

Bryce Maximé
English 464
Professor Mueller
Final Project

Immediately the most important thing for me to address in this new rationale and introduction is that the nature of my entire lesson plan has changed. Upon further analysis and discussion, the lesson plan and nearly everything about it, from audience to subject, is impossible for me to effectively teach. It is written for a very specific audience that likely does not exist, that is a Japanese high school class learning English that still has the ability to critically analyze literature in a language they likely do not speak. As such, I am redefining my lesson as a whole and will refocus it entirely.

The new audience of the lessons will continue to be a Junior or Senior high school class. Students at this level should be able to be challenged with difficult text, about difficult social issues. I believe that George C Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* would be appropriate for discussion here. It is absolutely biting satire that deals with the harsh subject of race in America. Yet it is considered comedy by virtue of its genre of satire. The goal of this lesson would be to allow students to discuss a very pressing social issue in a mature context, while also discussing whether or not it deserves to be called comedy. This lesson is almost exactly what Dr. Finn has also used in her comedy course this year. I believe that it is so effective at getting students to discuss some very pressing matters, that it is worth being used in a grand literature course as well. Naturally my one major concern is finding a way to slot this into the schedule. It cannot come too early, or too late without proper introduction. This will likely follow a discussion

on Langston Hughes, Maya Angelou, or another African-American author or poet. This will be limited to small group discussion about the nature of comedy and even moreso whether or not they found *The Colored Museum* funny at all.

Prior to this, students will read Langston Hughes' "Harlem." I feel like this gels perfectly as the introduction to a very hard-hitting, heavy-handed, text about race. All of these sections will begin with a brief discussion on the life of the author. It should be noted here, as it will be in each individual lesson plan, that this is one day of an overall lesson that will take a week at maximum, and likely no more depending on the work used. Students in this lesson will discuss the historical context of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes himself, and at the end of the lesson be eased into *The Colored Museum*. I believe that the sudden jump in time will be potentially poignant, as in my own education it was easy to get the impression that racial conflict in America died post Civil Rights Movement when it absolutely did not. Students will be assessed in this section by being assigned asked to write a response poem. This can be in either prose or poetic language, but it should be a reflective work that challenges students to give their worldview before leading into a more modern discussion of race.

After reading *The Colored Museum*, students will likely need something to pick them up. This lesson will focus on something more light-hearted but something they can still get something from. Thusly, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, to which I hear a class of imaginary students moan in agony. Immediately, the biggest hurdle is the fact that it *is* what it is. But rather than focus on the actual societal concerns presented in the novel, I want to focus on the one thing that always made me chuckle when I was made

to analyze it in class. That is, the very beginning, and the notice given “by order of the author.” I think that this is the absolute best part of Huck Finn and it never gets any credit. Everything in the novel, every societal issue, every potential motive, moral, etcetera is completely demolished by this notice. Which begs the question, why was it included? This will be the focal point of the discussion, and will be brought up when the novel is finished by the class. This will be the focus of a class discussion, with a small short-write of a few paragraphs at the end for assessment. Students will be asked, why is this here? What is the reason for the notice existing? Does the notice even really matter, and are you even supposed to take it to heart? Out of the current lessons, this is my most favorite, but I am a little concerned that students might get the impression that I am grasping at straws over such a small section of a novel.

Next, students will read *Lord of the Flies*. This is included as a discussion of the nature of humanity as a whole. The focus of this lesson will be discussing whether or not humanity is violent by nature or otherwise. Students will read *Lord of the Flies* as the main text, but be introduced with Thomas Hobbes’ *The Leviathan* and Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s conflicting belief. This lesson will take likely the full week, as we spend some classes discussing Hobbes and Rousseau, and the other classes discussing the novel. At the end of this lesson, students will be structured into a loosely moderated debate to discuss what they believe human nature is. Students will be expected to not only refer to the three things read, but also real-world events to justify their belief.

