

Curriculum Units by  
Fellows of the  
Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
Guide  
2023

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## *Preface*

In February 2023 teachers from New Haven Public Schools became Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute® to deepen their knowledge of the subjects they teach and to develop new curricular material to engage and educate the students in their school courses. Founded in 1978, the Institute is a partnership of Yale University and the New Haven Public Schools, designed to strengthen teaching and improve learning of the humanities and STEM fields in our community’s schools. Through the Institute, Yale faculty members and Public Schools teachers join in a collegial relationship. The Institute is also an interschool and interdisciplinary forum for teachers to work together.

Teachers had primary responsibility for identifying the subjects on which the Institute would offer seminars in 2023. Between October and December 2022, teachers who served as Institute Representatives and Contacts canvassed their colleagues in New Haven public schools to determine the subjects they wanted the Institute to address. The Institute then circulated descriptions of seminars that responded to teachers’ interests. In applying to the Institute, teachers described unit topics on which they proposed to work and the relationship of those topics both to Institute seminars and to courses they teach. Their principals verified that their unit topics were consistent with district academic standards and significant for school curricula and plans, and that they would be assigned courses or grade levels in which to teach their units during the following school year.

Through this process four seminars were organized:

- “Poetry as Sound and Object,” led by Feisal G. Mohamed, Professor of English;
- “Latinx Histories, Cultures, and Communities,” led by Albert Laguna, Associate Professor of American Studies and of Ethnicity, Race, and Migration;
- “Writing Queer and Trans Lives,” led by Juno Jill Richards, Associate Professor of English; and
- “Energy and Environmental History of New Haven and the American City,” led by Paul Sabin, Randolph W. Townsend, Jr. Professor of History and Professor of American Studies.

Between March and July, Fellows participated in seminar meetings, studied the seminar subject and their unit topics, and attended a series of talks by the seminar leaders.

The curriculum units Fellows wrote are their own; they are presented in a section for each seminar. The units, which were written in stages over time, contain five elements: content objectives, teaching strategies, examples of classroom activities, lists of resources for teachers and students, and an appendix on the academic standards the unit implements.

They are intended primarily for use by Institute Fellows and their colleagues who teach in New Haven and are disseminated online at [teachersinstitute.yale.edu](https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu).

The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute is a permanently endowed academic unit of Yale University.

James R. Vivian

New Haven  
August 2023

## *I. Poetry as Sound and Object*

### **Introduction**

As its title suggests, this seminar explored poetry both as performance and as material object. This allowed poems to emerge from the dusty classroom anthology so that they might become a form of living art lending itself to creative engagement in the classroom. Through such exploration traditional poems become more vibrant and trends in current poetry become more visible and available for appreciation. As a text anchoring our discussion, we turned repeatedly to Tyehimba Jess's Pulitzer-Prize winning book of poems *Olio* (2016), a verse exploration of the history of performances delivered in the intermissions of minstrel shows. Through this subject, Jess explores questions of enslavement and freedom, of the liberating power of art and its creation of new social relations, and of the triumph of Black performance in wresting aesthetic achievement from the teeth of anti-blackness. It is an excellent example of poetry that demands to be encountered as both sound and object. It is available as a sound recording, allowing for an especially compelling experience of its contrapuntal poems. And as a book *Olio* is a beautiful object, with original artwork and tear-out pages meant to be variously folded to give poems various meanings.

In addition, the seminar visited the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library on several occasions to make the most of its outstanding collections. We viewed early modern commonplace books; manuscript and early printed versions of the poems of John Donne; the first edition of the poems of Phillis Wheatley; a telegram from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Langston Hughes inviting the poet to join the Selma to Montgomery march; a letter from Sigmund Freud to the poet H.D. chatting about household pets; and a heavily revised manuscript version of the first of Ezra Pound's *Cantos*. All of these artifacts place poetry in broader personal and historical contexts, and also offer insight into the creative process behind the making of poetry. In terms of performance, our seminar was fortunate to attend a poetry reading by Tyehimba Jess and his students, and to attend a concert of Bill Lowe's Signifyin' Natives in their jazz interpretation of Jean Toomer's *Cane*, a classic of the Harlem Renaissance in both poetry and prose. We also considered such video poems as Claudia Rankine and John Lucas' situation videos.

The curriculum units arising from the seminar reflect its core aim of making poetry available across grades and across various subjects—not just language arts, but also science, history, and visual arts. Carol Boynton has designed a unit for kindergarten marking National Poetry Month and inspired by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers's *Keep a Poem in Your Pocket*. The unit combines elements of making, namely the making of a pocket in which students can hold the poems that they will be reading, with read-alouds, a visual poetry toolbox, and other forms of collaborative interpretation in class. Notable in Boynton's unit is a lengthy list of poems that might be selected as a poem of the day throughout National Poetry Month, a treasure trove that is diverse in every sense of the

term. In a unit designed for first grade in a STEAM magnet school, Cary Draper emphasizes the importance of poetic sound as a tool in the development of early literacy, and especially its ability to aid early readers in habits of visualization before they move on to more extended prose works, such as chapter books. Draper structures her unit around four different kinds of poetry: silly poems, shape and concrete poems, science poems, and poems by Black writers.

