

I. Rationale

In cooperation with History and English teachers along with supportive administrators I piloted the *History through Literature* project during the 2023-2024 academic year. Rather than teaching a survey course with superficial treatment of events, I integrated works of historical fiction that expanded students' understanding of historical phenomena and of the human condition. Students' diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural value systems along with their unique lived experiences demand the integration of alternate narratives to counter dominant historical narrative typical of high school history survey courses. Motivation for the reader is derived from their participation in choosing a title that is meaningful. Students choose titles related to historical and universal themes. They keep a dialectical journal which helps them engage with the narrative. Students identify historical topics they research. For example, a student researched the Fugitive *Slave Act* as a result of their engagement with Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*. Students participated in a digital book fair through which they engage in one another's research findings through the use of websites, podcasts, and book talks. Students share their familiarity with the historical context, key turning points in the plot, and the protagonists' victories and failures that resonated with them. I look forward to sharing these cumulative projects with Fellows and authors in addition to collaborating in finding other dynamic approaches to making titles accessible to 14 to 18 year olds in creative ways. Based on my positive experience integrating *There There* by Tommy Orange into the history curriculum I shall be using 2023 finalist for nonfiction Ned Blackhawk's *The Rediscovery of America Native Peoples* and *The Unmaking of American History*. I plan to leverage Blackhawk's work to give students' an even greater understanding of indigenous peoples' stories. I have also shared National book Award titles including 2017 winner Jesmyn Ward's *Sing Unburied Sing*, (2016) Colson Whitehead's *Underground Railroad*.

Example of a student's *Dialectical Journal* for chapter 6 *Kojo* (Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*)

1 Character analysis

Describe characters who are relevant in developing the theme and plot.

Kojo - Kojo is Sam and Ness's son. He escapes the plantation with Ma Aku as a baby, and Ma Aku brings him to freedom in the North, where she raises him as an adopted son.

Anna. Even though he is a free man in a city that is relatively friendly towards black people, slavery still exists and its specter torments him.

Important quotes

Identify quotes from the reading that you think are important. Explain why you think the quote is important, and then analyze how each quote brings out a theme that exists in the work.

"He loved the look of those boats, loved that his hands helped build and maintain them, but Ma Aku always said it was bad juju, him and all the other freed Negroes working on ships. She said there was something evil about them building up the things that had brought them to America in the first place, the very things that had tried to drag them under." He loved the boats, but Ma Aku said there was something off about it. Him and the others working on the boats that tried to bring them to America in the first place is disgraceful.

Student encountered no new / unfamiliar vocabulary in this chapter.

Literary devices/Rhetorical Devices

Identify literary devices. Include an example of the literary device from the text.

In Homegoing, water symbolizes the pain and suffering of slavery and racism, and specifically how slavery violently uproots people from their homes. This association begins when Esi is sent from the Gold Coast (modern-day Ghana) on a ship to America, and many people on the boats throw themselves into the water rather than submit to slavery.

Thoughts & predictions *I feel that Kojo won't find anyone and the history of descendants will linger; until hopefully, the descendants meet. When Kojo felt pride in fixing the ships and helping, it did not impede on moving forward, but being stuck in the past and not trying to escape.*

Plot development and analysis: *Jo was living in Maryland, working on the boats in Fell's Point. He had lived there ever since Ma Aku had gotten him out of slavery by crossing the border into the free state. Police often came around the boat, which still made Jo jumpy. He continued on to the house where Ma Aku worked because he knew his wife Anna would be helping with the cleaning.*

History through literature methodology and reading list (* represents titles we incorporated into the curriculum this year)

Colonialism/ Slavery; legacy of slavery, & failed Reconstruction intergenerational trauma

Fiction

* ***Homegoing Yaa Gyasi*** 910 L (14-17 y.o)

**There There* Tommy Orange 810L (14-17 y.o)

**Sing, Unburied, Sing* Jesmyn Ward 840L (14-17 y.o)

**The Water Dancer* Ta' Nehisi Coates

Twelve Years a Slave Solomon Northup

**The Underground Railroad* Colson Whitehead (11-17 y.o) 890L

**Kindred* Octavia E. Butler time travel 580L

**The Nickel Boys* Colson Whitehead orphaned children

Asian American Studies

Non Fiction

**Asian American Histories of the United States* Catherine Ceniza Choy

How Does it Feel to be a Problem? Moustafa Bayoumi

Bayoumi tells the stories of seven young men , all Arab and Muslim, in America and their struggles to try and sustain a life in a country that sees them as their foe.

