

## An American Century: Year-end Project

Your task: To plan and execute one forty-minute lesson, accompanied by an informational reading for the class to digest the night before. Through discussion, interactive media, and other activities, the lesson will explore cultural trends in America during your decade.

Process:

### Step 1: Meet as a group to plan your approach.

Brainstorm potential topics to research and sources to use. Try to identify one or more central themes for your lesson. You will be expected to develop an intelligent and integrated theme that has not been the focus of previous American Studies lessons. There will be forty minutes allotted for your lesson, and you should not attempt to cover every area of interest from your ten-year period. Assign responsibilities and due dates for each group member's research and other responsibilities.

### Step 2: Research your topics.

Collect your resources, compiling a bibliography as you go. Communicate often with your group members and be prepared to adapt your topic as your lesson develops out of your research. Highlight information that might be included in your informational reading.

### Step 3: Create a one-page informational reading.

Bring your research together to create a one-page handout that is clear, engaging, and professional-looking. Your students will be reading this handout as homework the night before you teach your lesson. Think about what you need them to know so that your lesson is effective and productive.

The informational reading must meet the following criteria:

- Appropriate, original content: must make use of relevant information that has not been covered previously in American Studies
- Correct citation: must make correct use of Chicago-style endnotes. This is an academic document, and any voices and ideas from your research must be attributed to their original source.
- Effective layout: the layout of the handout must convey meaning in a way that is interesting and creative. This may include charts, images, or other graphics.

N.B. Your handout must be submitted (.rtf) in advance to Mr. Francis. Do not exceed one page for your handout.

#### Step 4: Create a lesson plan.

Your lesson plan should include a focused and specific aim question, a series of analytical discussion questions, targeted information you hope to elicit from the students, and one or more relevant and engaging activities. This will be the guide for your group's lesson. At the start of your lesson, you will need to provide two copies of your lesson plan for Ms. Plafker and Mr. Francis.

Take care to develop challenging and thought-provoking questions that require the class to synthesize rather than spit back information. Avoid yes-or-no questions. The lesson must reflect that the group understands the difference between teaching (an engaging process for the students) and telling (a passive experience for the students).

You must include an audio/visual component in your lesson, such as a song or movie/television clip from your decade. You must sign out any necessary equipment (such as TVs, VCRs, DVD players, or computers) in advance with the Technology Department (Rm. 222), English Department (Rm. 601), or the Social Studies Department (Rm. 301). It is also wise to test this equipment out in advance. If you do not and it fails to function, your grade will be lowered.

#### Step 5: Assign teaching responsibilities.

Each group member must have a clear pedagogic role during the lesson, and he or she will be assessed individually on preparedness and organization, delivery and clarity, and engagement of others.

Find effective and creative ways to include all group members. Overly-forced transitions between group members are uncomfortable and will be evaluated accordingly. Make sure your lesson moves smoothly from topic to topic and, if necessary, from teacher to teacher.

Content: Suggested areas of focus include but are not limited to the following:

- Social movements: civil rights matters; labor issues; education trends; migrations, housing, demographics
- Politics: foreign policy and military actions, constitutional amendments, major Supreme Court decisions, political campaigns
- Artistic movements: trends in music, fine art, photography, film, literature, drama
- Media trends: new technology, advertising, print journalism, radio, television, the Internet, the "Crime of the Century"
- Economics: wages, prices, costs of living, the stock market, trade
- Food: dining culture, eating trends, new technology
- Teen culture: values, leisure time activities, dating trends, education, family, economics

Assessment: Assessment will be based on preparation, professionalism, creativity, primary source selections, and overall mastery of the content. You will also be evaluated on the continuity, flow, and scope of your lesson, as well as how well you elicited participation from the class.