



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2024 Volume I: Myth, Legend, Fairy Tale

The History and Legacy of Myth in the African and Latino Diasporas

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Introduction

I am a History and Law teacher at Metropolitan Business Academy in New Haven, Connecticut. MBA has a population of about 400 students in grades nine through twelve. The majority of students come from the city of New Haven, with around 20% coming from neighboring, more suburban towns through the magnet school program. I have taught Modern World History, African American & Latino Studies, and Constitutional Law at MBA for two years. Before coming to New Haven Public Schools, I taught at the middle and high school levels, mostly Social Studies and Language Arts, in Meriden, Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Watertown.

In this unit, students will explore the history and importance of myths and legends in the African or Latino diaspora as part of the African American & Latino Studies course. This unit can be used to look at the African diaspora, the Latinx diaspora, or both. There will be examples of folklore for both diasporas, but this is certainly not an exhaustive list.

Lesson 1 focuses on establishing class norms of respect when discussing religious and/or spiritual beliefs, and defining the term myth, and oral tradition, as well as activating students' background knowledge such as fairy tales, schoolyard rhymes, etc. Lesson 2 looks at how people encode cultural knowledge in song, and how this information can outlast its original audience. Lesson 3 discusses cultural appropriation versus cultural appreciation with the focus texts of Joel Chandler Harris's Brer Rabbit stories and/or the song and folktale La Llorona. Teachers must be sure to establish a respectful environment for this lesson as personal backgrounds and feelings can escalate over this topic. Lesson 4 looks at how indigenous religious figures have interacted with colonizer Christianity.

The final project is an artistic representation of how one myth has changed over time and space. For example, students might show how Brer Rabbit stories originated in Africa, moved to the plantations of the Southern United States, and eventually were the subject of a Disney film and theme park ride. Another example would be the spread of La Llorona (the Weeping Woman) from Mexico to most of North, Central, and South America, as well as a discussion of similar stories from other parts of the world that are not necessarily related, for example, Medea in Greece. I recommended that students choose one of the myths discussed in the unit for their project, but students can also be encouraged to research myths in either diaspora

independently. This may also be a suitable differentiation for students who excel at independent research. What constitutes an “artistic” project is up to the discretion of the teacher, but I recommend projects like posters, paintings, textile arts, or “ebooks” (slide decks) over a traditional essay or slide presentation.

Unit Objectives

- Students will understand the history and legacy of myth in the African & Latino Diasporas.
- Students will be able to analyze the history of their chosen myth as it evolves through time.
- Students will be able to create a dynamic artistic representation of their chosen myth.

Unit Essential Questions

1. What are myths/legends/fairy tales & why do they matter? What do they tell us?
2. How do people code cultural information in song? Why would people still sing these songs after the information becomes irrelevant? Does cultural information ever really become irrelevant?
3. What is cultural appropriation? Who can tell what stories? How does being an outsider to a culture change/bias/influence how a story is told?
4. How have indigenous religious figures interacted with the religious values of the colonizer (specifically Christianity)?

Example Myth: La Llorona

La Llorona is a legend from Mexico that has spread throughout Latin America and the United States. Every region “has its own legend and special version about La Llorona. She goes out at night through all parts uttering heartbreaking cries.”¹ In most versions, she was the poor indigenous wife (or lover) of a Spanish conquistador and the mother of his children, but he left her for a richer woman. In her grief, she drowned their children to spite him. She is therefore cursed to haunt the earth, searching for her lost children and weeping. Children are warned to stay away from rivers and water after dark, as she either steals the children away or kills them as she did to her own.

There is evidence that La Llorona is a holdover from a pre-colonization Aztec myth. Spanish colonizers noted in the 1500s the legend of a woman who “appears dressed in white, bearing on her shoulder a little cradle, as though she were carrying a child; and she can be heard sobbing and shrieking. This apparition was considered a bad omen.”² In 1585, Fray Bernardino de Sahagun wrote of “a demon whom [the Aztecs] gave the name Cioacoatl [sic]. She appeared clad as a lady of the palace [in white]. She terrified, she frightened, and cried aloud at night.”³

In 1965, folklorist Bess Lomax Hawes studied ghost stories of the inmates of Las Palmas School for Girls, a residential facility of the Department of Correction of the County of Los Angeles, California. The fourteen teenage girls interviewed were of diverse ethnic backgrounds, and twenty eight of the thirty one ghost stories shared with researchers involved malevolent female ghosts, nine of which are identified as La Llorona by name, and many others sharing a similar story or warning.⁴ In these retellings, La Llorona sometimes targets men as revenge on her husband instead of children. Other accounts have claimed La Llorona to be the ghost of La Malinche (Dona Marina)⁵, the indigenous woman who translated and had children with conquistador

Hernán Cortés and is often viewed as a traitor to her people for collaborating with the Spanish colonizers.

