

Thomas Ostheimer

Lesson Plan for NEH Workshop entitled “African Americans in the Making of Early New England.”

Summer 2017

Class: Advanced Placement United States History

Unit of Study: Ongoing/full-year examination of race and “unfreedom” in America.

Description: Utilizing the historical construct of “race”, students will examine the extent of power and status of various groups of Americans, such as African-Americans, Native Americans, and immigrants throughout our history. The concept or theme of a “continuum of unfreedom,” as described by Professor Jared Ross Hardesty in his work *Unfreedom, Slavery and Dependence in 18th Century Boston*, will provide a frame of analysis for my students as they explore race in America.

The influence of **place** and **time** on the degree of “unfreedom” will become clearer to students as they analyze the aforementioned groups of Americans in specific locations and during significant eras of American history i.e., early colonial period (1492-1689), Colonial Wars for Empire (1689-1763), Revolutionary War and Constitutional period (1763-1789), Antebellum period (1789-1861), Civil War and Reconstruction period (1861-1877), Industrial and Imperialistic period (early 19th century into the early 20th century), The World Wars (1914-1945), and the modern/contemporary period (1945-2017). As America evolves into first a hemispheric power and then a global power, our focus on race and “unfreedom”) will go beyond our borders to include non-Americans.

What will students do?

Using primary and secondary sources, and local research and field studies, students will analyze race and “unfreedom” through an examination of political and economic power, or lack thereof. This frame of analysis will also include social status and the cultural impact of race. Field studies will include a trip to Deerfield in October, to examine both the Deerfield Raid of 1704 and the town’s history of slavery during the pre-Revolutionary period. I am also planning a field trip to Ten Hills Farm coupled with a walk on parts of the Freedom Trail in Boston. Both field studies will focus on historical memory as demonstrated by monuments, memorials, buildings and artifacts. Students will be encouraged to investigate how historical memory of race has evolved due to the influences of place and time.

As a final project to be completed after the AP exam in May, students will create a memorial relevant to our exploration of race and the continuum of “unfreedom” in American history. Students will analyze what memorials are, what their purpose is, and what shape and form they can take. In addition, students will view Maya Linn’s documentary on her memorial to the Vietnam War entitled *A Strong Clear Vision*. This exploration of memorials will culminate in an exhibit or show that will be presented in our school library.

“The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line.” -W.E.B. Dubois

A final essay due in June will ask students to reflect on how much progress, in terms of race, we have made as a country.