

Curriculum Units by
Fellows of the
Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
Guide
2025

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Preface

In February 2025 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 2025. Between August and December 2024, teachers who served as Institute Representatives canvassed their colleagues in New Haven public schools to determine the subjects they wanted the Institute to address. The Institute 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 two seminars were organized:

- “Objects, Material Culture, and Empire: Making Russia,” led by Molly Brunson, Associate Professor in Slavic Languages and Literatures and History of Art; and
- “History, Science, and Racism: The Long Shadow of Eugenics,” led by Daniel HoSang, Professor of American Studies.

Between February and July, Fellows participated in seminar meetings, studied the seminar subject and their unit topics, and attended a series of talks by Yale faculty members.

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 published online at teachersinstitute.yale.edu.

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

I. Objects, Material Culture, and Empire: Making Russia

Introduction

When we think of Russia, we often imagine whimsical nesting dolls or gem-encrusted *Fabergé* eggs. These objects—with their charming bright colors and over-the-top luxury—have become synonymous with the paradoxes of Russian culture, at once modest in its peasant origins and exuberant in its expressions of imperial power. Taking such things as inspiration, this Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute seminar traced the rise and fall of the Russian empire through a series of objects. Together, we asked how things, and the materials they are made from, contributed to the articulation of a Russian national identity in the nineteenth century. How might a stone vase, wooden toy, silver pistol, or article of clothing reveal stories about the people who made, purchased, and used them? How might they unlock narratives about the environment, modern industry, and an ever more global state actor? Coming from a range of disciplinary backgrounds and grade levels, from kindergarten to chemistry, from Spanish language to visual arts, the Fellows who participated in this seminar found common ground in the practices of looking at and analyzing objects, exploring the advantages and disadvantages of taking an object-centered approach to academic study. What can things tell us? What can they not tell us? And why does this all matter? These were the driving questions of our seminar.

We took as our starting point the proposition that we might be able to track the history and culture of the Russian empire, from the eighteenth century to 1917, by remaining especially attuned to material culture. Reading works of literature, history, and theory alongside visual and material examples, we saw how the birth of Russian industry was inscribed into fine carved objects and fairy tales. We identified the myth of an ethnically and culturally unified Russia in the supposed “discovery” of folk crafts and medieval heritage. We read about virtuosic craftsmanship in Leskov’s “Lefty” and the obsessive possession of consumer goods in Gogol’s “Overcoat.” And we considered the artifacts of Russian colonial practices in Ukraine, Central Asia, and Siberia. Implicit in our discussions was the acknowledgement that few of the seminar participants would have the opportunity or need to engage specifically Russian material in their classes. Instead, we were united in our exploration of Russia as a case study for thoughtful, interdisciplinary, and innovative pedagogical approaches to object study. We anchored these approaches in rigorous methods of object analysis, refined through our reading of foundational scholars like the art historian Jules David Prown and put into action with our experimentation with writing object biographies. By far, the soul of the seminar was in the frequent visits to Yale collections, which gave us hands-on experience with analyzing and discussing objects in a seminar setting. We observed the material characteristics of Orthodox icons in the Yale University Art Gallery. We sifted through the eclectic Eurasian collection—from a fish skin Siberian robe to a carved wooden toy of a monkey—of the Peabody Museum of Natural History. The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library offered an opportunity to peruse the Romanov family photograph albums and wonder about the snapshot as an object. And for our final session on

materiality and food, we indulged the senses as we read Chekhov's "Gooseberries" and sampled rye bread, pickled vegetables, and more.

The Fellows' curriculum units bear the imprint of this interdisciplinary approach to materiality. Both Sean Griffin and Natalie Ochoa take a historical frame, exploring how material culture can make a slice of the past present for students. Griffin leverages the rich collections of local and regional museums to supplement a lesson on Abraham Lincoln's assassination in his reading classroom and make a positive impact on his students' comprehension skills. In her history unit, Ochoa introduces key artifacts from a range of modern revolutions—starting with the Scientific Revolution, and moving on to the French, Haitian, and Russian Revolutions—to highlight how objects both emerged from and also contributed to such significant events. Maria Medianero and María Dolores Gómez López each bring an attention to objects into their Spanish language classrooms. Medianero bases her unit in the comparative musical and performance traditions of Panama, Russia, and the local Quinipiac tribe; exploring the instruments, costumes, dances, and sounds of each culture supports her students' ability to discuss and appreciate other cultures. López designs her unit around the various folktales and customs of Spain, grounding each individual example in the careful analytical methods of material cultural studies.