Finally, the fifth lesson will discuss what literature is as a whole. I want this lesson to be open-ended as I think it will hold more value this way. There will be no truly

formal assignment, but students will be introduced to experimental literature and electronic literature. I think that putting together a slideshow, or even showing an image during a brief lecture would do the trick for an introduction. I would likely use an image of Zang Tumb Tumb for experimental literature, as it goes against most traditional depictions of literature. I think that this holds value as a capstone of a year because it allows students to really think about what they believed literature to be. Did the view it as a very rigid structure, words reading left to write, in block text format? The final assignment for this lesson would just be for students to bring in something they think fits the umbrella of literature, whether experimental or otherwise and present for no more than five minutes on why it is literature. This is intended to have students really think about what fits in the umbrella of literature, and to hopefully realize that literature is more expansive than what was read in class.

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Lesson Plan

Harlem, Langston Hughes

Grade Level: Junior or Senior High School Students

Focus: Discussing Langston Hughes, the ideas present in *Harlem*, and to act as a transition into *The Colored Museum*

Objective: Students should understand the Harlem Renaissance to an adequate enough extent to be able to equate it to *Harlem*. Students should also be able to reflect appropriately on current society in response to the writings of someone from the past.

Agenda:

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| ● Discussing the Harlem Renaissance | 15 Minutes |
| ● Discussing Hughes | 5 Minutes |
| ● Reading and Discussion | 5 Minutes |
| ● How this relates to <i>The Colored Museum</i> | 10 Minutes |
| ● Easing into <i>The Colored Museum</i> | 10 Minutes |

Harlem:

- An artistic movement that shaped black identity
- Black authors sought out by publishers
- A realistic portrayal of black life
- An aesthetic movement, not political
- The progenitor to the civil rights movement
- “The Great Migration” pushing African Americans to urban spaces
- African American magazines, and the NAACP
- Experimentation
- Black intellectuals

Hughes:

- Poet, novelist, playwright
- Wrote about African American culture, ideas
- Influenced by Sandburg and Walt Whitman
- Utilized jazz rhythms and dialect to authentically express urban African Americans
- Travelling lecturer

Class Discussion:

- Read to self

- Make notes of what the subject matter is

The Colored Museum:

- Introduce *The Colored Museum*
- Biting satire of African American identity
- Discusses the tragic portrayal of African Americans
- Seeks to expose flaws in both sides of the community
- Who is George C Wolfe?
- Born post Harlem, born during the Civil Rights Movement

Closing Remarks and Homework:

- Continue to think about *Harlem* and the relation that the Renaissance had to the following Civil Rights Movement
- Start thinking on how or why *The Colored Museum* is closely related to *Harlem*
- Homework: Write a response poem to *Harlem*, prose or not, that either responds to the idea or discusses present society

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Lesson Plan

The Colored Museum, George C. Wolfe

Grade Level: Junior or Senior High School Students

Focus: Discussing Satire, Comedy and Tragedy, and whether or not this is even funny

Objectives: Students should be able to understand satire, and relate whether or not that gives *The Colored Museum* a pass on humor. Students should also be able to appropriately explain with evidence from the film why it is funny or not in their own opinions.

Agenda:

- Discuss Satire 10 Minutes
- Explain how comedy and tragedy are not so different 10 Minutes
- Show “Git on Board” 10 Minutes
- Small Groups to discuss whether or not this is funny and why 10 Minutes
- Bring together as a class for wrap 5 Minutes

Satire:

- Satire is the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.
- Does this give *The Colored Museum* a pass?
- Is *The Colored Museum* even effective satire?

Comedy and Tragedy:

- Is *The Colored Museum* a comedy?
- It is full of tragic scenery, a man throwing out his past, a woman who has a lost her identity, a soldier murders his comrades to spare them from the horrors at home
- By nature tragedy can become comedic, but is it comedy tragedy by nature?
- Is it tragic to laugh at the jokes present in *The Colored Museum*

“Git On Board”

- Shows a performance of the play
- Allows students to actually see how it would be portrayed
- Does this make it any funnier?

