THE CHANGING AMERICAN LANDSCAPE

AN ENVIRONMENTAL PARADOX

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NEH Summer Institute 2010
Final unit of the year

This unit is situated at the end of 11\textsuperscript{th} grade American Literature and follows instruction in the order listed below.

1. Language & Communication and Issues of Language in an American Classic
2. The Art of Memoir & Personal Writing
3. Rhetoric of Politics & Speech
4. Media Exploration: Corporate Culture & Advertising; Internet; and Film
5. Class, Cultural Diversity, and the American Dream
6. The Changing American Landscape
ESSENTIAL QUESTION
How do we talk about a piece of text in an academic way?

For example, addressing fiction may include:
  Basic text elements (PSCT)
  Genre
  Literary periods
  Literary Critical Theory (cf Appleman)
ESSENTIAL QUESTION
How do we talk about a piece of text in an academic way?

Addressing non-fiction may include:
What is it about? Who wrote it and for whom (purpose)? When was it written and what else was happening when it was written (purpose)? How is it relevant today?

Subject Audience Speaker/Logos Pathos Ethos
HABITS OF MIND

• How do you know? (Evidence)
• Whose point of view are you seeing? (Perspective, Empathy)
• What causes what? (Connections, Cause & Effect)
• How might things have been different? (Conjecture, Imagination)
• How does it matter? (Relevance)

TEXT CONNECTIONS

Text to Self
Text to Text
Text to World

From
DEFINING AND READING TEXT IN THE 21ST CENTURY


Intertextuality -- Julia Kristeva: essentially means “social situatedness” that is the idea that all utterances [or texts] are responses to previous utterances and are addressed to specific addressees.
Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).
ANALYZING Course of Empire

Background Information
Generally
Individually
Purpose
Effect
Application/Relevance
Cole: Savage State
Cole: Pastoral
Cole: Consummation
Cole: Destruction
Cole: Desolation
“When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title.”
“Imagining America: Icons of 20\textsuperscript{th} Century American Art” Video co-created by Jonathan Fineberg and John Carlin. (Aired Dec 2005; not available?) Although the title speaks to the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, a lengthy discussion of Cole’s Oxbow and 19\textsuperscript{th} century influence is illuminating.

2-hour PBS art documentary addresses nature society, identity, mass media, “spiritual wilderness”, and “the space between art & life.”
The Oxbow, Thomas Cole

“Imagining America...” includes lengthy discussion about the influence of this painting.
Panoramic Perception

“Speed and luxury, however, altered what people actually saw. Perceptive travelers had long noted that the swiftness of the train made the scenery a rapidly moving blur. The historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch explains that railroad travel required a new kind of perception. All details near the train disappeared into a haze of speed, and the traveler could see only the general outline of the far distance. Schivelbusch calls this ‘panoramic perception’” (185)

Walden  Henry David Thoreau

A Rustic Mill, Bierstadt
Manufactured Landscapes
Documentary about Ed Burtynsky’s landscape photos

Kennecott Copper Mine (Burtynsky)
“MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES”
Photographer Ed Burtynsky
Documentary video

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZiKBKnesnU (4 mins)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3uYIWi82A&NR=1 (2 mins)
Topics for Inquiry

“The Land Ethic” Aldo Leopold
“The Stone Horse” Barry Lopez
“Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination” Leslie Marmon Silko
“The Trouble With Wilderness” William Cronan
“A Wind Storm in the Forests” John Muir
“Marshland Elegy” Aldo Leopold
An Exploration of Romanticism Through Art and Poetry

FIVE THEMES OF GEOGRAPHY

Location
Place
Human/Environment Interaction
Movement
Region

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/resources/ngo/education/themes.html
THEME 3: HUMAN/ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

“The environment means different things to different people, depending on their cultural backgrounds and technological resources. In studying human/environment interaction, geographers look at all the effects—positive and negative—that occur when people interact with their surroundings. Sometimes a human act, such as damming a river to prevent flooding or to provide irrigation, requires consideration of the potential consequences. The construction of Hoover Dam on the Colorado River, for example, changed the natural landscape, but it also created a reservoir that helps provide water and electric power for the arid Southwest. Studying the consequences of human/environment interaction helps people plan and manage the environment responsibly.”

From nationalgeographic.com
Take a Look Around

Salem State College offers examples of local landscape changes.

Salt Marsh next to dorm
New construction/landscaping (metaphor)
SSC SALT MARSH
(It’s a blurry Great Egret)
SSC SALT MARSH
(It’s a blurry Great Egret)
It’s a metaphor
“You just don’t expect to find confrontational conceptual artwork sandwiched between a posh private golf course and a genteel mansion-turned-museum where staff members busy themselves caring for English gardens.”

Deepwater Horizon Response


“Deepwater Horizon Response” by Mitchell Gaudett: A contemporary artist’s response to an environmental catastrophe.
WORKS CONSULTED FOR NEH RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMER 2010

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The British Library

This link takes you to the British Library which has an educational program[me]. This particular site explores the evolving aspects of the English language specific to dictionaries.

http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/dic/meanings.html