A commitment to method is also what unites the units of Dan Croteau, Katie Yates, and Charnice Hoegnifioh. Croteau and Yates each bring an object-based approach to the writing classroom. Croteau draws out the things of Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* as inspiration for student writing on important objects in their own lives. Yates centers her unit on the collective writing of creative personal prose and poetry in the kinds of storytelling on display in a scrapbook. As a teacher of high-school science, Hoegnifioh takes a material approach to students' introduction to laboratory work; encouraging material literacy becomes a way for her to orient students with the things and practices of the lab, its norms, possibilities, and dangers. To know more about glass and beakers is, in her unit, to embody and activate the identity of a scientist.

This material awareness carries through in the curriculum units of Nadiya Hafizova, Kasalina Maliamu Nabakooza, and Carol Boynton. Hafizova's deep understanding of environmental ethics and the literature around object agency allows her to design a series of activities that will inspire students to think with seriousness about consumerism in their own lives. Nabakooza has immersed herself in blacksmithing practices to introduce this rarely taught practice to her art students, enriching it with how ironwork brings together such disparate contexts as the Russian empire and Uganda. And finally, teaching the youngest cohort, Carol Boynton starts with a classic of children's literature, *The Mitten*, and uses it to introduce her kindergartners to the Ukrainian arts of illustration and textile design.

Throughout the seminar our intention was to elevate our material literacy, remaining alive to the powers of observation, and the potential for objects to tell stories about

people, history, and culture. In these creative and diverse curriculum units, each seeking to support student learning in material ways, we can see the intellectual and pedagogical impact of looking beyond text and image—to the things that make up our world.

Molly Brunson

Synopses of the Curriculum Units

25.01.01

***The Mitten* - A Ukrainian Folktale, by Carol Boynton**

This two-to-three-week unit, designed for Kindergarten students, introduces aspects of Ukrainian material culture through the story *The Mitten*. Students will hear and learn two versions of the folktale – one retold by Alvin Tresselt from 1964 and the second by Jan Brett in 1989. Through the rich illustrations, each story uses strong and clear examples of Ukrainian objects from home life, clothing, and everyday items. *The Mitten* will serve as a foundation for several discussions, including topics such as animals, size and volume, patterns and designs, story sequencing, and even role-playing. Students will design their own mittens, create animal cards to tell the story, make animal masks to act out the story, and decorate a vyshyvanka – an iconic traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt.

(Developed for Literacy and Social Studies, grade K; recommended for Literacy and Social Studies, grades K-2)

25.01.02

Writing Object(ive)s: Items as Inspiration for Literacy Work, by Dan Croteau

In this unit, students are asked to examine Sandra Cisneros’s work *The House on Mango Street* through object study to improve their writing skills and their understanding of symbolism. Throughout the course of the unit, students will use a modified form of Jules Prown’s material culture theory to study objects in order to develop greater understanding of the objective, write in more detail, and delve deeper into symbolism. Students will use their object study notes to build descriptions of the objects that they will use to write object biographies at the conclusion of the unit. In addition, students will create material examples of the house on Mango Street in order to show their understanding of symbolism and to use the object study process to examine the work of their peers.

(Developed for Language Arts, grade 8; recommended for Language Arts, grade 7)

25.01.03

Legends and Customs of Spain: a Bridge between the Past and the Present, by María Dolores Gómez López

This unit is designed for 5th-grade students and aims to develop cultural awareness by exploring the rich heritage of Spain through the in-depth analysis of elements found in its traditional legends and festivities. Through the study of well-known stories, such as “The Lady of Elche,” “The Lovers of Teruel,” “The Lizard of La Malena,” and “Saint George and the Dragon,” students will identify and examine key narrative components, including historical context, characters, fantastic elements, conflict, resolution, and moral

messages. Special attention will be given to the symbolism in each legend and its reflection of cultural and societal values.

Simultaneously, the unit will address major traditional celebrations from different Spanish regions, including Las Fallas, San Fermín, and La Tomatina. Students will analyze the origins, evolution, and defining elements of these festivities—costumes, music, food, and rituals—understanding their role as collective expressions of cultural identity, memory, and community celebration. Comparative activities will encourage students to reflect critically on cultural similarities and differences between Spanish traditions and those of their own or other cultures.

Learning activities will include guided readings, literary analysis, class discussions, dramatizations, creative writing, and the development of oral and visual presentations. Audiovisual and digital resources will support student inquiry and enhance content comprehension.

