

Curriculum Overview for Rwanda Genocide Unit

Class: Contemporary Communications, Grade 12

Objective: To analyze the impact of language before, during, and after genocide

Length of unit: Six to 12 weeks

This unit contains other elements of the Contemporary Communications class to align to district and state standards. Parts of this curriculum can be omitted to adjust to other class requirements. This curriculum is shown in its entirety here.

Weeks One-Four: Who Am I? (What language do I use to describe myself?)

1. Student will write and present a poem titled "Where I'm From" poem from the lessons of George Ella Lyon. Rationale: This sets the tone of collaboration and equity in a classroom where there are many voices and experiences. Students can empathize, connect, and understand multiple perspectives.

Source: George Ella Lyon Website

Source: *Rhythm and Resistance: Teaching Poetry for Social Justice*. Edited by Linda Christensen and Dyan Watson. 2015.

Link: <http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html>

Template: **The *WHERE I'M FROM* Template**

I am from _____ (specific ordinary item), from _____ (product name) and _____.

I am from the _____ (home description... adjective, adjective, sensory detail).

I am from the _____ (plant, flower, natural item), the _____ (plant, flower, natural detail)

I am from _____ (family tradition) and _____ (family trait), from _____ (name of family member) and _____ (another family name) and _____ (family name).

I am from the _____ (description of family tendency) and _____ (another one).

From _____ (something you were told as a child) and _____ (another).

I am from (representation of religion, or lack of it). Further description.

I'm from _____ (place of birth and family ancestry), _____ (two food items representing your family).

From the _____ (specific family story about a specific person and detail), the _____ (another detail, and the _____ (another detail about another family member).

I am from _____ (location of family pictures, mementos, archives and several more lines indicating their worth).

2. Students discuss effective resume writing (Who Am I in My Community?) and the use of effective adjectives and verbs in resumes.

Students fill out questionnaires as pre work to the job interview simulations. These questionnaires ask them to use language to describe themselves—adjectives; the students also list the ways their teachers and peers would describe them. The focus of their attention is always the language.

Students write application letters and resumes to potential employers. They are encouraged to use job-specific phrases to appear professional. They discuss the “good” words to use and those with negative or non-professional connotations.

Within this unit, students look at social media platforms and articles of employers and universities who discuss appropriate online presence.

The culminating activity is a job interview simulation with feedback that looks at the following: the body “language” of the applicant, the resume and verbiage in the resume, and the professional decorum used by the applicant. Students produce polished essays after peer edits of the language used in the resumes.

3. Week Five: (Who am I in the Political Arena?) Students analyze internal bias by reading an article titled “The American Political Spectrum” in the *America Now* text book. They discuss in groups and whole class about how they have formed their opinions, i.e. via family values, peer values, and media sources.

Students analyze media headlines by taking one topic, preferably a controversial topic, and looking at six news sites and their biases. For example, they reviewed current headlines of NFL players who refuse to stand during the national anthem. They review various news coverages and answer the questions: Is it fair? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Students are asked to imagine their school on Homecoming night and are asked the following question: How would you feel if your football team or members of your football team chose to kneel instead of stand during the national anthem. They are encouraged to share, debate, and analyze their responses. Then they are asked to analyze their own word choices such as “respect” to the flag, “honoring” those who serve, “oppression” of groups, “freedom” to protest. They also look at the language in the Pledge of Allegiance and the language in the national anthem.

4. Weeks Six, Seven, and Eight: (Who am I in the Nation?) Students are assigned teams and given a particular group to study. Prior to this, they are asked the following questions:
 1. What is a micro aggression?
 2. What is a hate group?
 3. List the top 10 hate groups in the United States
 4. List the state with the most hate groups.
 5. List three hate groups in your home state.
 6. Which hate group (s) scare you the most and why?

The teacher collects these for later. Each group of three to four students (for a total of 8 groups) is assigned a group. These groups are the KKK, Black Lives Matter, NOW and the feminist movement, Peta, AFL and animal rights groups, the Sierra Club and Green Peace, Neo Nazi, LGBTQ organizations, and DACA/immigration movements.

Assignment and Rubric Here:

Contemporary Communications—Team Project One—**Revised on 9-18-17: Presentations 9/20**

This is your first team project that will require extensive research and collaboration. The bulk of the work will be done in class, but as a team, you will have to decide if you need to go beyond the classroom to complete the project. You will establish the norms, assign the roles, the amount of work, and you will set the pace. I am here to provide support and answer questions, but I will have a very limited role in your project. Your goal is to problem solve every step of the way as if you are doing a major project for your employer. Do not ask me a question that you can google. If you are absent, communicate with your team. At the end of the project, you will NOT have the option to complain, beg for a grade change, or ask your parents to intervene. This is your job. You would not do this with an employer. However, if an extreme situation arises, you should come to me immediately and I will meet with you and your team as a moderator.

There will be basic guidelines (checklists) that you must complete if you want to get a grade of a B (85%). In order to get an A, which by definition means exceptional and beyond, you will need to add another layer or component to your presentation. This will be the additional 15%. You can discuss this with me in advance, but I will not provide you with examples. The key is to involve the audience in a unique way that goes beyond your basic presentation. This is NOT a presentation where you stand up and read from a Power Point. At the office of Contemporary Communications, we believe that YOU are the ones with the answers. YOU have the creative, innovative ideas. YOU are the future. YOU are the ones who are teaching us. Enjoy yourselves. Think outside the box. WOW us! 😊

ASSIGNMENT:Your team will be assigned a group or an organization in the United States. These groups or organizations recruit members of society to engage in certain ideologies in order to promote an agenda or to change laws. These groups vary. Some are peaceful. Others might not be. You may or may not agree with this group, and that is fine. That is NOT the purpose of this assignment.

