



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2013 Volume II: Immigration and Migration and the Making of a Modern American City

Understanding Immigrant and Migrant Fiction

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.02.08
by Matthew S. Monahan

This unit is primarily intended for the eleven-twelve ELA (English Language Arts) band. The duration is six to eight weeks. Students completing this unit will use *Drown* by Junot Diaz as an anchor text in their exploration of immigrant and migrant fiction. In addition to reading, discussing, and writing about such themes as assimilation, acculturation, and coming of age in the immigrant and migrant contexts, small groups of students work cooperatively to find and create artifacts using a variety of primary and secondary sources to establish an interactive timeline.

Through the continued development of their timelines, students establish how immigration laws and policies, as well as patterns of immigration, have changed over time. Timeline exercises relate to the fiction pieces they are reading in the unit both explicitly and implicitly.

Upon completion of this six-to-eight-week unit, honors contract students will produce a published piece of writing (i.e. a piece that has been put through the five-step writing process) between six and nine pages in length; students without honors contracts will publish two, three-to-four -page papers. Regardless of the scope of student work, the writing will present an argument and will incorporate both narrative and informational/expository techniques.

(Recommended for English, grades 11 and 12)

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