This unit fosters intercultural understanding, oral and written expression, and appreciation for cultural diversity. By the end of the unit, students are expected to recognize, interpret, and value the narrative and symbolic elements that bring legends and traditions to life, understanding their importance as means of cultural transmission and identity formation.

(Developed for Social Studies, Spanish Language, Sciences, and English Language, grade 5; recommended for Social Studies, middle school grades, and Spanish Language and Sciences, grade 6)

25.01.04

Utilizing Artifacts to Unravel History: The Hunt for Lincoln’s Killer, by Sean Griffin

This curriculum unit is meant to accompany a Read180 unit on the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, but can be incorporated into any unit of study that teachers are undertaking. The focus that the unit brings is the concept of object study in the classroom. Early in the unit I will introduce the concept of material culture to students and then begin to allow them to practice object study in the classroom through activities, such as Show and Tell and the Object Study Timeline, which they will work on sporadically throughout the life of the unit. Throughout the unit I will introduce a variety of online sources, such as the Library of Congress, The Ford’s Theater Museum, and others highlighted in the unit, that will serve to parallel our readings. The unit will end with students going back to the resources to participate in the Lincoln Assassination Living Museum Activity.

(Developed for Read 180, grades 5-8; recommended for Language Arts, grades 5-8; English, grades 9-12; and American History, grades 6-12)

25.01.05**Stuff Lives: Building Ethical Consumers through Object Study and Environmental Philosophy, by Nadiya Hafizova**

This unit is an interdisciplinary, art-infused balm to environmental science courses that may overwhelm with data, yet leave the student feeling powerless to affect change. Students may be more galvanized into action when asked to connect emotionally and spiritually with the philosophical repercussions of our consumerist society. By giving objects voices, personalities and roles, students will be awakened to a more mindful consciousness around how to use, care and respect the products of our environment. At the beginning of the unit, students will compose a draft of an environmentalist philosophy or contract for how to use the environment. After going through a sequence of lessons that include a Fishbowl discussion, reflecting on sentimental artifacts, exploring cultural idioms, imagining a dystopian future world of scarcity, personifying objects as agents of social change, and examining historical pieces of environmentalist propaganda and manifestos, students will revisit their environmental philosophy with more nuance. Their takeaway object will be a sculpture or portrait made of their own trash to represent their new ethic.

(Developed for Environmental Studies, grades 11-12; recommended for Environmental Studies, Philosophy, and English, grades 11-12)

25.01.06**Beakers and Behavior: The Material Culture of the Science Laboratory, by Charnice Hoegnifioh**

This interdisciplinary unit introduces high school students to the laboratory setting through the lens of material culture, using laboratory tools as entry points for scientific inquiry, cultural reflection, and behavioral expectations. Designed as an introductory unit for science courses like Chemistry and Integrated Science, it invites students to explore the physical and chemical properties of materials and how these properties shape scientific practices, safety norms, and classroom conduct. Students will learn to think like scientists by developing foundational skills in measurement, SI units, and unit conversions, connecting abstract concepts to the tools and technologies they handle in class. Lab equipment will be treated as cultural artifacts whose design and material properties influence what scientists can do, and how they must behave, in the laboratory.

By treating laboratory objects like goggles, beakers, and hot plates as cultural artifacts with agency, students begin to understand how material design influences what we can do in a lab and how we behave within it. Historical and artistic representations of laboratories further enrich students' understanding of how science is both practiced and perceived. Through hands-on experiments, critical observation, and reflective discussion, students will examine how the evolution of scientific tools parallels advancements in

chemistry, while also developing foundational concepts such as heat transfer, energy, and states of matter. Aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), this unit not only builds content knowledge but also cultivates scientific identity and lab citizenship, helping students “think like scientists” from day one by recognizing the lab as a place of careful practice, cultural meaning, and material constraint. By rooting this learning in the diverse lived experiences of our urban comprehensive high school students, I aim to make the laboratory not only a site for scientific thinking, but also a space for belonging, collaboration, and mutual respect.