Group Discussion:

- Was this funny?
- Why or why not?
- After seeing it performed, is it effective satire?

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Lesson Plan

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain

Grade Level: Junior or Senior High School Students

Focus: Why is the Notice included at the beginning?

Objectives:

- Students should be able to discuss why this is included in spite of the obvious issues discussed in the novel while forming an opinion on whether it helps or hinders the text

Agenda:

- Reading The Notice 2 Minutes
- Silent Write about The Notice 5 Minutes
- Group Discussion 10 Minutes
- Explaining the Notice together 10 Minutes
- Expanding the Notice and it's intentions 10 Minutes
- Does the Notice have to exist 7 Minutes

The Notice:

- The Notice states that anyone searching for any value from Huck Finn is going to be punished
- Authors hardly write things for the sake of writing them, so why did Twain include this?
- Is this also satirical, does he include this to poke fun at people that read purely for entertainment, or does he include this to poke fun at all?
- Does the notice even need to exist, or is the story compromised without its presence?
- If it doesn't need to exist, why? Is it purely a one-off joke?

Homework:

- Utilizing notes taken in group discussion, the silent write before the group discussion, and notes they may have taken post breakdown students will write no more than a page discussing the point of the notice. This will hopefully include discussing whether or not it is necessary, whether or not it is satirical, whether or not it is intended to be taken to heart, or whether or not it compromises the integrity of the story when it is missing.

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Lesson Plan

Lord of the Flies, William Golding

Grade Level: Junior or Senior High School Students

Focus: The Nature of Humanity, and Using Evidence from Fiction and Nonfiction to Assist

Agenda:

- Hobbes and Rosseau 20 Minutes
- The Philosophy of *Lord of the Flies* 20 Minutes
- Explaining the Debate 5 Minutes

Thomas Hobbes:

- Wrote *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common Wealth Ecclesiaticall and Civil*
- Concerns society, government, and the social contract theory
- Part I: Of Man
 - Human nature is materialistic
 - There is no immaterial soul
 - Hope is desire for a thing with the idea that it can be had
 - Describes psychology without any idea of the greater good
 - Civil war is the natural progress for humanity
 - Therefore, humans are full of summum malum, the greatest evil
 - This is the fear of a violent death, which allows humans to enter society so as to be spared this

Jean-Jacques Rosseau

- Wrote *The Social Contract or Of the Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right*
- Believes that society is what causes summum malum to exist, not that human nature causes society to exist
- Believes that society is far worse than the state of nature of humanity
- “Let us then admit that force does not create right, and that we are obliged to obey only legitimate powers”
- All participants should be free to choose which laws they live under

Lord of the Flies

- Jack and Roger embody Hobbes’ idea that humans given no society or taken out of society will revel in violence and evil

- Piggy and Simon embody Rosseau's idea that humans out of society are inherently good and peaceful
- Ralph is a bystander that watches the two sides, he simultaneously represents summum malum and summum bonum at several points

The Debate:

- Students will be split into two groups, Rosseau and Hobbes
- The two groups will then debate on the nature of humanity using real world examples, their respective texts, and the novel itself
- This will allow students to stretch their use of critical reading, their use of interpretation of reality, and form a strong opinion on a very serious matter

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Lesson Plan

Grade Level: Junior or Senior High School Students

Focus: What is Literature, and what counts as literature?

Objectives:

- Students should walk away from this lesson with a wider grasp on what counts as literature
- Students should be able to find new sources of literature, or even create new forms of literature if they so please
- Students should have a newfound appreciation for the art of creating literature, or literature as a whole

Agenda:

Presentations

Class Period

What is Literature?:

- “Written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit.
- Books and writings published on a particular subject.”
- “A subjective value judgement”
- “Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech”
- Fiction?
- Non-Fiction?
- Poetry?
- Short stories?
- What isn’t literature?
- Film isn’t literature, but is a screenplay?
- Music isn’t literature, but are lyrics?