Fiction

**Snow Falling on Cedars* David Guterson (1940s-1950s) 1080L

Farewell To Manzanar Houston & Wakatsuki (1940s) memoir

the placement of Japanese-Americans in internment camps during World WarII

**Thousand Pieces of Gold* (1860-1930) Ruthanne Lum McCunn 940L

A young Chinese woman is sold (trafficked) to a middle man who brings her to "The West"

China Boy Gus Lee 880L (1950s) experience of Chinese American

**Joy Luck Club* Amy Tan (930L) experience of Chinese American women (intergenerational)

Tan writes about the intergenerational challenges between mothers who fled Communist China and their daughters they are raising in America. (traditional vs. modern value systems)

A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain Robert Olen Butler

Aftermath of the Vietnam War and the impact on the Vietnamese refugees who settled in the United States

The Women Warrior, China Men Maxine Hong Kingston

The first book is about a daughter being told stories about her family's past in China. It tells tales about strong women that clash with the real oppression of women.

Bone Fae Myenne Ng

This novel is about the Leong family, living in Chinatown, San Francisco; their troubles and drama of maintaining a stable family.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian Sherman Alexie

Junior, a 14-year-old living on the Spokane Indian reservation, was born with a range of medical issues. This book shows all of the troubles he goes through to obtain a higher education than the rez offers.

Black Elk Speaks John G. Neihardt

Neihardt tells the story of Nicholas Black Elk, a Lakota healer and visionary, during the twilight years of the nineteenth century.

War Dances Sherman Alexie

This book is a group of works of literature, all written by Alexie, showing the features of modern relationships.

The Things They Carried Tim O'Brien

This novel is about men who fought in the Vietnam War and the effects it had on them.

Never Fall Down Patricia McCormick

This book is about a boy who was separated from his family after a soldier took him away. He was sent to a labor camp and learned how to survive.

Buck MK Asante

This novel is about a kid who has to educate himself through gangs, rap, and eventually, when he gets a chance, books. He finds that literature can teach him and guide him through life.

Time Out of Joint Philip K. Dick

This novel questions whether or not the world is real. The main character begins to notice things becoming out of place and eventually leaves town to try to figure out the reason for these unnatural occurrences.

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? Philip K. Dick

This novel is set in a dystopian world where in 2021 a world war has uncovered technology that wreaks havoc on humanity. These androids live in hiding among humans, trying to remain undetected.

A Small Place Jamaica Kincaid

This novel is about a small island in the British West Indies that was used to escape European Colonialism. It also depicts the drawbacks of living in such a small place off the mainland.

The Painted Drum Louise Erdrich

This novel is about the relationships with family and the strength that comes with it. These relationships are stung together by a drum from the Ojibwe tribe.

***Love Medicine* Louise Erdrich**

This novel tells the drama of two Native-American families, the Kashpaws and the Lamartines.

***The Complete Stories* Zora Neale Hurston**

This collection of African-American literature contains all of Hurston's fiction stories from 1921 to 1955.

***The Night Watchman* Louise Erdrich**

This novel tells the stories of the difficult lives of many Native-Americans who were alive during the time leading up to the "emancipation" bill in the US Congress and their struggles to try and live a "normal life" in a country that wants to drive them out.

***Loving vs. Virginia* Patricia Hruby Powell**

This novel is a forbidden love story about two teens who faced injustice. It is about their struggles to change the law, so that they could be together.

Stamped From the Beginning Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds (2016)

Arab-American Studies

How does it feel to be a problem Moustafa Bayoumi

Imperialism /globalism

A Small Place Jamaica Kincaid

Waiting for Snow in Havana Confessions of a Cuban boy Carlos Eire

World War II

All The Light We Cannot See Anthony Doerr 880L (14-17 y.o.)

**Maus A Survivor's Tale I My Father Bleeds History (1930s-1940s)* Art Spiegelman NA -L

**Maus A survivor's Tale II And Here My troubles Began (1930s-1940s)* Art Spiegelman NA-L

Vietnam War

The Things They Carried Tim O'Brien

* *The Sympathizer* Viet Thanh Ngyuen

U.S. intervention in Iraq

**Fallujah* Walter Dean Myers 780L

U.S. intervention in Afghanistan

Kite Runner Khaled Hosseini

The Yellow Birds Kevin Powers

Books for purchase:

Title, author, isbn #