly Iroquois Indians, from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century painted in England and the U.S., as well as portraits and sketches of Western Plains Indians

4. Three Iroquois creation stories:

"Iroquois Creation Story." *American Literature Anthology*. Ed. Andrew Harris. Salesian High School, Richmond, CA; 2015.

*Kanienkehaka* <http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/> . Web. July 13, 2015.

<http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/>

*Wendat Creation Story* [1704.deerfield.history.museum](http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/). Web. July 13, 2015

<http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/>

These three stories are myths about the creation of the earth and its environs, people, languages, and the dark and light aspects of life.

5. Silko, Leslie Marmon. "The Man to Bring Rain Clouds." *The Man to Bring Rain Clouds*. New York: Penguin Books, 1974. 3-9.

This is a gentle story about the death of a Pueblo Indian tribal elder, and the social and spiritual aspects of the experience from tribal characters and a Catholic priest. Irony abounds.

6. Supaman. "Prayer Loop Song." Web. July 14, 2015

<http://www.rebelmusic.com/#!/music/rebel-music/video/supaman-prayer-loop-song>

This is a video of a Crow musician/dancer mixing traditional regalia, music, and dance with



contemporary symbols, music, and dance.

7. UN Youth Caucus- Intervention on Language

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=60Gc5F\\_VJQ0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60Gc5F_VJQ0)

This is a video of a representative advocating for a U.N. intervention in world locations to help save disappearing indigenous languages

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

Recordings of various American Indian traditional flute, drums and chant.

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

This project was created for a fairly liberal Catholic college preparatory high school. Be prepared for possible student resistance to comparing Indian creation mythology to Christian creation mythology. In a public school setting, state clearly that the religious content of the material is teaching ABOUT religion as a human phenomenon, and Christian material is religious material as literature.