

***Mountain Movers:
Student Activism & the Emergence of Asian American Studies
Curriculum Module***

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American Literature
Fremont High School
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Course Vision & Mission for American Literature

Our class exists to define what it means to be an American and explore the idea of the American Dream. For decades, the dominant America narrative in literature has been of the White American male. Today, the face of America reflects many different voices. These voices have been rendered voiceless, but the reality is they are here and have remained unheard. **Our purpose is to become active contributors to or critics of the American narrative.** This class is about the inclusion and expression of ALL Americans. With appropriate, literary representation and open, thoughtful discourse, we will engage in developing our respective voices in the American narrative.

Unit 5 Essential Questions:

- What does it mean to be an American and why is this question different for whites than it is for people of color living in the U.S.?
- How does counter-storytelling reveal the truth of particular cultures/ethnic groups?
- How does this combat the notion of these particular cultures/ethnic groups serving as “the other”?
- What should the term "American" refer to and how do we work towards this united identity as Americans?

Texts of Oral History from *Mountain Movers: Student Activism & the Emergence of Asian American Studies*:

- Harvey Dong’s “Still Relevant Today: Changing the World”
- Amy Uyematsu’s “Back in 1969: Protests, Yellow Power, and the Emergence of Asian American Studies”
- Holly Raña Lim’s “Standing on the Shoulders of Giants”

Other Texts and Media for Unit 5 (prior to the inclusion of *Mountain Movers*):

- Frederick Douglass’ autobiography *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
- Steve McQueen’s film *12 Years a Slave*
- Various works by literary, artistic, and musical pioneers of and inspirations from the Harlem Renaissance including:
 - Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Margaret Burroughs, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Aaron Douglas, Jacob Lawrence, William H. Johnson, Romare Bearden, Kara Walker, Simone Leigh, Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin, Public Enemy, Tupac Shakur, Erykah Badu, and Kendrick Lamar
- Kyle Korver’s article “Privileged” from *The Player’s Tribune*
- Mai Anh Huynh’s essay “Double-A”
- Wayne Wang’s film *The Joy Luck Club*
- Amy Tan’s essay “Mother Tongue”
- Marissa Aroy’s documentary *Delano Manongs: Forgotten Heroes of the United Farm Workers*
- Excerpt of Carlos Bulosan’s *America is in the Heart*
- Jonathan Valdez’s essay “Too Funky for White People...”

NOTE: Daily Lesson Plans are based on a 90-minute block schedule. These readings, lessons, and activities may be scaffolded more extensively due to the students’ academic needs and may be spread out over time depending on one’s daily bell schedule.

Common Core Standards

Reading: Informational Texts

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.5

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Writing

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.a

Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Speaking & Listening:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

DAY 1

OBJECTIVE: The students will be able to:

- Identify key chronological events in Asian American history in the timeline.
- Establish the “cause and effect” of events in the development of societal perceptions about Asian Americans.

SET: (15-20 minutes)

- Break students up into groups to review and compare the timeline events of Asian Americans in:
 - [AALDEF: Our Struggle For Civil Rights](#) (pop-ups version) & [AALDEF | Civil Rights Timeline](#) (text version)
 - Soya Jung's work-in-progress, "A Different Asian American Timeline": aatimeline.com

ACTIVITY: (15-20 minutes)

- In groups, students are to address:
 - What are some key events that contribute to society’s modern-day perceptions of Asian Americans?
 - How are these people of color specifically viewed by society?
 - In light of adversity, how do Asian Americans rise above the atrocities of the past through modern-day achievements and activism?
 - How are any of these events addressed in your U.S. history class?
 - Why might these events not be highlighted in your U.S. history class?
- Take notes and be ready to share out in a Socratic Seminar setting. ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1](#))

EVALUATION: (40-45 minutes)

- Based on today’s Socratic Seminar and the use of their individual notes, students are to create an infographic on how the history of Asian Americans in America reflects the essential question, “What does it mean to be an American and why this question is different for whites than it is for people of color living in the U.S.?” through the free website <https://www.easel.ly/create/>. ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7](#))([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1](#))([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5](#)) This ideally will be due at the end of the block or probably completed for homework.