(Developed for Chemistry, grades 10-12; Culinary Chemistry, grades 11-12; and Integrated Science, grade 9; recommended for Biology, General and Physical Sciences, Earth Science, and Art History, grades 9-12)

25.01.07

Exploring Native American, Panamanian, and Russian Cultures, by Maria Medianero

This unit focuses on exploring the rich cultural diversity of Native Americans, Panamanians and Russians through the lens of music, dance and traditional clothing. By studying the Quinipiac Tribe alongside Panamanian and Russian cultures, students will gain a deeper understanding of how culture shapes identity. This comparative approach encourages critical thinking and fosters respect for different traditions. Students will engage in an in-depth study of the unique musical instruments, traditional dances, and distinctive clothing associated with these cultures. Through interactive lessons, students will learn the significance of each element in expressing cultural identity and heritage.

The integration of music and dance allows students to engage actively with the material, making learning more dynamic. Additionally, exploring these cultural elements can enhance students’ language skills as they learn new vocabulary and expressions related to music and art.

In this unit students will be able to identify and compare the musical instruments, dance styles and traditional clothing of Native American, Panamanian and Russian cultures. I will introduce the topic to students through a multimedia presentation that will include pictures, videos and audio clips of instruments and dances.

Upon the completion of this unit, students will be able to identify key instruments from each culture, for example, Native American Quinipiac tribe natural sounds, Panama’s meyorana, and Russia’s balalaika. They will explore traditional dance forms and their meanings in each culture, as well as typical clothing styles and their symbolic representations. They will understand the similarities and differences in the use of music and dance across cultures; and will create a presentation or visual project comparing the musical instruments, dance styles and clothing from the three cultures studied,

demonstrating their understanding of cultural significance and similarities and differences.

I will also ask essential questions to stimulate discussion. Why is it important to learn about different cultures when studying a language? How do traditions, celebrations and daily life differ among Native American, Panamanian and Russian communities? What makes a culture unique, and how do Native American, Panamanian and Russian cultures reflect their history and geography? Students will discuss the role of music, dance and clothing in expressing cultural identity.

Some assessments will include hosting a cultural dance day where students can dress in traditional clothing or colors representing each culture, creating a clothing collage using images from magazines or online resources or make an actual piece of clothing, and organizing a “fashion show” where students present what they learned about the clothing of each culture.

Students will be able to choose how to show what they learned: they can write a report, create a presentation, or even produce a short video that showcases what they've learned about the musical instruments, dances, and clothing from Native American, Panamanian, and Russian cultures.

(Developed for Spanish, grade 8; recommended for English Language Arts and Social Studies, grade 8)

25.01.08

Iron Sharpens Iron: Master Blacksmithing, by Kasalina Maliamu Nabakooza

This visual arts unit, *Iron Sharpens Iron: Master Blacksmithing*, is written for teaching 8th grade students. Students will learn about the ironwork of the master blacksmith Samuel Yellin and create artwork inspired by his wrought-iron gates on Yale’s campus in New Haven, Connecticut. Students will reflect on and respond to ironworks by the master blacksmith Samuel Yellin. It is an interdisciplinary unit that teaches students how to analyze artworks and investigate objects. This unit concludes with a field trip to the Yale University Art Gallery. Students will experiment with materials to reinterpret artistic blacksmithing practices to create drawings and 3D artworks.

(Developed for Visual Arts, grade 8; recommended for Visual Arts, grade 8)

25.01.09

Revolutions and Objects: How Objects Shape History, by Natalie Ochoa

Typically, modern world history classrooms primarily focus on important events and leaders of revolutions. This unit curriculum’s discussions and lesson plans extend beyond these common topics by incorporating the study of revolutionary objects. The unit

consists of three pairs of revolutions: the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, the French and Haitian Revolutions, and the Industrial and Russian Revolutions. Ninth grade students will apply art historian Jules Prown's method of object analysis, which consists of three steps: description, deduction, and speculation. In the description stage, students will first examine the object as a whole, and then work down to its fine details. Deduction consists of handling the object, or imagining how one could handle it in limited circumstances, and describing the sensory experience of using or viewing the object. Finally, students will form a hypothesis about the object's identity and function, and use outside information (catalogue information, archival resources, research on similar objects, etc.) to confirm their ideas. Along the way, students will answer and develop a multitude of questions regarding their chosen objects. Throughout the unit, students will be challenged to use Prown's method, and use their skills to create a final project on revolutionary objects from a Latin American revolution of their choice. Overall, the unit has been written with the intention of engaging our diverse learners through hands-on activities and inclusive content.

