

Shane Markowitz – Curriculum Project

New World Globalization: Crossing Boundaries between Europe, East Asia, and the Americas

Rationale

This curriculum plan is aimed at deepening and liberating, with a more global narrative, the Age of Encounter unit in my World History course. The first day builds up background information on the processes by which these encounters developed in the Americas, the second and third days provide an opportunity to concretely examine multiple objects and the global connections embedded in them, and the fourth and fifth days engage in a deep dive into the diffusion of ideas between East Asia and Central America and the global webs of communication and transportation that it depended on.

Note: this unit comes after engagement with the Renaissance as a global phenomenon. Students will have, for example, already explored the Golden Age of Islam and its subsequent effects in making the Renaissance possible. They will have explored globalization also through objects like those portrayed in The Ambassadors painting by Holbein. In this sense, students should come with some cognizance that the world is globalized but with only minimal engagement with East Asia specifically.

Objectives

Students attain familiarity with the Age of Encounter, including sea routes and contacts formed, and its effect on indigenous populations.

Students gain an understanding of how globalization, including webs of transportation networks, information flows, trade, and cultural fusion, was already impacting the Americas in the 16th-18th century.

Students practice researching and presenting information about different objects and putting them in a global context.

Lesson Plans

Day 1 – Background Context on Age of Encounter

Students will view the Crash Course video, *The Age of Exploration*, and the Ted Ed, *How Magellan circumnavigated the globe*, to understand essential contextual information about this era. They should also listen to History Hit's podcast on the Fall of the Aztecs.

Resource: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOclF9eP5uM>

Resource: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFdiX8mj0Es>

Resource: <https://play.acast.com/s/dansnowshistoryhit/e505fd5d-e2c9-4e59-ae62-d34ee80e66d4>

While engaging with content, students should take detailed notes on the effects of exploration (on both Europe and indigenous populations in the areas being “discovered”). Students should, furthermore, demonstrate understanding of the contacts being developed between Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

Day 2 – East Asia and New World Diffusion

This lesson will begin with a reel of images of different objects that represent East Asian influences on the New World. Students would hypothesize what the different objects (E.g. cabinets, tea bowl, panels, etc...) are and where they might come from. Students will also examine artwork and note their observations. At the end of this process, it can be communicated that these objects were all, in fact, found in Central America in the 16th-18th centuries but may have come from or been influenced by ideas from other parts of the world.

The objects would then be assigned to different pairs of students. Each group would be tasked with researching their particular item based on the contextual information provided and preparing a presentation for the subsequent lesson with the following information.

1. What are we looking at? Purpose? Why would this item have been popular in the New World?
2. Where would the design for this item have come from? Somewhere else (where?), the New World, or both? Explain and be specific.
3. Where was the item likely manufactured? If from abroad, why do you think locals didn't produce their own version of the item? If locally, what challenges would have emerged in the production?

Day 3 – Object Presentations

Students present their main findings from their research for the different objects. As we proceed, the discussion can be steered towards ensuring understanding of the cultural blending/fusion at work in the different items and how geography also influenced the outputs. As a basis of comparison, students can discuss similarities/differences with modern diffusion of ideas and products.

Days 4-5 – Globalization

The thematic focus on “crossing boundaries” will be expanded on following the presentations through a reading of Carr’s text on Asia and the New World. Students should identify different forms of globalization that are observed (e.g. exchange of goods, transportation networks, immersion of ideas, Mexico City and Kyoto portrayal as world class cities...) and discuss how globalization already was impacting the world in the 16th-18th centuries employing this content in a 250-300 word essay.

Assessment

Students will be assessed based on the quality of their object presentations and globalization essay. They should demonstrate detailed knowledge of different aspects of globalization in the East Asia-New World case study through concrete examples.