
Guide for Curriculum Unit 08.02.08
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This unit consists of approximately four class sections of block period ninety-minute seminars in which students will enjoy exposure to and discussion of various model samplings of versions of the lone anti-hero, a figure who exemplifies the deepest “American” yearnings for a free, yet ordered existence within the parameters of the hierarchies of his own criminal design. This figure also serves as a dramatic counterpoint to the traditional heroic code exemplar of the Arthurian “knight in shining armor” or to the ancient Homeric model of a moderately flawed, though highly idealistic vision of the “wanderer” who remains ever faithful (though not necessarily sexually so) to familial, spousal, and communal/ethnic commitments and codes of appropriate conduct while off on twenty-year adventures (i.e., Odysseus).

Our primary texts include F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby, Mario Puzo’s and Francis Coppola’s The Godfather (and its filmic representations), Brian DePalma’s Scarface (a retread of Macbeth), Ridley Scott’s American Gangster, and David Chase’s The Sopranos. The culminating activity or assessment for learners of this unit will be to synthesize, create, and present to other classmates an original, unique version of the heroic or anti-heroic pattern represented in mythology.

(Recommended for English, grades 10-12)