(Developed for Modern World History, grade 9; recommended for Modern World History, grade 9)

25.01.10

Material Culture in the Writing Classroom, by Catherine D. Yates

This unit is for high school Arts, English and Creative Writing teachers interested in a writing- and discussion-centered semester-long scrapbook project. The unit is manageable, not expensive to facilitate. The experience of teaching this unit is immersive, a hands-on learning model which is student-centered. The goal is to create a virtual or handheld scrapbook, telling the local story of the class community, and to share it with a national audience. The learning activities are based in community-sharing, influenced by the art historian Jules Prown and the weaver Anni Albers. It includes inclusive and playful pedagogy, studying the Romanov family albums and Nancy Rolfe's scrapbooks at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and getting to know objects at the Peabody Museum of Natural History. While curating material objects for the scrapbook, students will analyze and explore the lives of the objects they choose. They will write descriptions of their objects. Relationships will be built through deep, academically investigative processes. Students will edit a short blackout poem, based on Prown's method of investigation, summarized in his words: "an entire cultural universe is in the object waiting to be discovered". Other activities include constructing a mini eulogy through word and images, and practicing writing.

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

II. History, Science, and Racism: The Long Shadow of Eugenics

Introduction

Our Yale New Haven Teachers Institute seminar, titled “History, Science, and Racism: The Long Shadow of Eugenics” examined the complicated history and ongoing impact of eugenics on many disciplines and fields.

The word “eugenics” was coined in 1883 by Francis Galton in London and means roughly “good in birth.” Galton argued that the human “race” could be improved through selective breeding, much like livestock or plants. His vision was both degrading and dangerous, and the so-called science behind it was deeply flawed.

Still, eugenics spread widely in the United States in the early 20th century, including at elite universities like Harvard, Yale, and Stanford. In fact, Yale faculty helped bring the American Eugenics Society headquarters to the New Haven Green in the 1920s. American eugenicists pushed for policies that allowed states to sterilize people they labeled “defective” or “dangerous,” leading to more than 60,000 involuntary sterilizations nationwide, including at least 500 in Connecticut.

They also shaped immigration laws, criminal justice policies, and whole fields of scientific and medical research. Even Nazi leaders in the 1930s credited U.S. eugenicists for influencing their ideas. While many people assume eugenics is a lurid and regrettably chapter in the past, its influence is still visible in our institutions and culture today, especially within our schools and universities.

The seminar included visits to Yale’s Sterling Library to view a collection of archival material related to role of Yale’s faculty and administrators in supporting the American eugenics movement. We also visited the Peabody Museum to examine objects in their collection, including an exhibition related to the history of intelligence testing and eugenics.

The 11 curriculum units produced by the Fellows demonstrate the ways in which educators can help students explore these legacies in meaningful and empowering ways.

Interdisciplinary scholar and educator Eve Galanis explores eugenics in photography, cultural production and music while also introducing critical traditions of resistance. A’Lexus Williams highlights Black women’s struggles for reproductive justice in an AP African American Studies course while also urging teachers to attend to the ways that eugenics logics are often built into the course design of such college prep courses.

Jaimee Mendillo’s unit engages middle schoolers about the eugenic roots of standardized testing, leading them to design more just approaches to assessment. Carmen Córdova-Rolón affirms the voices of immigrant students against eugenics-shaped narratives of

inferiority. John Saks connects eugenics to colonialism, capitalism, and white supremacy while exploring the anti-eugenic commitments of disability justice movements and other sites of resistance.

For her psychology class, high school educator Jessie Simpson examines the history of the American Eugenics Society in New Haven and the relationship between eugenics and psychology. Biology teacher Salvador Calatayud Ripoll unit uses eugenics to introduce students to the concept of “pseudoscience” and language arts teacher Nancy Bonilla reimagines reading instruction through anti-eugenic, project-based learning.

Spanish language instructor Hanna Marshall uses language and cultural study to help students reflect on identity and practice anti-eugenic thinking. Math educator John Kennedy shows how statistics were used to support eugenics ideas and develops anti-eugenics math lessons. Art teacher Stephanie Smelser guides students in a S.T.E.A.M. unit critiquing intelligence testing and brain science.

Together, these units demonstrate the creativity, care, and commitment of teachers who are giving students the tools to confront hard histories and imagine more inclusive futures.

Daniel Martinez HoSang

Synopses of the Curriculum Units

25.02.01

Eugenics and Anti-Eugenics in the Arts: Photography and Music, by Eve Galanis

This curriculum unit, designed by Eve Galanis, a social studies teacher, historian, and artist based in New Haven, Connecticut, explores the history and enduring impact of the American eugenics movement. This unit emphasizes how eugenics influences photography, music, and cultural life. Originally created for a **Digital Storytelling course**, the unit is intentionally broad and adaptable for U.S. history, Black and Latino studies, ethnic studies, genocidal studies, visual art, theater, or music classes.