The legend of La Llorona has been the subject of poetry, songs, television, and movies. In his 1849 poem “La Llorona ,” Manuel Elogio Carpio Hernández, wrote:

PALE with terror I heard it told / When I was a boy, an innocent boy / That a man gave death / In my town to his wife Rosalía / And since then in the shadowy night / The frightened people heard / Sad moans of the pained woman, / Moans like she was in agony. / For a time her lamenting stops / But then she breaks into large sobs, / And she traverses the streets alone. / She fills everyone with mortal terror, / And close to the river in the thick darkness / She goes crying, enveloped in her cloak.⁶

Others believed La Llorona to be the product of European folklore interacting with indigenous Mexican religion, as she has many similarities to “European ghosts known as ‘White Ladies’ as possible prototypes for the narratives of La Llorona’s human life. He also points out the legend’s resemblance to the myth of Medea and to Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*.”⁷ La Llorona is also the subject of episodes of *Supernatural* and *Grimm*,⁸ and featured in movies like Disney’s *Coco* and *The Legend of La Llorona*.

Example Myth: Santa Muerte

Santa Muerte is described by her followers as a “powerful and mystical Mexican female folk saint of death ... depicted as a female Grim Reaper... While she is caring, motherly, and generous with her devotees, Santa Muerte is also vindictive or wrathful to those who do not come through on their promises to her, who disrespect her, or who insult and disrespect her children, her loyal devotees.”⁹ Meanwhile, the Catholic Church has officially condemned worship of Santa Muerte as a “the celebration of devastation and of hell.”¹⁰ She is a fast growing religious icon, with an estimated 10-12 million devotees in Mexico, the United States, and Central America.¹¹ The earliest documented reference to Santa Muerte was in an Inquisition report on idolatrous practices of indigenous people in 1797.¹²

Santa Muerte is strongly associated with criminals, especially cartel drug lords. Her protection is frequently invoked by people on the fringes of legal society because “she is seen as a non-judgemental saint that can be invoked for some not-so-holy petitions. ‘If somebody is going to be doing something illegal, and they want to be protected from the law enforcement, they feel awkward asking God to protect them... Devotees also feel comfortable going to her for favors of vengeance – something they would never ask of God or a canonized saint.”¹³

Despite the Catholic Church’s official rejection of Santa Muerte, she probably could only have risen to such popularity in a Catholic context. Figures of Death in the form of a skeletal person have been part of Catholic iconography since the medieval period, and were brought to Mexico by Spanish colonizers. Mexican folk Catholicism has many “folk saints, who could be divided into two groups: the informal and the semi-formal saints. The informal saints are figures declared by their believers as saints, although they have never been canonized.”¹⁴ Santa Muerte’s devotees similarly combine orthodox Catholic practices (rosaries, novenas, pilgrimages, masses) with more pagan/indigenous practices that are also associated with “New Age” spiritual

practices (home altars with offerings like food, tobacco, alcohol, and flowers; use of spells, etc.)¹⁵ In conclusion, Santa Muerte is a Mexican folk saint associated with the fringes of society and condemned by the Catholic Church who nevertheless has gained increased popularity since the turn of the 21st century.

Example Myth: Los duendes

Los duendes are spirits that mix European beliefs in fairies with spirits of indigenous American beliefs. They are usually said to be small, mostly humanoid creatures who can appear as humans or animals. They “live in the mountains, in caves near rivers, which they build in large rocks and in the roots of fig trees.”¹⁶ They can be evil, neutral tricksters, or benevolent helpers. They confuse people who walk into the mountains by changing the paths, and they sometimes kidnap children to play with them, and usually return them unharmed. They can “pursue girls of marriage age, making them sick, and provoke storms, protect or destroy villages, play tricks on men and frighten them when they are unaware.”¹⁷ Like the fairies of European mythology, los duendes are tricksters who follow their own moral codes that humans cannot fully understand and act in ways we cannot predict.

Example Myth: Follow the Drinking Gourd

“Follow the Drinking Gourd” is a African American folk song that describes a route to freedom in the north for escaping enslaved people in the antebellum south. The most common modern version describes a path to be taken in spring (“When the sun comes back / and the first quail calls”) led by an old man with a peg leg (possibly a former sailor) using a river as a road to disguise their travels.¹⁸ The phrase “Follow the Drinking Gourd” is repeated in the verses and the chorus and refers to the constellation Ursa Major, also known as the Big Dipper. This constellation is fairly easy to find, and points toward Polaris, the North Star; if one walks towards Polaris, one will be heading north.