Three units are geared toward middle-school students. Carolyn Streets has designed a curriculum unit on poetry that is also a unit in social justice education, drawing on the pedagogical value of blackout poetry as a tool of interpretation and creative engagement with texts. Centered on the “herstory” of Black resistance from its roots in the 1960s to the Black Lives Matter movement of the present day, Streets focuses especially on such poets as Audre Lorde, June Jordan, and Nikki Giovanni. The unit, as she suggests, can bridge Women’s History Month in March and National Poetry Month in April. Kasalina Nabakooza’s unit for the grade 7 to 8 visual arts classroom employs screen printing and T-shirt making as creative engagement with the poetry of Langston Hughes, and especially his collection *The Dreamkeeper and Other Poems*. Drawing on original archival research, the unit places Hughes’s poetry in the context of the two world wars, and the interwar years, exploring the history of Black service in regiments such as the Harlem Hellfighters of the First World War, a regiment also significant in the writings of W.E.B. DuBois. The unit as a whole, then, marries the teaching of poetry with the teaching of visual arts and history. Matthew Schaffer has designed a unit on urban poetry for the seventh-grade reading intervention classroom. In a wide-ranging consideration of his topic, Schaffer moves from Martial’s ancient Rome to Jamaal May’s present-day Detroit. Treating poetry as sound, Schaffer incorporates student performance of poems in his unit. As object he incorporates Langston Hughes’s “Come to the Waldorf-Astoria!” a spoof of a *Vanity Fair* ad highlighting class tensions of the Great Depression. As Schaffer points out, treating poetry in this way can be especially valuable for students in an urban setting: it allows them to draw on their own experiences of their lived environment in a political act of exercising a “right to the city” in which one composes one’s own “social reality,” in the words of Henri Lefebvre.

The final unit arising from the seminar is Katie Yates’s, which is geared toward the high school creative writing classroom. Yates incorporates bookmaking and performance, as well as historical research, into her creative writing classroom. And she points to ways in which the early modern practice of commonplacing has contemporary equivalents that will be familiar to secondary students: playlists, online galleries, and online messages. The unit thus draws on ways in which students already creatively engage with cultures, environments, and communities. But Yates is concerned especially with the social-emotional learning and community building possibilities offered by the teaching of poetry. As such her unit reaches well beyond particular grades or a particular subject, seeking nothing short of a teaching method centered on “creativity and wisdom” as a remedy to school climates too often characterized by “scarcity, fear, and exhaustion.”



That points to the case made across all of these units for the importance of poetry in the classroom. Schaffer points to research suggesting that the teaching of poetry is on the decline, squeezed out of curricula by various forms of nonfiction prose. And yet Boynton draws our attention to the many ways in which poetry can be an enormously powerful tool in literacy development, with Draper reinforcing that point in light of research on the importance of poetry to visualization, a key step in the early development of literacy. Nabakooza and Streets reveal ways in which poetry can allow students creatively to engage in a broad spectrum of subjects, adding richness and vibrancy to lessons in history and social justice. In these units poetry emerges as a pedagogical star. Its many possibilities in the classroom become apparent through the creative and dynamic efforts of these thoughtful educators.

Feisal G. Mohamed



## Synopses of the Curriculum Units

### 23.01.01

#### [The Power of Poetry in Kindergarten](#), by Carol Boynton

This four-week poetry unit for primary students focuses on building an appreciation of poetry. April is National Poetry Month, 30 days of celebrating the joy, expressiveness, and pure delight of poetry.

Inspired by the poem, *Keep a Poem in Your Pocket* by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers, the students will begin the month-long celebration by designing a pocket to wear each day, carrying a poem with them throughout the day. Each day students will hear and learn a new poem with the goal of celebrating the diversity of poets and styles, across time and cultures.

(Developed for Reading, grade K; recommended for Reading, grades K-2)

### 23.01.02

#### [Visualization and Illustration: Poetry for Developing Readers](#), by Cary Draper

This curriculum unit is designed to teach first graders the comprehension strategy of visualization through poetry. It could also be adapted for early readers—grades kindergarten through second. This unit explores poems as sound, their accompanying illustrations, and the objects that they become. This curriculum is designed to be taught for four weeks with four or five lessons a week. As a class, students will read different poems in a variety of styles: silly poetry, shape and concrete poetry, science poetry, and poems by Black poets. Each style of poetry will be covered over a week. Students will have the opportunity to read and listen to poems read aloud. After reading each poem, students will then visualize what they see happening in the poem and discuss it with their peers. Students will also illustrate each poem with what they visualized in a personal poetry booklet that includes the poems that we have read. We will follow this protocol throughout the unit. At the end of the unit, students will have a book full of their illustrations to accompany the poetry that we have read.

(Developed for English Language Arts, grade 1; recommended for English Language Arts, grades K and 2)

### 23.01.03

#### **Before the Hashtag: Reconstructing ‘Herstory’ Using Blackout Poetry, by Carolyn Streets**

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s served as the blueprint and inspiration for many seeking equity and access. Activists like Fannie Lou Hamer and Shirley Chisholm are examples of the historical voices of women advocates that served as catalysts for change. Today, a significant movement for change is #BlackLivesMatter which went viral in 2013 unifying many in protest to amplify calls for justice, police accountability, and an end to the systemic racism that is deeply embedded in the laws, practices, and institutions of our country. The three African American women founders of the hashtag, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi walk in the same tradition as the foremothers of the movement; Tometi notes that they did not “create a historical movement, but instead come from a long legacy of resistance.” That legacy of resistance is the catalyst for this unit. My unit, titled “Before the Hashtag: Reconstructing ‘Herstory’ Using Blackout Poetry,” centers on African American women’s voices within a social justice curricular framework.

(Developed for ELA, grade 8; recommended for ELA, grades 9-12)

### 23.01.04

#### **The Dream Keeper’s Quest, by Kasalina Maliamu Nabakooza**

This visual art unit is intended to engage students in innovative communicative design and critical thinking skills. Written instructions will be provided in English and Spanish. Students will be introduced to the unit with the text *Schomburg: The Man Who Built A Library* by Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrated by Eric Velasquez. This unit helps expand students’ reading comprehension, art literacy and social skills. As a K-12 Visual Arts teacher I will implement this curriculum to expand the opportunities for my students to demonstrate cross-cultural understanding using the medium of printmaking. Students will learn about the tools and terms used in collagraph, reduction print and silkscreen printmaking processes. The core text of this unit that will be used by students is *The Dream Keeper and Other Poems* by the African American poet Langston Hughes, illustrated by the African American artist Brian Pickney. Archival poetry by Langston Hughes will be reflected in the unit lessons, each anchored by a single poem. The unit will also include poetry by Hughes from archival research at Yale Beinecke Rare Book Library and collage artworks from the children’s book *Sail Away* by Langston Hughes and the African American artist Ashley Bryant. A final project drawing together poetry, visual arts and history will include an exhibition of matted prints accompanied by a prose reflection on the poem or original poetry by the students at the school library.