The curriculum challenges the misconception that eugenics was a fringe or outdated pseudoscience, instead situating it as a central force in shaping 20th-century education, aesthetics, and social hierarchies. It highlights how eugenicists weaponized ideas of heredity, perfection, talent, and ability to enforce racial and social hierarchies, while also emphasizing the **tradition of resistance**; the anti-eugenic art, music, and cultural practices that countered these ideologies.

Students begin with a historical overview, analyzing primary and secondary sources, and examining how photography and music were used to promote eugenic ideals. They then turn to examples of anti-eugenic media, such as W.E.B. Du Bois's photography and politically charged music of the Civil Rights and anti-colonial eras, to see how communities resisted cultural erasure and redefined artistic value. The unit culminates in a **student-designed digital storytelling project** that critiques eugenic legacies and creates liberatory alternatives.

(Developed for Digital Storytelling, grades 10-12; recommended for Black and Latino Studies, U.S. History, World History, and Ethnic Studies, grades 9-12)

25.02.02

Rethinking AP: Black Women, Anti-Eugenics, and Reproductive Justice, by A'Lexus Williams

This unit, designed for Advanced Placement African American Studies (APAAS) course will introduce students to a brief history of eugenics and its legacies, while centering Black women's histories and their fight for reproductive liberty. Students will learn about the history of eugenics as the foundation to identify eugenic behaviors and develop anti-eugenic practices engaging with the content and course itself. The content of this unit is divided into three historical time periods ranging from the 17th century to contemporary. In each of these time periods students will explore distinct ways eugenic logic manifests, evaluate changes and/or continuities regarding its function in regulating Black women's reproductive capacities. By engaging in both the content and course students will discover how eugenic ideologies have shaped dominant narratives and how it persists in educational practices; Ultimately developing a critical lens that empowers them to

challenge and disrupt these legacies through anti-eugenic thought and action. While this unit is designed for APAAS it can be integrated in other AP courses, U.S. History, Ethnic Studies, and is easily adaptable for interdisciplinary teaching.

(Developed for AP African American Studies and U.S. History, grades 10-12; recommended for Biology and New Haven History, grades 10-12; and ELA and Journalism, grades 11-12)

25.02.03

Challenging the Standard: Testing & the Fight for Educational Justice, by Jaimee Mendillo

This unit invites middle school students to critically examine the origins, implications, and impact of standardized testing in American public education. Drawing on the historical foundations of intelligence testing and its roots in the eugenics movement, students learn how assessments have historically functioned not to support learning, but to sort, exclude, and reinforce racial and class-based hierarchies.

Students explore how standardized testing became central to public education and reflect on how these assessments have shaped their own academic identities. Through inquiry, reflection, discussion, and project-based learning, students confront questions such as: What do test scores say about intelligence and potential? Who created these systems of assessment? Who benefits from them? Who is harmed by them? What might more just and inclusive assessments look like?

The unit culminates in an activism project in which students propose and/or advocate for more equitable approaches in education. Grounded in civic education and informed by the history of educational inequality, this unit empowers students to move from personal reflection to collective action, developing the critical tools they need to become advocates for equity in their schools and beyond.

(Developed for U.S. History, grade 8; recommended for U.S. History, grade 10)

25.02.04

Identity and Latin Cultural Heritage: Elevating Voices Against Eugenics, by Carmen Cordova-Rolon

This curriculum unit explores the challenges Latin American immigrant students face in balancing their cultural heritage with pressures to assimilate into a dominant culture that often marginalizes them. Many encounter policies and school curricula that overlook their contributions and experiences while depicting immigrants as threats or burdens. New arrivals in New Haven Public Schools undergo assessments that may place them at lower grade levels, perpetuating feelings of inferiority and limiting access to resources.

The way Latin American students see themselves is shaped by family, social, and academic structures, many rooted in eugenics policies of the late 19th century. Despite eugenics' significant historical influence, discussions around it are largely absent from the current school curricula, even though local research highlighted its effects as recently as the 1990s.

Through a careful selection of literature exploring discrimination, poverty, gender roles, immigration, and identity, this unit helps students understand how eugenics shaped societal attitudes and policies of inequality. By critically examining these themes, students are encouraged to value their ethnicity, voice, and identity. Ultimately, this unit serves as both a historical exploration and an intervention, empowering students to challenge eugenic legacies and contribute to a more just and inclusive society.