The purpose of this assignment is to **analyze the use of language in the public arena**, specifically the use of language used to persuade people to think or feel a certain way. While you will be doing extensive research into these groups, you are not just educating us about the things you discovered while googling. It is important that you keep the focus of your research on the language because this is a class about communication. Language can be spoken, printed, or displayed in symbols. Language can be used to uplift people and create a call to action, and language can be used to denigrate groups of people. Language can inspire peace. Language can incite violence. The way we communicate is linked to the way we react and interact, the way we behave, and the way we solve problems. The use of language is displayed in the political arena, the news via online feeds, television and radio, and social media. **Your team will look at the language used by these groups—the language of the past, the present, and the language you perceive will occur as your assigned group evolves.**

You will also analyze whether the language used or communication tools used are effective. Effective does not imply positive impact. For instance, the language used in Nazi Germany was certainly effective in achieving its goal. Effective language sparks action. Effective language sparks involvement. This project will directly relate to the second project where you will extensively analyze language and its role in the destruction of certain groups.

CC Team Project Timeline and Requirements—Revised 9-13-17

Because this is a research assignment, you will be expected to show your sources every step of the way. This means that if you have slides, you will note your source on the slides and you will have a works cited page at the end of the project. **You will need to show evidence that your sources are legitimate.**

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. History of the Group—Origin (do NOT cut and paste—this section is small) | |
| How/When the group formed and the historical context (depth here) | _____10 |
| WHY did the group form? Think critically. | _____5 |
| 2. Goal of the Group | |
| What is the purpose of the group? What do they want to achieve? | _____5 |
| What language do they use? Specific examples, <u>five minimum</u>—look at phrases, word choice, repeated words—this section is the most important. | _____25 |
| What symbols/and or propaganda is used? (specific) | _____10 |
| What actions do they use? Protests? Speeches? Other? | _____5 |
| How will they achieve their goal? What <u>evidence</u> will be apparent? | _____5 |
| What CURRENT media platforms do they use? Examples. | _____5 |
| 3. Media portrayal | |
| Is the coverage of this group fair and accurate? How do you know? <u>Show examples from both sides of the spectrum.</u> | _____20 |
| 4. Presentation | |
| All members of your team speak or interact during the presentation | _____5 |
| Presentation includes visuals, compelling examples, and knowledge of content | _____5 |
| There is a separate source page for the entire presentation | _____5 |
| TOTAL POINTS: | _____/105 |

These requirements are the basics to achieving an 85% grade of a B. If your team is happy with that and you are confident that you will achieve a perfect score in each category, then your task is complete. However, if you want to extend to an A, you will have to WOW the audience with additional information that makes your presentation move beyond good enough. **You can discuss this with me ahead of time to confirm that you have a solid idea.**

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 5. ABOVE AND BEYOND | _____20 |
| TOTAL POINTS | _____125 |

During the project, students will have surveys as to the success of the group involvement. At the end of each group’s presentation, students will fill out a feedback sheet for immediate feedback.

Peer Evaluation for Team Project

Your name _____

Date _____

Name of Presenters: _____

Topic: _____

1. Did the team demonstrate their knowledge of content?

1 2 3 4 5

2. Did the team connect the use of language with the topic?

1 2 3 4 5

3. Did the team use a variety of valid sources?

1 2 3 4 5

4. Did the team engage the audience? Did it hold your interest?

1 2 3 4 5

5. Did the team go above and beyond the assignment to add additional knowledge or to actively engage the audience in the knowledge? Was it related to language?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

What celebrations/positives can you share about this team's presentation?

What suggestions or constructive criticism can you provide the team?

What will you always remember about this presentation?

After all the presentations, the students will reflect on a response form shown below:

Week Nine: Debrief with essays from *America Now*. Essays are in section two titled “Language: Do Words Matter?” Students will read, discuss, and take notes. Some of these sections refer to genocides directly.

Assign groups to Genocide project.

Show example of my PP of Rwanda. Discuss eight stages of genocide, propaganda, and the influence of language during genocide. This will also cover the language of peace and reconciliation.

Students will be assigned a genocide to research, and they will do presentations that discuss the historical context, the events leading up to genocide, the stages, and the aftermath of the genocide.

***My power point is included in this thumb drive.

GENOCIDE PROJECT: Weeks 10-12

You (individually) or your group will be researching one of the major genocides. This will be similar to your first project, but this time you will be expected to go above and beyond the power point experience. You will need to actively engage your audience. You will need to give a pre and a post test to determine learning, and you will need to discuss the power of language and its use in the genocide event. You will use the eight stages of genocide to categorize the events of your selected project.

Rubric: Genocide Project

1. Genocide historical context—where, when, and why _____5
 2. Make a timeline of the genocide. List the events leading up to genocide, the tipping point, the genocide event, and the aftermath. You can do this as a visual or in any way that helps the audience understand. Remember: No dense text on slides. _____20
 3. Label specific events, i.e. conflict, propaganda, skirmishes, and fighting in a classification process. In other words, which events fit into which categories of the 8 stages? _____40
 4. Use video, art, activities, writing prompts, discussions, polls, or other means to engage your audience. An engaged audience is an audience that is actively learning _____20
 5. Provide a reflective piece at the end that you share with the audience. This can be a conversation or bullet items—this should be a deep reflection—what did you learn that you did not know? How does this information deepen your understanding of conflict? What is the moral of this story? (CRITICAL THINKING) _____15
- Total Points Possible _____100

Comments:

Pre Test for Project One and Project Two: Contemporary Communications

Name and Date:

1. What is a genocide?
2. What role does language play before, during, and after genocide?
3. What is propaganda?
4. What role does language play in motivating people to act a certain way?
5. What role does the media play in spreading positive or negative messages?