DAY 2

OBJECTIVE: The students will be able to:

- Read aloud an informational text (oral history).
- Respond to text-dependent questions to create meaning and understanding.

SET: (15-20 minutes)

- Debrief yesterday's information from the Asian American timeline website and the responses from the Socratic Seminar by having students share their infographics in groups of 4-5.
- Share highlights from 1-2 representative student infographics on a group-by-group basis as a way of introducing the reading of Harvey Dong's, "Still Relevant Today: Changing the World."
- Break students into small groups to read aloud Harvey Dong's, "Still Relevant Today: Changing the World."

ACTIVITY: (35-40 minutes)

- Students are to discuss and record responses to the following text-dependent questions as they read aloud ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.5](#)) Harvey Dong's, "Still Relevant Today: Changing the World":
 - How does Dong's involvement with the Stop the Draft Week (STDW) protests intersect effectively with the Black Panther Party and this time of revolution and change?
 - How does Dong's understanding of his mother's origins (affected by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1883 and active in protesting during the Sino-Japanese War in 1945) provide meaning and context for all of his activism?
 - How does the following statement encapsulate Dong's early school experiences: "I ate my lunch and humility" (Dong 119)?
 - Although enrolled in ROTC, explain the juxtaposition of Dong's family's military legacy and his anti-war STDW protests?
 - Why does the term "Asian American" and the formation of the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) give rise to the significance of identity and voice at this time?
 - What does Dong's community outreach through his work at Self-Help for the Elderly and with youth reveal about his intrinsic need for justice for all?
 - How does the photo on pages 114-115 epitomize Dong's life struggles and efforts to bring growth and change in the world?
- If some groups are done, they may begin reviewing the "Asian American Movement 1968" link to make historical connections to Harvey Dong's personal experiences. (25-30 minutes)

EVALUATION:

- **Homework:** Students are to review their assigned section of the "Asian American Movement 1968" link ([Asian American Movement 1968](#)) and take note of HOW these primary documents support Dong's personal experiences. Students will informally present at the beginning of the next class ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1](#))([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9](#)) ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1](#)):
 - Introduction to the Asian American Movement 1968
 - Third World Student Strikes at SFSU & UCB 1968-1969
 - UCB Chinese Club Newsletter
 - San Francisco State Strike TWLF Demands
 - San Francisco State Strike 1968 Student Brochure

DAY 3

OBJECTIVE: The students will be able to:

- Interpret how a photograph reflects the deeper meaning of a historical context.
- Write a letter to apply and reflect one's learning.

SET: (25-30 minutes)

- In their assigned small group, share out observations and thoughts on the primary documents featured in the "Asian American Movement 1968" website.
- Share out insights on HOW these primary documents support Dong's personal experiences.

ACTIVITY: (30-40 minutes)

- Review select 3-4 photographs from Dong's oral history and have students articulate HOW his photographs humanize the history of this particular Asian American experience.
- Record student responses on the board as a big verbal brainstorm of ideas.
- Once students have completed their sharing out, explain how the students will be writing a Thank You Letter to Harvey Dong, including some of the brainstormed responses on the whiteboard as a celebration of WHY the students are giving thanks to Harvey Dong.
- Review the format of a formal letter, with the intention that these letters will be mailed to Harvey Dong.
- Watch the interview with Harvey Dong in the link [UC Berkeley Resource Guide on the TWLF](#) and have class discussion afterwards:
 - How does Harvey Dong's oral history compare to Harvey Dong Live in an interview?
 - How do both his oral history and interview complement each other in developing our understanding of his life work and activism?
- Students can begin working on their Thank You Letters to Harvey Dong and will finish for homework (**20 minutes**):
 - Structure of Thank You Letter to Harvey Dong:
 - To Mr. Harvey Dong,
 - First Paragraph: thank him specifically based on your readings about how his social activism has made a difference to Asian Americans but really ALL Americans.
 - Second Paragraph: discuss the significance of his continual work in response to the essential question: "What should the term "American" refer to and how do we work towards this united identity as Americans?"
 - Sincerely,
Your Printed Name
Your Signature
- The goal and hope is to collect and mail these letters directly to Mr. Dong.