Assignment (Assigned in a Previous Lesson):

- Bring in something you believe is literature
- Be prepared to discuss what makes this thing literature for five minutes
- Be prepared to share these notes aloud in class
- If the work is of adequate length, it may be read aloud as well
- If not, a summary of qualities

Debate Guide for *Lord of the Flies* Artifact

Things to Consider For the Debate:

- Does the existence of Ralph and Piggy's small society of sorts verify Hobbes' claim? Did they do this because they were afraid that Jack and Roger would kill them otherwise?
- What is the reason for the boys' breakdown when they run into the Naval officer? Are they ashamed of what they have done, and does this fit in with Rosseau?
- Simon seemingly exists to represent the good of humanity, but can he also represent the inherent evils?
- What does the author appear to view humanity as? Is this baseless?
- Are there limits to individual freedoms, should those governed relinquish individual rights?
- What real world events have happened recently, on either side, that could enhance your point? Look towards wars, protesting, advances in the sciences, etc.

***Lord of the Flies* - Human Nature Debate: Artifact**

After reading *Lord of the Flies*, Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract* we will be having a class wide debate. You will be split into three groups. One group will argue in line with Hobbes' belief that humanity is evil by nature, the second group will argue Rousseau's belief that instead it is society that causes evil, and the final group will be annotators and observers.

Procedure and Purpose:

This will be a loosely moderated debate. It is encouraged that students contribute to the discussion whenever possible, as long as no one is currently speaking. Participation is expected and you should come prepared with the text itself (for quoting).

It is important to remember that there is no winning in a debate. All I ask is that you form a strong opinion that you can back up with evidence from the text. You may be assigned to a side that you do not personally agree with. If this happens, remember that this is more an exercise in being able to back up your position with actual evidence.

Due to the nature of this, it is also important that you are able to listen to your classmates as well. While it is not the primary focus, it is no less important that you do listen and occasionally challenge the opinions of those around you. This disagreement and challenging of beliefs is what allows you to grow as a person with an opinion. You should be able to both backup your challenge, but also to defend your own point if challenged back.

Those in the annotation group will be responsible for recording ideas and comments they find interesting to be repeated at the end of the debate. Essentially, you will act in order to summarize key speaking points, and during the time you share these points you may also comment on them. The annotation group will act as a sort of middle ground that has no dedicated side to argue for, and instead will input their own responses to the points brought up by the other two groups.

Comedy and Tragedy, Quotes for Consideration: Artifact

Here are some quotes to consider when discussing *The Colored Museum* in your groups, or even to reflect on post discussion.

- **“In the first place, true drama is awfully close to being comedy...A man who loses his pants out in front of a thousand people-he’s suffering the tortures of the damned, but he’s awfully funny doing it”** - Howard Hawks, American director
- “For tragedy, as some say, is when something bad happens to you, while comedy is when it occurs to another;...**In other words, comedy and tragedy flow from the same actions...**” - Cecil Foster, *Genuine Multiculturalism*
- **“A joke will allow us to exploit something ridiculous** in our enemy which we could not...bring forward openly or consciously...” - Sigmund Freud
- “Laughter is a reaction to incongruity...**Laughter is a release of nervous energy...**” - Emys Westacott

***Harlem* Homework Guide**

Artifact

For this assignment, produce a response to the *Harlem* poem. This does not have to be poetry, it may be prose. Draw inspiration from our current society, or even reflect on things that happened post Langston Hughes' death (1967). Consider the state of the presidency, or even the state of countries outside of our own. Respond to what dreams are being implied in the poem, or even directly respond to "What happens to a dream deferred."

Do not feel forced to throw yourself into poetic language. Write in a manner that makes you comfortable, the content of your writing is more valuable than the surface level of vocabulary used. Remember that the option to write a response in prose is available as well. If you choose this option, keep it no longer than one page. I understand that with such complex topics, this may be difficult, but ultimately brevity is the soul of wit.

Artifact:

“Git on Board” From the TV Run of *The Colored Museum*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFprKJBkRY>

Also, potentially “Symbiosis” from the same TV Run:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wqAaemW-P4>

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