(Developed for Visual Arts, grade 8; recommended for Visual Arts, History, and English, grade 8)

### **23.01.05**

#### **Cities of Big Shoulders, Roses from Concrete: The Poetry of the City, by Matthew Schaffer**

In this unit students will explore the concept of poetic voice as expressed in the city poem. They will explore urban poetry by employing analysis of figurative language, textual structures, and word choice. Students will also learn how the collaborative interpretation of poetry through performance, visual art, and videography can both enhance the meaning of the text in addition to creating new meaning. Through using these tools, students will learn the methods in which authors transform the sights, sounds, buildings, people, and cultures of the city into their own unique and distinctive poetic voice. Poetic voice represents the sound of the poem as it is brought to the ear of the reader-listener, the authorial presence and tone which drives the artistic vision, and the inherently political voice of the poem that asserts citizens' right to the city, to shape its present and future. From ancient Rome, to the rapid industrialization and urbanization of the nineteenth century, up to the present day, students will see how poets across the world envisioned the city, how it was celebrated, critiqued, or carefully examined. In this process, students will have the opportunity to explore and illumine their own experiences and vision of life in the city through their own poetry. This unit was developed for the Grade 7 Reading Intervention classroom, and is intended for all secondary humanities and social studies courses.

(Developed for Read 180, grades 7-8; recommended for English Language Arts, World History, and American History, grades 7-12)

### **23.01.06**

#### **Poetry as Community Practice, by Catherine (Katie) Yates**

This poetry unit is conceived for teachers for whom the road of learning is an active interdisciplinary verb, a way to weave together our academic and creative learning. The plan asks teachers to build cross-curricular lessons. This deep dive into what it means to be a creative writer is for educators who are lifelong students, activists, writers, researchers, journalists, and explorers of our threatened planet. The purpose of this study centers on foregrounding research alongside hands-on reading and writing activities as the basis for composing poetic narrative. While conferencing, conversation and collaboration are at the heart of a strong editing process, this unit seeks to distance writers from critique and to align students with exploration, study, and immersion in content and study, rather than focusing on writing something good according to conventional metrics. Students and teachers need to find innovative structures to develop and promote narratives that will keep us sane. Innovative writing technologies and performances

deserve to be at the center of teaching practice not sequestered in classrooms. This curriculum introduces research as the basis for creative writing: personal essay writing, poetry writing mirrored in the seventeenth-century form of the commonplace book.

(Developed for Creative Writing, grades 11-12; recommended for Creative Writing and English, grades 9-12)

## *II. Latinx Histories, Cultures, and Communities*

### **Introduction**

Our seminar, “Latinx Histories, Cultures, and Communities,” aimed to provide a critical overview of some of the central themes and issues that have shaped the experience of Latinx communities in the US. We went about this work through an emphasis on three basic elements: historicization of primary sources, keen attention to literary and popular culture forms that shape and reflect quotidian social relations, and the importance of close reading as a tool for understanding the aesthetic and formal logics of cultural texts. We began with a simple question: Why have people from Latin America decided to migrate to the US in the first place? To answer this question, we began our study with an examination of US-Latin American relations with particular emphasis on the quotidian life of the imperial project in popular culture. We investigated 19<sup>th</sup> century political cartoons and Disney films to explore how ideas about Latin America circulated while balancing these representations with writings by Latin American intellectuals like Cuban poet, orator, and journalist José Martí. The seminar then shifted to its primary goal of understanding how Latinx artists and communities have narrated life in the U.S. From close readings of novels like Helena Viramontes’s *Under the Feet of Jesus* and sitcoms like *Qué Pasa, USA?*, to analysis of the poetry of the salsa “sound” and science fiction films like *Sleepdealer*, we engaged with the diversity of Latinx communities and the wide range of cultural production and theory that speaks to race, gender, and sexuality.

The seminar took into consideration the Fellows’ shared primary goal – to gain knowledge about Latinx communities broadly and to devise a specific curriculum unit they could use in their classes. This desire was a product of a disconnect the Fellows felt in their classes. Demographically, New Haven Public Schools have a large Latinx presence and yet, teachers have been exposed to very little course material in their own training that specifically examines Latinx histories and cultures. For the Fellows, this seminar provided a means to fill knowledge gaps in a way that would allow them to include content that speaks to the experience of their Latinx students while simultaneously helping *all* of their students develop a greater appreciation for the diversity and complexity of the United States and the histories of migration that are foundational to the American story.

The results of this hard work were evident in the units each Fellow produced:

**Michael Lauer** wanted to devise a unit to include in his “American History and Film” class. Fascinated by the power of the media to shape our understandings of Latinx communities, Lauer focused his energies on unpacking one of the most popular films in US history – *West Side Story* (1961). He uses this film as a point of departure to tackle three objectives: 1) To discuss the long history of stereotypes in films representing Latinxs and Latin Americans extending back to the earliest days of Hollywood, 2) As a

means to unpack the history of the colonial politics that undergird US-Puerto Rico relations and the migration of Puerto Ricans to New York City from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century onward, and 3) To foreground the history and placemaking practices of Puerto Ricans in New York City and how their own cultural practices in the arenas of poetry and social movements strenuously pushed back against the simplistic, and often offensive, representational strategies featured in the film.

