



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1991 Volume II: The Family in Art and Material Culture

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## Introduction

This seminar took the concept of “family” as the organizing principle for a series of object-based studies intended to explore the potential of art and material culture as evidence for the cultural understanding of other times and places, as well as our own. In developing their units, fellows were not required to adhere closely to the “family” theme, although half of them did. The fellows represented elementary, middle and high schools quite evenly, with four primarily interested in Social Studies or History, four in Art, and two in French (with a cultural/historical leaning). With its emphasis on methodology, this seminar seems to have been especially helpful to Fellows in developing the practical aspects of their teaching lesson plans.

Most of the units focused on American topics, with a strong interest in Black, Hispanic and Anglo cultural studies, spiced with scrutiny of the Cajuns in Louisiana and the Inuit (Eskimo) in Alaska. One of the two units on a non-American theme, dealing with the Ashanti of West Africa, related to a particular cultural interest of black students. Certainly the dominant shared characteristic of the units was concern for culture, with a closely connected interest in art and artifacts.

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