EVALUATION:

- **Homework:** Thank You Letter to Harvey Dong.

DAY 4

OBJECTIVE: The students will be able to:

- Examine the oppressive and empowering dynamic of words and language.
- Apply the concept of counter-storytelling to their own selves.

SET: (15-20 minutes)

- On the projector, I will show the information about voting rights for Asian Americans from [50 Years of the Voting Rights Act: An Asian American Perspective | Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#) and have an informal discussion about the following questions:
 - What can be inferred and critiqued about how Asian Americans come to perceive themselves in this country?
 - How can this timeline reveal a snapshot of systemic racism in our country?
 - How do you think this legacy for Asian Americans has affected their sense of “Americanness” in our country?
 - What might they feel in response to all of this systemic racism and discrimination?

ACTIVITY: (20-25 minutes)

- Break students up into groups of 4-5. Half the groups will read one link while the other half reads the other link from the Densho Blog (“densho” meaning “to pass on to the next generation” or “to leave a legacy”):
 - [Yellow Power: The Origins of Asian America - Densho: Japanese American Incarceration and Japanese Internment](#)
 - <https://densho.org/time-to-retire-euphemisms-for-japanese-american-incarceration/>
- All groups will respond to the following questions for discussion:
 - How does the power of names and language shape our sense of self-worth and identity?
 - How does this article serve as an example of counter-storytelling to U.S. history textbooks?
 - Why do the words and phrases we use to identify ourselves have such a profound impact?
- Class discussion on these Densho Blog articles by addressing these questions.
- “Densho” Project: (35-40 minutes)
 - Distribute white paper and colored pencils/markers for students to create an image in the spirit of “densho.”
 - On one half of the paper, they identify themselves according to how they feel society perceives them to be in a few words or phrases, along with an illustration representative of the meaning/concepts of those words and phrases.
 - On the other half of the paper, they identify themselves in a few words or phrases for society to recognize and they will illustrate an image that represents the meaning/concept of those words or phrases.
- Students will share their “Densho” Project in small groups as a means of voicing their own quick mini-truths about themselves and their respective cultures.
- To debrief before class is over, have students reflect on how the “Densho” projects in their small groups respond to the essential question: “What does it mean to be an American and why is this question different for whites than it is for people of color living in the U.S.?”

EVALUATION:

- The students’ sharing their “Densho” Projects in small groups will provide a quick glimpse into their understanding of counter-storytelling.

- **Homework:** Read Amy Uyematsu's "Back in 1969: Protests, Yellow Power, and the Emergence of Asian American Studies" and be prepared to respond to your assigned text-dependent question ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6](#)):
 - How does Uyematsu define and justify being an "Angry Asian Girl" growing up?
 - Why does the series of her family photographs humanize these historical experiences in the Asian American timeline?
 - How do her high school experiences of being stigmatized by whites contribute to her social perspective on her life choices and her interactions with whites at UCLA?
 - How do UCLA's courses "Orientals in America" and "Ethnic and Status Groups in America" serve as an awakening for Uyematsu to see her feelings as reflections of past injustices to Asians and a means to take action and pride in oneself and culture?
 - How does the following statement encapsulate *why* Uyematsu embodied the "Angry Asian Girl": "Instead of being either ignored completely in the history books or seeing our images grossly stereotyped and distorted by the majority culture, we were determined to uncover our true stories, to learn what really happened, and to articulate an Asian American perspective" (Uyematsu 199)?
 - Why does the Black Power Movement resonate with Uyematsu on a global scale with the activism of the '60s and '70s and on a personal scale in recognizing the need for Asian empowerment and representation?
 - From her perspective today, what does Uyematsu reflect on about the past that is relevant today for future generations?

DAY 5

OBJECTIVE: The students will be able to:

- Compose an organized body paragraph response to a text-dependent question.
- Create a visual representation of key ideas derived from student responses to questions.