**Amy Brazauski** built her curriculum unit around a desire to empower her students by helping them develop a “futurist mindset.” She deploys this term broadly to encompass the world-making possibilities inherent in social movement politics and organizing *and* in the world of literature – specifically speculative genres she groups under Afrofuturism and Latinxfuturism. The result is a unit that brings together historical contextualization, readings of central texts from social movements like the Chicano Movement and Puerto Rican Young Lords Party, and close attention to the aesthetic strategies in films like *Black Panther* and comic books like *Puerto Rico Strong* and *Ricanstruction*. Students will use these lessons to put a “futurist mindset” into practice through a range of creative projects that include poetry slams, collaborative projects, and producing their own comics.

Albert S. Laguna



## Synopses of the Curriculum Units

### 23.02.01

#### [Exploring Puerto Rican History and Film Portrayals](#), by Michael Lauer

The Puerto Rican History Through Film unit aims to connect class concepts to media stereotypes for students in the American History Through Film elective in grades 10 to 12. Students learn about concepts surrounding the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico while deconstructing the stereotypes often used to imagine the island and its people by reading primary and secondary sources and watching *West Side Story*. The curriculum, divided into ten 90-minute sessions, culminates in an innovative final project. Students work in pairs or small groups to create a historically accurate movie poster that counters stereotypes about Puerto Ricans in New York City using resources from Hunter College's Center for Puerto Rican Studies. They present their research methodology, design, findings, and a reflection on how they used *West Side Story* as a teaching tool. The final project encapsulates their semester's progress in research, writing, and presentation skills, focusing on themes such as Latinx stereotypes in film, Puerto Rican ties to New York City, and the relationship between media and historiography. Overall, the unit provides a rich and engaging learning environment in which students are tasked to challenge stereotypes and represent more nuanced narratives.

(Developed for United States History through Film, grades 10-12; recommended for U. S. History, grade 10, and Film Studies and Black and Latino Studies, grades 10-12)

### 23.02.02

#### [Nosotras Somos el Futuro: Futurity in Latine Activism and Futurism](#), by Amy Brazauski

This curriculum unit seeks to help students develop a futurist mindset through examining historical Latine movements that sought to change history and Latinefuturist film and comics that envision a pathway to a more just future. The unit takes the position that educators of historically oppressed youth, who prepare students for an ever unpredictable future, must explicitly teach about the power of cultural and communal identity. Therefore, the unit takes a deep dive into Puerto Rican, Chicano, and Pan-Latine organizations, such as Young Lords and Crusade for Justice, which used the rhetoric of futurity to build a collective, aligned with a common vision of political and social national revolution within the US. From here, the unit moves closer to visualizing the future through an exploration of Latinefuturism genre in film and comics. Examples from *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, *Puerto Rico Strong*, and *Ricanstruction*, tell of ways to build a future through means of traditional practices and technological advancement. The goal of the unit is to help students identify sources of strength and power within their identity, design pathways towards enacting solutions, and imagine a future that relies on community unification and social justice. To develop these skills students will author

community manifestos, contribute to a classwide publication, engage in a poetry slam, and develop futurist comics. Students will culminate their learning through creating a project that depicts their conception of the future and reflecting on the importance of cultivating a futurist mindset.

(Developed for English II, grade 10; recommended for English Language Arts, Social Studies, Latino/a/e/ Studies, and Creative Writing, grades 8-12)

### *III. Writing Queer and Trans Lives*

#### **Introduction**

LGBTQ history is often a story told from above, from the pathologizing perspective of a medical expert or the criminalizing framework of the law. To counter these tendencies, our seminar focused on the ways that LGBTQ individuals have narrated their own identity and experiences. This telling focused on a few key episodes in a wider history of sexuality. We followed the cultural efflorescence of the Harlem Renaissance, drawing out the ways that war and migration inflected the lived experience of racial and sexual minority; the midcentury red scare, as a Cold War reckoning with normative family and suburban life; and the political ferment of the 1960s, including the predominance of life narrative for activist-authors like Audre Lorde and Cherrie Moraga. Our consideration ended in the 1980s, with a young adult novel taking place in the Mexico/Texas borderlands, as a way to broach a range of prescient topics, including migration, adolescent masculinity, generational trauma, the prison industrial system, and the wider arc of Reagan-era domestic policy.

Though anchored in a wider consideration of LGBTQ life, these investigations did not hew to a literal sense of self-declared identity, but rather considered the framework of what is considered “normal” across a number of realms, including gender presentation, adolescence, courtship, romantic love, family life, reproduction, and the “good life.” In so doing, the seminar worked to foreground an intersectional analysis, drawing out the ways that experiences of sexual identity are enmeshed in the intricacies of gender, race, class, and nation. For this we turned to a range of popular media forms, including novels, mysteries, memoir, poems, music, and film, to allow for a broader consideration of the ways gender and sexuality shape life narratives.

As the Fellows engaged in these works, they produced a dynamic set of conversations around the difficulties of teaching younger students about minoritized identity, alongside the necessity of representing a diverse and expansive curriculum. For instance, Felicia Fountain’s excellent unit, “American History-LGBTQ Figures and Voices,” takes on the important topic of erasure, allowing students to question the partiality of a given historical narrative. Using a range of primary and secondary sources, this unit offers a more expansive historical landscape, one that demonstrates the ways that that “the LGBTQ community has always been woven into the fabric of the American quilt of history.” Moving from the poetry of Audre Lorde to the civil rights activism of Bayard Rustin, the unit offers a more expansive, intersectional accounting of American history through a series of interactive assignments.

Dan Croteau’s unit, “Black and Queer Lives: Intersecting Identities of the Harlem Renaissance” also turns upon the problem of representation and erasure. “When I arrived in my school,” Croteau writes, “I recognized that the literature we were reading didn’t

celebrate the lives of black and brown people.” Noting the continuing work of diversifying this curriculum to highlight people who identify “somewhere outside the lines of straight, white, cisgender, and male,” the unit expertly outlines the intersections of Black and queer life in the Harlem Renaissance, drawing on a found poetry as a way to bridge the wide-ranging work of Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and Walter Dean Myers.