(Developed for Language Arts and Social Studies, grade 5; recommended for Language Arts, grades 5-6, and History, grades 5-7)

25.02.05

Grasping things at the Root: Introducing a Critical Framework for Understanding Eugenics, by John Saksa

My unit begins with a historical outline that explains how modern eugenics differs from its older incarnations. The first part analyzes how modern eugenics movements since the 1800s were formed in conjunction with the expansion and operation of European colonialism, white supremacy, and capitalism. The first assignment requires students to explore how different social groups were de-humanized via racist comics and given dignity through photojournalism.

The second part of the unit discusses early eugenics practices within the United States and explores how eugenics connects with US white supremacy and capitalism. The second assignment involves students reading articles on how eugenics was practiced across multiple industries and making a slideshow on how certain scholars influenced their fields while promoting eugenics.

The third part examines how eugenics is thoroughly inculcated into our daily lives today through our educational and economic systems while addressing more prominent examples of the overt promotion of eugenics in politics today. The third assignment requires students to conduct research in groups on how eugenics is still present today. The fourth part discusses disability justice activism and efforts to abolish eugenics. The final project involves selecting and researching an industry and proposing how to abolish eugenics.

(Developed for Sociology, grades 9-12; recommended for American History, Modern World History, African American History, and Latin History, grades 9-12)

25.02.06**New Haven and the Lingering Effects of the American Eugenics Movement, by Jessie Simpson**

This unit was developed for Psychology 100, a dual enrollment class with Southern Connecticut State University where students in New Haven Public Schools earn both high school and college credit. This is an upperclassmen elective class. This unit looks at the American Eugenics Movement and the American Eugenics Society as a local New Haven organization. The eugenics movement and psychology as a scientific discipline both developed from the late 19th century desire to use science to explain human behavior and improve the human condition. As the field of psychology was founded from a primarily white, Western European, male perspective, deviations from that demographic were often seen as flawed and in need of correction and/or elimination. This, along with systemic racism and a colonizing mindset, helped foster eugenics, which in turn strengthened the theories of those same early psychologists. In this unit, students will explore the origins of the eugenics movement, its growth and influence on New Haven and the world throughout the 20th century, and its lasting effects to this day in the context of this psychology course. The final project is a short research project on one of the lasting legacies of eugenics through to the present day.

(Developed for Psychology, grades 10-12, and Constitutional Law, grade 11; recommended for Psychology and New Haven History, grades 10-12, and Constitutional Law, grade 11)

25.02.07**The Dangers of Pseudoscience. Eugenics: When Science Meets Racism, by Salvador Calatayud Ripoll**

This unit invites students and teachers to examine and confront the pseudoscience of eugenics. Taught at the end of the biology course, it asks students to revisit and question what they have learnt about genetics. Eugenics claimed to be science, and at some point, was the dominant narrative, backed by the most important universities and scientific institutions in the USA, but it used flawed biology to justify racism, classism, ableism and even violence. Eugenics is not a thing of the past, its legacy can be observed today in the way we talk about intelligence, crime, health or beauty.

Students will use their scientific knowledge and critical thinking skills to dismantle eugenic myths and investigate how these ideas grew and shaped U.S. history, including their own city. They will conduct historical research, scientific analysis and collaborative projects to reflect about eugenic ideas and learn how to spot its legacy in modern examples.

This unit is a call to think critically about how science is used and misused in our society. Teaching students that science is not neutral and needs ethical reflection will empower

them to recognize pseudoscience, confront injustice and contribute to a more equitable future.

(Developed for Biology, grades 9-12; recommended for Biology, secondary grades, and Science, elementary grades)

25.02.08

An anti-eugenic approach to assessing reading comprehension in the middle school classroom, by Nancy Bonilla

The unit I am presenting is one that offers a brief overview about Eugenics and its direct influence on Education as we know it today. Assessing reading comprehension using an anti-eugenic approach is what I am presenting as an alternative to standardized testing in the classroom. My unit consists of teaching strategies that we can implement in the hopes of assessing less with standardized tests and introducing more individualized project based learning. This unit uses a middle school level novel Bronx Masquerade by Nikki Grimes, but the content objectives, teaching strategies, and activities are applicable to any novel study. Students will work with making text to self and text to world connections. My goal is to develop a student's desire to want to read more because they are reading for meaning. In this unit, students will have various opportunities to interact with the text and make meaningful connections using analytical skills. The unit also allows for student discourse and in best practice we know students learn best when they learn from each other through conversation and the healthy exchange of ideas. The lessons provide a framework for student discussion beyond the text on issues about racism, inequality and stereotypes.

