

East Asia Curriculum Project

1. Rationale

This unit will be for my Advisory class. Advisory is a class where a teacher is given a group of about 30 students in 9th grade, and they remain with those students throughout their four years of high school. At each grade the students are required to complete a “Signature Project” which grows from being a simple research project in 9th grade into a campaign for change where the students enact a change they would like to see in the world, getting people to participate in their actions by 12th grade. The rest of the class is fairly open ended, which allows teachers to draw from their own experiences, or pursue curriculum they feel would be outside the realm of a typical academic class. This lends itself well to exploring some concepts of East Asian culture, providing an opportunity to expand students’ experiences and exposure to these ideas that they might be semi-familiar with, but have not had an opportunity for someone to guide them to a deeper knowledge about.

The skills and content I would like my students to leave with is a stronger ability to do independent research, when they look up information they have not yet encountered, and a better, deeper understanding of where some of the East Asian stereotypes or cultural norms they may be aware of come from and what they mean. I will lead in with asking what students understand or know about East Asia currently, and where they get that information, and then build on that understanding by opening up the curtain on where some of these customs and cultural norms come from.

2. Skill and Content Objectives

We will be exploring the Heian period and introducing the “high watermark” period of Japanese culture, literature, and art. Students will explore, through research, what this culture was like, who the people were that were writing/creating it, and will discuss it’s lasting effects on current Japanese culture.

3. Lesson Plans

Lesson 1 – Introduction to Heian Period

45 minute class

5 min – Quick Write: What do you know/think about Japan? What do you consider “Japanese Culture”?

5 min – Class Discussion: students discuss/share thoughts

10 min – Klose Activity – students read and fill in the blanks from the reading

20 min – Teacher Lecture: introduce Heian period

Discuss how Heian is period of “Japanization”, move away from China

Watch video: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/at/cl_japan/cj10.html

5 min – Closing: summarize what students took away from the day’s lesson, collect papers.

Homework – Read an Essay about the Heian Period:

<http://www.colorado.edu/cas/tea/curriculum/imaging-japanese-history/heian/essay.html>

(Lesson Adapted from the Keizai Koho Center www.kkc.or.jp/english/)

Lesson 2 – Scrolls and Interpreting Meaning

45 minute class

5 min – discuss previous night's reading

5 min – discuss Introduction to Emaki: read introduction

20 min – Heian Scrolls and Life:

Hand out scroll descriptions randomly to students (1 of 4)

Students use <http://www.colorado.edu/cas/tea/curriculum/imaging-japanese-history/heian/images.html> to find their scroll and analyze it using the handout.

10 min – Students find a partner and analyze the similarities and differences between their two scrolls with the venn diagram.

5 min – collect papers, assign homework of Analyzing Art Characteristics

(Lesson adapted from University of Colorado Program for Teaching East Asia <http://www.colorado.edu/cas/tea/curriculum/imaging-japanese-history/heian/lesson.html>)

Lesson 3 – Women in Japan and Their Role in Literature

75 minute class

15 min – Ask students to come up with characteristics they think were expected of women in ancient China and Japan. List responses on the board.

Possible questions:

- How does this compare with the expectations of women in society today?
- What were some of the institutional structures that may have been placed on women that limited their roles in society?

15 min – Teacher Lecture on the role of women in this period in Japan

– Discuss the role of Confucianism in Japan and it's effects

40 min – Read Ban Zhao's "Lesson for a Woman."

<http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/banzhao.html>

Have students read and ponder questions at the end of the reading.

Ask students after reading about the list of characteristics we made:

- Are there characteristics that should be added/taken away?
- Were there any characteristics you were surprised about after reading Ban Zhao?
- What do you know about Ban Zhao that may influence what she is writing?
 - Emphasize that texts of this era were largely proscriptive and not necessarily descriptive of people's actual behaviors at the time.
- Use questions five, six, eight and nine on the bottom of the primary source document website for other discussion points.

Homework – Read Writers of the Heian Era and research other roles women had and were influenced by in pre-Heian times in Japan.

(chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/lessons/lesson2/lesson2.php?s=0)

(Lesson adapted from Center for History and New Media <http://chnm.gmu.edu>)

Lesson 4 – Tale of Genji and Sei Shônagon’s Pillow Book

75 minute class

5 min – Discuss the homework reading and what role women had in Japan

20 min – Introduce Sei Shonagon’s Pillow Book and what it was.

Have students look at the lists she made

<http://guerrillasemiotics.com/2013/05/sei-shonagons-lists/>

Discuss some favorites

5 min – Introduce Tale of Genji, a contemporary to Sei Shonagon, and how it was the first “novel” and definitely the first one written by a women (that we have a record of)

40 min – Student Research: students use

<http://www.taleofgenji.org/>

https://coursewikis.fas.harvard.edu/aiu18/The_Tale_of_Genji

to look up research about Tales of Genji and students answer following 9 questions:

1. Who wrote The Tale of Genji?

2. Who is Genji?

3. When was it written?

4. What is the story about?

5. Why is the story an important part of Japanese culture and history?

6. How has the Tale of Genji been an influence to Japanese art through the ages?

7. Name and describe three to five characters from The Tale of Genji.

8. List and discuss some of the themes that are present in The Tale of Genji.

9. What class of people is The Tale of Genji about? How does this consideration change your understanding of the Heian Period in Japan?

Homework – Read at least one chapter from each of the Parts, listed of the web.archive site. Record your impressions, observations and thoughts on the chapters you have read (Three entries minimum)

Webiste:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170108040703/http://webworld.unesco.org/genji/en/index.shtml>

A list of chapter names can be found here, to help you choose

<http://mercury.lcs.mit.edu/~jnc/prints/genji.html>

(Lesson Adapted from the Keizai Koho Center www.kkc.or.jp/english/)

4. Assessing Student Achievement

Summative project – Knowing what you now know about the Heian age, visit http://www.lizadalby.com/LD/TofM_SUBJ.html and pick three topics. Record your impressions about these, or other, aspects of life in the Heian era and how they influence, or are seen, in Japanese culture today.

Further lesson ideas involve an exploration of the Kokin Wakashu and waka poetry, a lesson on Japanese tea ceremonies and the idea of "*mono no aware*" and *sabi* and *wabi* and a zen austere with zen gardens, and the fall of the Heian age with the rise of the Shogun and Samurai and the Bushido warrior class. But, these four will have to do for now!