Both units are exemplary for the ways that they culminate in a series of multi-tiered classroom assignments, allowing for a pedagogy focused on student engagement and participation.

Juno Richards

## Synopses of the Curriculum Units

### 23.03.01

#### [American History - LGBTQ Figures and Voices](#), by Felicia Fountain

The LGBTQ community has a rich history that is part of the American story—American History. This year-long unit fits anywhere in the continuum of your American History curriculum. Through this unit students will have the opportunity to discover the contributions of the LGBTQ community to major historical happenings that changed the course of history. For example, George Washington’s Continental Army would not have survived the harsh winter during the American Revolution without the help of Prussian war strategist Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben. He was openly gay. However, Washington still sought von Steuben to train his men in effective weaponry use. The men learned how to quickly reload muskets in preparation for bayonet use. This training was crucial because the Prussian Army was well known for superior army and battle strength.

The unit is designed to help teachers pair their American History curriculum, which is familiar to most with a pairing of the occurrences of LGBTQ community whose names and involvement left out or erased. Students will examine periods like the Harlem Renaissance and rich contributions of writers, actors, singers, poets and performers—many of whom never expressed their personal lives. Some of the impetus for the products they created like poems and plays were sparked by their hidden struggles. Many times, their personal struggles and the threat of harsh treatment by society if exposed forced the Harlem Renaissance intellectuals to take a stand for the civil rights of others, thus impacting and even changing history for all mankind.

This unit will be taught throughout the year of the eighth-grade American history curriculum. Students will use research to explore the impact and influences of the LGBTQ community on American History early 1600s until the mid to late 1900s. Students will discover that much of the information that they need is not located in their Social Studies textbooks. Students will research private correspondence, newspaper articles, interviews, poems, plays, songs, and information that was shared by their confidants. At the end of this year-long process, students will have a more accurate representation of American History as well as societal factors that originally silenced the voices and hid the contributions of the LGBTQ community.

Essential questions for this unit are:

- How have cultural, social and political forces shaped interactions with or impacted the lives of those who are a part of the LGBTQ community?
- Who is responsible for erasure?

- What might erasure look like?
- How high the LGBTQ experience been represented in your classes?
- How well has the LGBTQ experience or accomplishments been discussed in your social studies or history classes?
- How is the LGBTQ community represented in society?
- What areas of the United States are open to/promote LGBTQ rights?
- What areas of the United States are closed to/against LGBTQ rights?
- Who or what determines how the LGBTQ rights are established?
- Do all Americans have the same rights?
- What are some of the things that influence the LGBTQ community?
- What are some of the things that positively and negatively influence the LGBTQ community?
- What changes in governmental laws practices have gone into place to support the LGBTQ community?
- How were laws used to halt or impede the LGBTQ community?
- What events have influenced the LGBTQ plus community/ movement?
- Why do you think that the LGBTQ experience has been represented in a particular way?
- In your opinion, how does society feel about the LGBTQ experience?
- How does the LGBTQ experience compare from the Harlem renaissance era to the 1970s era?
- How does the LGBTQ experience of today compare to the 1800s?
- What are reasons that the involvement of the LGBTQ community, like the influences of minority groups left out of the history books?
- How can erasure be used as a weapon?
- What are the attitudes that support or promote erasure? Can those attitudes still be found in society today?
- How have attitudes surrounding the LGBTQ community changed?

(Developed for Social Studies and American History, grade 8; recommended for American History and Social Justice, grades 8-12)

### **23.03.02**

#### **[Black & Queer Lives: Intersecting Identities of the Harlem Renaissance](#), by Daniel Croteau**

In this unit, students are asked to examine literature by authors from the Harlem Renaissance and beyond through the lens of identity considering all parts of an identity including race, gender, sexuality, and others. As a part of the unit, students will consider the construction of identity and the construction of truth. Authors included in this unit are Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes as well as the work of filmmaker Oscar Micheaux.

As an entry point for students, the work of Walter Dean Myers, an author born in Harlem following this time period, is included.

(Developed for Language Arts, grade 8; recommended for English, grade 9)





#### *IV. Energy and Environmental History of New Haven and the American City*

##### **Introduction**

In this seminar exploring urban environmental history, we considered New Haven as a social and ecological site for complex energy, water, and transportation systems and as a changing habitat for humans, domesticated animals, and wildlife. We linked broad issues in U.S. urban history with specific instances from New Haven, such as oyster harvesting in its harbor, the erection of dams on the West and Mill Rivers, and the evolution of its canal, railroad, and highway infrastructure. Our readings also included shifts in land use, including residential segregation, urban renewal projects, and health issues tied to pollution of the air, water, and soil.

During the seminar, we met with New Haven civic leaders to learn about city plans to respond to climate change and about community-driven efforts to transform vacant lots into vibrant green spaces. We complemented this with visits to the Beinecke Library and the New Haven Museum to look at historical maps, photographs, and documents. Towards the seminar's conclusion, a bus tour introduced participants to key sites, such as the Eli Whitney Dam, English Station power plant, Farmington Canal recreational trail, and Winchester Factory. One highlight was a visit to a nature reserve where a small dam, hundreds of years old, had recently been dismantled to rejuvenate the river ecosystem. Our seminar culminated in a discussion of the idea of "restoration ecology," what a sustainable future might look like for New Haven, and how teachers might engage students in thinking about the city's present and future environmental challenges.