SET: (20-25 minutes)

- Students read for homework Amy Uyematsu's "Back in 1969: Protests, Yellow Power, and the Emergence of Asian American Studies" and are now expected to write a complete body paragraph responding to their assigned text-dependent question ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.a](#)). (20 minutes)

ACTIVITY: (60-65 minutes)

- After students are done with their body paragraph responses, they are to get into groups according to the assigned text-dependent question.
- Each student in the group shares out their written responses to the question and should take notes on the common take-aways from the reading of Amy Uyematsu's oral history (keeping track of who contributed which idea).
- Each group is responsible for creating a Powerpoint or Google Slide Show presentation that includes the following ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5](#)):
 - The text-dependent question as the opening slide
 - Individual bullet-point responses to the question, representative of everyone's ideas
 - Each following slide will be for each student's idea: a bullet-point response as the title of the slide and a visual representation of that idea to support Uyematsu's ideas from the text-dependent question.
 - Each student's explanation/interpretation of the bullet-point response and the visual will make a direct response to the essential question: "What does it mean to be an American and why is this question different for whites than it is for people of color living in the U.S.?"
- Each person must speak equally and articulately to provide depth to Uyematsu's oral history.
- Everyone must take notes on each other's presentations.

EVALUATION:

- **Homework:** Complete Powerpoint / Google Slide Show Presentations for the next class session.
- After tomorrow's presentations, students will write a reflective response to a different group's text-dependent question and presentation about how the group's responses to the question reveals how Uyematsu responds to the essential question "What does it mean to be an American and why is this question different for whites than it is for people of color living in the U.S.?" (5-10 sentences). ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7](#))([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1](#))

DAY 6

OBJECTIVE: The students will be able to:

- Present a visual representation of key ideas derived from student responses to questions.
- Compose a written reflection to a group presentation's response to the essential question.

SET: (15 minutes)

- Students will have 15 minutes to review and organize their presentation content and speaking order.

ACTIVITY: (45-50 minutes)

- There will be 7 student group presentations, in which:
 - Students will give their presentation, with an assessment focus on content and delivery.
 - Content:
 - Each slide represents each student's bullet-point response to the text-dependent question.
 - Complete explanations of the visual representation of bullet-point response to the text-dependent question and to the essential question as a whole: "What does it mean to be an American and why is this question different for whites than it is for people of color living in the U.S.?"
 - Delivery:
 - Voice/Volume/Pace/Life
 - Eye Contact/Poise
 - Time: 5-6 minutes
 - Classmates are required to:
 - take notes on each presentation, and
 - ask a question from at least ONE group presentation.
- With time left over, students may begin composing and organizing their written paragraph for homework. (25 minutes)

EVALUATION:

- **Homework:** Students will write a reflective response in 2 body paragraphs:
 - First Paragraph: a personal response to a DIFFERENT group's text-dependent question and visual presentation.
 - Second Paragraph: a personal response about how Uyematsu's experiences reflect the essential question: "What does it mean to be an American and why is this question different for whites than it is for people of color living in the U.S.?". Be sure to use accurate and correct textual citations. ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7](#))([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1](#))

DAY 7

OBJECTIVE: The students will be able to:

- Interpret historical information to do historical reasoning.
- Compare and contrast this information in an organized response.

SET:

- [Welga Archive - Bulosan Center for Filipino Studies | Filipino American Farmworker History Timeline](#)
- Watch “A Family Affair” (<https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/films.htm>) from [Seattle's Asian American Movement - Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project](#) and their companion guide [For Teachers - Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project](#)

ACTIVITY:

- As a class, watch the film **A Family Affair (20 minutes)** and take notes on highlights that address the essential question of celebrating and critiquing the American experience.
- Discuss and debrief after viewing the film. **(5-10 minutes)**
- Individually, examine the historical timeline and take notes on highlights that respond to the essential question of celebrating and critiquing the American experience. **(10-15 minutes)**
- In small groups, share the different notes of ideas and reactions from the Farmworker History Timeline link and the film “A Family Affair.”
- Given the information, students are to compose an organized response comparing and connecting the Filipino experience to the Asian American experience as a whole. ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9](#)) **(20-25 minutes)**
- Share and discuss how and why Filipinos are considered Asian (given the colonizing and imperializing throughout the centuries) and how there is a kinship with the Mexican Americans in the Farmworker Movement. **(15 minutes)**
- With time permitting, begin reading aloud as a class Holly Raña Lim’s oral history, “Standing on the Shoulders of Giants,” and be prepared to discuss the following in a Socratic Seminar tomorrow:
 - How does Raña Lim’s background mirror many students’ backgrounds, especially in California, and what does it reveal about the migration stories of many as a whole?
 - How does her decision and reasons to attend UC Riverside demonstrate the reality that many students face today in the college acceptance process?
 - How does her time at UC Riverside become her formative years in becoming the leader that she never expected herself to be?
 - “I always thought of myself as a supporter in the background...” (Raña Lim, 230). What does this statement reveal about her experience as an Asian American of not having the confidence to be vocal or view herself as a leader?
 - “I felt like my accomplishments weren’t just mine, but also belonged to the people that I worked with...” (Raña Lim, 231) How does her humility in this statement exhibit why she is such an effective leader?
 - How do her direct experiences in the Bay Area reflect her theories on how Asian American women were viewed, especially in positions of leadership?
 - Even after her work proving her strength as a leader, why does she feel like she has “imposter syndrome”?

- How does the significance of the title “Standing on the Shoulders of Giants” pay tribute to the Third World Liberation Front’s strike back in the 1960s and how do her continual efforts contribute to this legacy?

EVALUATION:

- The students’ sharing out and individual writings after viewing each film and reviewing the historical timeline will reflect their initial understandings of the Filipino experience in America. Also, today’s activities will provide a broader context for Holly Raña Lim’s oral history and Socratic Seminar for the next class session.

DAY 8

OBJECTIVE: The students will be able to:

- Participate and communicate their ideas in Socratic Seminar.
- Create a reflective project that demonstrates their understanding of the Asian American experience.

SET: (5 minutes)

- The class will be divided in half for today's Socratic Seminar. The first inner circle will be actively addressing the first 4 text-dependent questions of Lim's "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants" and the second inner circle will be actively addressing the second 4 text-dependent questions in addition to any of the essential questions:
 - What does it mean to be an American and why is this question different for whites than it is for people of color living in the U.S.?
 - How does counter-storytelling reveal the truth of particular cultures/ethnic groups?
 - How does this combat the notion of these particular cultures/ethnic groups serving as "the other"?
 - What should the term "American" refer to and how do we work towards this united identity as Americans?
- When students are in the outer circle, each is expected to take notes and track the participation of an assigned individual.

ACTIVITY:

- The Socratic Seminar will take approximately 25-30 minutes for each inner circle. **(50-60 minutes)**
- Before discussing and debriefing, have students record their reflections of today's Socratic Seminar and cite specific student insights and commentary (refer to notes) in their thinking. **(10 minutes)**
- Discuss and debrief student reflections from the Socratic Seminar. **(10 minutes)**
- Distribute and review the oral history mini-project assignment that reflects learning from the 3 oral histories. **(10 minutes)**
 - Students will have a menu of options to present to the class at the end of next week:
 - Create a photo essay or blog of an Asian American they find to be influential in their lives.
 - Conduct an interview with an Asian American and create an interview transcript highlighting the generational experiences of an Asian American.
 - Conduct an interview with an Asian American and write their oral history.
 - Using primary sources, write a mini-research paper (3 pages) that examines the impact of a historical Asian American (political, academic, literary, artistic, musical, etc.)
 - Create an artistic piece (painting/sculpture/collage) that exhibits the main ideas of the Asian American experience inspired by the 3 oral histories.

EVALUATION:

- Students work on the oral history mini-project will be a total reflection and culmination of their overall understanding of these oral histories in the context of the shaping of the Asian American experience. Also, this will highlight what aspects of these oral histories the students have internalized as integral to the understanding of the Asian American experience in the context of being an American and living in America.