(Developed for ELA Readers Workshop and ELA Writers Workshop, grades 7-8; recommended for ELA, grades 5-6, and Bilingual reading ELA and Social Studies, grades 5-8)

25.02.09

Hispanic and Latine Identities: The Shadow of Eugenics, by Hanna Marshall

This unit guides language education teachers into incorporating more culturally relevant lessons into their classroom. In addition to advancing language learning goals, the unit integrates cultural studies and investigations into the curriculum. This unit used the "shadow" of eugenics to explore aspects of identity. Students will reflect, write, and discuss how they perceive themselves and others; investigate the systemic factors that contribute to those perceptions; and ultimately identify ways in which we can be anti-eugenic in our Spanish classroom and our everyday lives.

(Developed for Spanish II, grades 9-12; recommended for Spanish I and II, grades 9-12)

25.02.10

Eugenics, New Haven, and Middle School Math, by John Kennedy

This curriculum unit examines the historical connection of eugenics with mathematics education, with a focus on New Haven and the institutional role of Yale University. It looks at statistical tools such as sampling, percentages, and data visualization, that were important in enabling eugenic ideologies in the early 20th century, both nationally and within Connecticut's local context. Through legislative support, academic research, and public messaging, eugenicists used the coercive power of mathematics, especially statistics, to portray biased assumptions about heredity and intelligence as objective truths.

The unit calls on math educators to engage with this history as part of their professional responsibility. It includes a set of four anti-eugenics lesson plans for middle school students, certainly adaptable to a wider audience, designed to explore fairness, data ethics, and the misuse of statistics. These lessons help students to ask not just "Is the math correct?" but "Who does this math serve?" and "What assumptions are made in the data?"

By grounding mathematical literacy in historical awareness and ethical reflection, the unit advocates for a more anti-eugenics pedagogy. This approach helps counter past harms and helps students recognize the ongoing social consequences of statistical reasoning. The paper blends past scholarship in race science, statistics, and education to demonstrate why eugenics remains a relevant topic within a math classroom today.

(Developed for Pre-Algebra, grade 7; recommended for Mathematics, grade 6, and Pre-Algebra, Grade 8)

25.02.11

Anti-Eugenics through S.T.E.A.M. connections, by Stephanie Smelser

In this S.T.E.A.M. unit students will self select an area of interest touching on topics connected to eugenics and brain related topics. The students can investigate many areas including gene editing, brain scans, and others or may wish to better understand how the brain works, parts of the brain, tools or devices to gain information on the brain. Students can better understand eugenics and how those alleged to be "feeble minded" had their reproduction regulated, sometimes based on spurious "intelligence tests." Students can consider brain assessments for IQ or can question many other areas during this innovative S.T.E.A.M unit.

(Developed for Art, grades 7 and 9-12; recommended for Art, Science, Math, and Computer)

**Curriculum Units by Fellows of the
Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1978-2025**

2025	
Volume I	Objects, Material Culture, and Empire: Making Russia
Volume II	History, Science, and Racism: The Long Shadow of Eugenics
2024	
Volume I	Myth, Legend, Fairy Tale
Volume II	Dynamic Earth, Foundation and Fate of Industrial Society
2023	
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
2022	
Volume I	Writing about Nature
Volume II	The Long Fight for a Free Caribbean, 1700s-1959
Volume III	Ethnic Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy
2021	
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
2020	
Volume I	The Place of Woman: Home, Economy, and Politics
Volume II	Chemistry of Food and Cooking
2019	
Volume I	Digital Lives
Volume II	Teaching about Race and Racism Across the Disciplines
Volume III	Human Centered Design of Biotechnology
2018	
Volume I	An Introduction to Income Inequality in America: Economics, History, Law
Volume II	Engineering Solutions to 21st-Century Environmental Problems

Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

2017	
Volume I	Adapting Literature
Volume II	Watershed Science
2016	
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
2015	
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
2014	
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
2013	
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
2012	
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

Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

2011

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

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

Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

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

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

Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

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

2000

Volume I	Women Writers in Latin America
Volume II	Crime and Punishment
Volume III	Constitutional and Statutory Privacy Protections in the 21 st 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

Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

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

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

Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

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

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

Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

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

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

Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

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

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

Curriculum Units by Fellows (continued)

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

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