The volume presents individual units that take an interdisciplinary approach to New Haven's environmental history, seeking to integrate it into curricula for social studies, science, and English Language Arts. This strategy seeks to foster a connection between New Haven Public School students and the urban environment they inhabit. Peter Kazienko's unit, "**Mill River: Past, Present, and Future of New Haven,**" takes students on a journey through time down the Mill River, exploring the river's changing uses and comparing the current city to its earlier iterations. The unit connects students to local places and also propels them towards civic participation by encouraging them to envision a sustainable and equitable future for the watershed. Emily MacMelburn's unit, "**Water, Air, Trees: Building Interest in Earth Space Science through Local Environmental History,**" explores strategies for incorporating environmental history in an integrated science curriculum. Her unit invites students to study the history of the Mill River and later investigate its water quality and resident invertebrates. The unit further encompasses a study of environmental justice issues related to highways and air pollution and the interplay of urban forestry, heat islands, and the history of residential segregation and inequality. Nancy Bonilla's unit, "**Community Gardens: An Urbanite's Connection to Nature, Community, and Self,**" grounded in Paul Fleischman's book, "Seedfolks,"

introduces students to the concept of community gardens and New Haven's gardening history. The unit engages students in a collaborative process that culminates in their creating a small garden of their own.

Paul Sabin

## Synopses of the Curriculum Units

### 23.04.01

#### **Mill River: Past, Present, and Future of New Haven, by Peter Kazienko**

This unit is intended to help students better understand the history of New Haven through engagement with historical primary sources in conjunction with specific New Haven locations explored on foot. Because much of what we see in New Haven can also be seen elsewhere in terms of manipulation of the landscape for economic and social gain, use of water as energy source, transportation, and dumping of waste, students also are being trained to transfer knowledge and skills to the wider national and global context. By working with students to develop and refine their observational and research skills, I hope to encourage them to access the landscapes around them as rich resources for the exploration of the past. If we can learn to observe and interrogate the physical world around us, we gain much in terms of depth of experience of a place. Through this teaching unit, I hope to instill deeper connections to the places we call home and a personal investment in what happens to them moving forward.

(Developed for People and Place, and Social Studies, grades 9-12; recommended for Geography, History, and Environmental Humanities, grades 9-12, and Civics, grades 11-12)

### 23.04.02

#### **Water, Air, Trees: Building Interest in Earth Space Science through Local Environmental History, by Emily MacMelburn**

This curriculum unit comprises three mini-units focused on water, air, and trees, designed to build interest in an integrated science course, especially the environmental aspects of the course. In the water unit, we delve into the history of the Mill River in New Haven, CT. In the air unit, we look at environmental racism and environmental justice, using the two freeways in Oakland, CA, as a case study. One highway, which passes through affluent, predominantly white neighborhoods, prohibits medium and heavy-duty trucks, while the other, which runs through economically disadvantaged communities of color, permits such trucks, leading to uneven exposure to air pollutants and a resulting disparity in health conditions like asthma, heart attacks, and cancer. In our trees unit, we continue the theme of environmental justice by examining the red-lining map of New Haven from 1937, juxtaposing it with recent maps, including one showing current tree coverage in the city. We then discuss the urban heat island effect and strategies to mitigate it, with tree planting being a notable solution. For each mini-unit, students not only absorb the content but also engage in a small project to solidify their understanding.

(Developed for Integrated Science, grade 9; recommended for Integrated Science and PhyChem, grade 9)

### **23.04.03**

#### **Community Gardens: An Urbanite’s Connection to Nature, Community, and Self, by Nancy Bonilla**

This unit seeks to connect students to nature and their neighborhood community. Through reading Paul Fleischman’s book, *Seedfolks*, and by engaging students in garden-related activities, the unit attempts to help students realize that the nature that surrounds them is not just green space, such as parks, but instead plants and soil that they can tend that may change the quality of life for others. People develop a sense of belonging when they see others invested in a little piece of the neighborhood. Connecting students to the community gardening experience means more than growing vegetables. It entails collaborative skills, planning, effective communication, decision making and compromise. These skills help build future leaders through meaningful experience. Students gain the satisfaction of knowing that they are creating and nurturing life. By the end of the unit, I hope that participating students will see that they can be active in their community. Gardening will serve as a catalyst for more community service and activism that is meaningful to them as “citizens of the world.”

(Developed for ELA, grade 8; recommended for Social Studies, grades 6-8)

**Curriculum Units by Fellows of the  
Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1978-2023**

	<b>2023</b>	
Volume I		Poetry as Sound and Object
Volume II		Latinx Histories, Cultures, and Communities
Volume III		Writing Queer and Trans Lives
Volume IV		Energy and Environmental History of New Haven and the American City
	<b>2022</b>	
Volume I		Writing about Nature
Volume II		The Long Fight for a Free Caribbean, 1700s-1959
Volume III		Ethnic Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy
	<b>2021</b>	
Volume I		The Social Struggles of Contemporary Black Art
Volume II		Developing Anti-Racist Curriculum and Pedagogy
Volume III		How to Do Things with Maps
Volume IV		The Earth's Greenhouse and Global Warming
	<b>2020</b>	
Volume I		The Place of Woman: Home, Economy, and Politics
Volume II		Chemistry of Food and Cooking
	<b>2019</b>	
Volume I		Digital Lives
Volume II		Teaching about Race and Racism Across the Disciplines
Volume III		Human Centered Design of Biotechnology
	<b>2018</b>	
Volume I		An Introduction to Income Inequality in America: Economics, History, Law
Volume II		Engineering Solutions to 21st-Century Environmental Problems
	<b>2017</b>	
Volume I		Adapting Literature
Volume II		Watershed Science

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

	<b>2016</b>	
Volume I		Shakespeare and the Scenes of Instruction
Volume II		Literature and Identity
Volume III		Citizenship, Identity, and Democracy
Volume IV		Physical Science and Physical Chemistry
	<b>2015</b>	
Volume I		Teaching Native American Studies
Volume II		American Culture in the Long 20th Century
Volume III		Physics and Chemistry of the Earth's Atmosphere and Climate
Volume IV		Big Molecules, Big Problems
	<b>2014</b>	
Volume I		Picture Writing
Volume II		Exploring Community through Ethnographic Nonfiction, Fiction, and Film
Volume III		Race and American Law, 1850-Present
Volume IV		Engineering in Biology, Health and Medicine
	<b>2013</b>	
Volume I		Literature and Information
Volume II		Immigration and Migration and the Making of a Modern American City
Volume III		Sustainability: Means or Ends?
Volume IV		Asking Questions in Biology: Discovery versus Knowledge
	<b>2012</b>	
Volume I		Understanding History and Society through Visual Art, 1776 to 1914
Volume II		The Art of Biography
Volume III		Anatomy, Health, and Disease: From the Skeletal System to Cardiovascular Fitness
Volume IV		Engineering in the K-12 Classroom: Math and Science Education for the 21st-Century Workforce
	<b>2011</b>	
Volume I		Writing with Words and Images
Volume II		What History Teaches
Volume III		The Sound of Words: An Introduction to Poetry
Volume IV		Energy, Environment, and Health

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 2010

Volume I	Interdisciplinary Approaches to Consumer Culture
Volume II	The Art of Reading People: Character, Expression, Interpretation
Volume III	Geomicrobiology: How Microbes Shape Our Planet
Volume IV	Renewable Energy

### 2009

Volume I	Writing, Knowing, Seeing
Volume II	The Modern World in Literature and the Arts
Volume III	Science and Engineering in the Kitchen
Volume IV	How We Learn about the Brain
Volume V	Evolutionary Medicine

### 2008

Volume I	Controlling War by Law
Volume II	Storytelling: Fictional Narratives, Imaginary People, and the Reader's Real Life
Volume III	Pride of Place: New Haven Material and Visual Culture
Volume IV	Representations of Democracy in Literature, History and Film
Volume V	Forces of Nature: Using Earth and Planetary Science for Teaching Physical Science
Volume VI	Depicting and Analyzing Data: Enriching Science and Math Curricula through Graphical Displays and Mapping

### 2007

Volume I	American Voices: Listening to Fiction, Poetry, and Prose
Volume II	Voyages in World History before 1500
Volume III	The Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics of the Solar System
Volume IV	The Science of Natural Disasters
Volume V	Health and the Human Machine

### 2006

Volume I	Photographing America: A Cultural History, 1840-1970
Volume II	Latino Cultures and Communities
Volume III	Postwar America: 1945-1963
Volume IV	Math in the Beauty and Realization of Architecture
Volume V	Engineering in Modern Medicine
Volume VI	Anatomy and Art: How We See and Understand

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 2005

Volume I	Stories around the World in Film and Literature
Volume II	The Challenge of Intersecting Identities in American Society: Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Nation
Volume III	History in the American Landscape: Place, Memory, Poetry
Volume IV	The Sun and Its Effects on Earth
Volume V	Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation

### 2004

Volume I	The Supreme Court in American Political History
Volume II	Children's Literature in the Classroom
Volume III	Representations of American Culture, 1760-1960: Art and Literature
Volume IV	Energy, Engines, and the Environment
Volume V	The Craft of Word Problems

### 2003

Volume I	Geography through Film and Literature
Volume II	Everyday Life in Early America
Volume III	Teaching Poetry in the Primary and Secondary Schools
Volume IV	Physics in Everyday Life
Volume V	Water in the 21st Century

### 2002

Volume I	Survival Stories
Volume II	Exploring the Middle East: Hands-On Approaches
Volume III	War and Peace in the Twentieth Century and Beyond
Volume IV	The Craft of Writing
Volume V	Food, Environmental Quality and Health
Volume VI	Biology and History of Ethnic Violence and Sexual Oppression

### 2001

Volume I	Medicine, Ethics and Law
Volume II	Art as Evidence: The Interpretation of Objects
Volume III	Reading and Writing Poetry
Volume IV	Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary American Art and Literature
Volume V	Bridges: Human Links and Innovations
Volume VI	Intelligence: Theories and Developmental Origins



## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 2000

Volume I	Women Writers in Latin America
Volume II	Crime and Punishment
Volume III	Constitutional and Statutory Privacy Protections in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
Volume IV	Ethnicity and Dissent in American Literature and Art
Volume V	Sound and Sensibility: Acoustics in Architecture, Music, and the Environment
Volume VI	The Chemistry of Photosynthesis
Volume VII	Bioethics

### 1999

Volume I	Women's Voices in Fiction
Volume II	Art and Identity in Mexico, from the Olmec to Modern Times
Volume III	Immigration and American Life
Volume IV	Detective Fiction: Its Use as Literature and as History
Volume V	How Do You Know? The Experimental Basis of Chemical Knowledge
Volume VI	Human-Environment Relations: International Perspectives from History, Science, Politics, and Ethics
Volume VII	Electronics in the 20th Century: Nature, Technology, People, Companies, and the Marketplace

### 1998

Volume I	The Use and Abuse of History in Film and Video
Volume II	Cultures and Their Myths
Volume III	Art and Artifacts: The Cultural Meaning of Objects
Volume IV	American Political Thought
Volume V	Reading Across the Cultures
Volume VI	Selected Topics in Contemporary Astronomy and Space Science
Volume VII	The Population Explosion

### 1997

Volume I	Twentieth Century Latin American Writing
Volume II	American Children's Literature
Volume III	American Maid: Growing Up Female in Life and Literature
Volume IV	Student Diversity and Its Contribution to Their Learning
Volume V	The Blues Impulse
Volume VI	Global Change, Humans and the Coastal Ocean
Volume VII	Environmental Quality in the 21st Century

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 1996

Volume I	Multiculturalism and the Law
Volume II	Environmental and Occupational Health: What We Know; How We Know; What We Can Do
Volume III	Race and Representation in American Cinema
Volume IV	Remaking America: Contemporary U.S. Immigration
Volume V	Genetics in the 21st Century: Destiny, Chance or Choice
Volume VI	Selected Topics in Astronomy and Space Studies

### 1995

Volume I	Gender, Race, and Milieu in Detective Fiction
Volume II	Film and Literature
Volume III	The Constitution and Criminal Justice
Volume IV	Coming of Age in Ethnic America
Volume V	The Geological Environment of Connecticut

### 1994

Volume I	Family Law, Family Lives: New View of Parents, Children and the State
Volume II	Poetry in the Classroom: Incentive and Dramatization
Volume III	Understanding the Ancient Americas: Foundation, Flourishing, and Survival
Volume IV	Racism and Nativism in American Political Culture
Volume V	The Atmosphere and the Ocean

### 1993

Volume I	The Symbolic Language of Architecture and Public Monuments
Volume II	Folktales
Volume III	Twentieth-Century Multicultural Theater
Volume IV	The Minority Artist in America
Volume V	Environmental Science

### 1992

Volume I	The Constitution, Courts and Public Schools
Volume II	Writing and Re-writings of the Discovery and Conquest of America
Volume III	Reading and Writing the City
Volume IV	The National Experience: American Art and Culture
Volume V	Ecosystems: Tools for Science and Math Teachers

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 1991

Volume I	Regions and Regionalism in the United States: Studies in the History and Cultures of the South, The Northeast and the American Southwest
Volume II	The Family in Art and Material Culture
Volume III	Afro-American Autobiography
Volume IV	Recent American Poetry: Expanding the Canon
Volume V	Adolescence/Adolescents' Health
Volume VI	Global Change

### 1990

Volume I	The Autobiographical Mode in Latin American Literature
Volume II	Contemporary American Drama: Scripts and Performance
Volume III	The U.S. National Parks Movement
Volume IV	American Family Portraits (Section I)
Volume V	American Family Portraits (Section II)
Volume VI	Genetics
Volume VII	What Makes Airplanes Fly? History, Science and Applications of Aerodynamics

### 1989

Volume I	American Communities, 1880-1980
Volume II	Poetry
Volume III	Family Ties in Latin American Fiction
Volume IV	Detective Fiction: Its Use as Literature and History
Volume V	America as Myth
Volume VI	Crystals in Science, Math, and Technology
Volume VII	Electricity

### 1988

Volume I	The Constitution in Public Schools
Volume II	Immigrants and American Identity
Volume III	Autobiography in America
Volume IV	Responding to American Words and Images
Volume V	Hormones and Reproduction
Volume VI	An Introduction to Aerodynamics

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 1987

Volume I	The Modern Short Story in Latin America
Volume II	Epic, Romance and the American Dream
Volume III	Writing About American Culture
Volume IV	The Writing of History: History as Literature
Volume V	Human Nature, Biology, and Social Structure: A Critical Look at What Science Can Tell Us About Society
Volume VI	Science, Technology, and Society

### 1986

Volume I	The Family in Literature
Volume II	Writings and Re-Writings of the Discovery and Conquest of America
Volume III	Topics in Western Civilization: Ideals of Community and the Development of Urban Life, 1250-1700
Volume IV	The Process of Writing
Volume V	The Measurement of Adolescents, II
Volume VI	Fossil Fuels: Occurrence; Production; Use; Impacts on Air Quality

### 1985

Volume I	Poetry
Volume II	American Musical Theater
Volume III	Twentieth Century American Fiction, Biography, and Autobiography
Volume IV	History as Fiction in Central and South America
Volume V	Odysseys: Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century African-American History Through Personal Narrative
Volume VI	Time Machines: Artifacts and Culture
Volume VII	Skeletal Materials-Biomineralization
Volume VIII	The Measurement of Adolescents

### 1984

Volume I	Elements of Architecture, Part II
Volume II	Greek Civilization
Volume III	Hispanic Minorities in the United States
Volume IV	The Oral Tradition
Volume V	American Adolescents in the Public Eye
Volume VI	Geology and the Industrial History of Connecticut

## Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

### 1983

Volume I	Elements of Architecture
Volume II	Greek and Roman Mythology
Volume III	Reading the Twentieth Century Short Story
Volume IV	America in the Sixties: Culture and Counter-Culture
Volume V	Drama
Volume VI	Cross-Cultural Variation in Children and Families
Volume VII	Medical Imaging

### 1982

Volume I	Society and the Detective Novel
Volume II	Autobiography
Volume III	The Constitution in American History
Volume IV	An Unstable World: The West in Decline?
Volume V	Society and Literature in Latin America
Volume VI	The Changing American Family: Historical and Comparative Perspectives
Volume VII	Human Fetal Development

### 1981

Volume I	The “City” in American Literature and Culture
Volume II	An Interdisciplinary Approach to British Studies
Volume III	Human Sexuality and Human Society
Volume IV	Writing Across the Curriculum
Volume V	The Human Environment: Energy
Volume VI	Computing

### 1980

Volume I	Adolescence and Narrative: Strategies for Teaching Fiction
Volume II	Art, Artifacts, and Material Culture
Volume III	Drama
Volume IV	Language and Writing
Volume V	Man and the Environment
Volume VI	The Present as History
Volume VII	Problem Solving

## **Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)**

### **1979**

Volume I	The Stranger and Modern Fiction: A Portrait in Black and White
Volume II	Themes in Twentieth Century American Culture
Volume III	Remarkable City: Industrial New Haven and the Nation, 1800-1900
Volume IV	Language and Writing
Volume V	Strategies for Teaching Literature
Volume VI	Natural History and Biology

### **1978**

Volume I	Language and Writing
Volume II	20th Century Afro-American Culture
Volume III	20th Century American History and Literature
Volume IV	Colonial American History and Material Culture