There are some logical inconsistencies in the modern version of this song. First, the modern lyrics were written in 1947 by Lee Hays and were unlikely to be the actual lyrics used by escaping slaves, assuming the song itself predates the Civil War. Second, in the Deep South, slaves often escaped to the West and south to Mexico, not to the North. Escaping to the North was popular in border states. Additionally, the modern lyrics are both too vague (“The dead trees show the way / ... The river ends between two hills”)¹⁹ and references to a specific “ole man”²⁰ waiting for the escaped enslaved people is unlikely. Thirdly, scholarly documentation about pre-1947 versions often include the disclaimer that there were more verses, but the person being interviewed does not remember them.²¹ However, as folklore does not need to be historically accurate to contain cultural knowledge, these historicity issues do not take away from the cultural importance of the song.

Example Myth: Ananasi

Anansi the Spider is a character from West African folk tradition. He is sometimes characterized as a god, and sometimes as a mortal trickster. He is sometimes a spider, sometimes a man, and sometimes both. His stories seem to have survived the Middle Passage because “Anansi is the spirit of rebellion; he is able to overturn the social order; he can marry the Kings' daughter, create wealth out of thin air; baffle the Devil and cheat Death. Even if Anansi loses in one story, you know that he will overcome in the next. For an oppressed people Anansi conveyed a simple message from one generation to the next:--that freedom and dignity are worth fighting for, at any odds.”²² Like Brer Rabbit (see next section), Loki in Norse Mythology, or Coyote in Indigenous American mythology, Anansi uses tricks to achieve his goals. He often tricks his opponents by pretending to be stupid, which lulls his victims into a false sense of security. In the context of slavery, “skills used by Anansi to thwart his rivals were ones that slaves could use to their advantage in their daily lives.... to lower planters' expectations and reduce suspicion and watchfulness.”²³

In one story,²⁴ Anansi wins all the stories in the world from the previous god who owned them. The other god sets a series of tasks for Anansi to complete, including catching Snake alive. Anansi tricks Snake by flattering him (“You are much too clever... I tried to catch you, but I failed.”), then by lying about his goal, (“Now I can never prove that you are the longest animal in the world, longer even than the bamboo tree.”) Anansi tricks Snake into stretching along a bamboo branch and ties him up, and can then bring him to the other god alive.²⁵

On a plantation, the enslaved people would use Anansi-style tactics to “decrease Massa’s income, find food, and avoid work.”²⁶ By spying, stealing, working slowly, avoiding work, breaking things, and generally acting foolish, the enslaved took a little power away from the masters. Given that popular thought among slaveholders at the time was that enslaved Africans were “savage animals in need of training,”²⁷ biblically cursed and “too barbaric to be converted [because they] were savage to the soul,”²⁸ and literally not-quite-human,²⁹ it was easy for the enslavers to believe that their human property was actually just that stupid. In a system where they had almost no power or control over their lives, enslaved people passed on Anansi stories as a coded way to spread rebellion against their masters.

Example Myth: Brer Rabbit

Brer Rabbit first became popular in the United States through author Joel Chandler Harris’s newspaper column in the *Atlanta Constitution*, but these stories have deep roots in West African tradition. Trickster characters, especially hares, are common among traditional storytelling in West, Central, and Southern Africa. This character is often conflated with Anansi stories from the Akan people, especially in Jamaica.³⁰ Included in the bibliography are examples of public domain stories from Harris’s books (*Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*; *Uncle Remus and His Friends: Old Plantation Stories, Songs, and Ballads with Sketches of Negro Character*; and *Nights with Uncle Remus*) as well as a modern online children’s storybook (“Hare and Hyena”) and George M. Theal’s book on folklore in South Africa, *Kaffir³¹ Folk-Lore: A Selection of Traditional Tales Current Among the People Living on the Eastern Border of the Cape Colony with Copious Explanatory Notes*.

Joel Chandler Harris (1848-1908) was born in Georgia to an unwed Irish immigrant mother who worked as a seamstress to support herself and her son. Harris's school tuition was paid for by a local doctor, and he excelled at reading and writing, but quit school at 14 due in part to his insecurity about his red hair, Irish ancestry, and illegitimacy. He became an apprentice to Joseph Addison Turner, owner of *The Countryman* Confederate newspaper, and worked for clothes, room, and board on the Turner plantation.³²

In his free time, Harris spent time reading Turner's extensive library and listening to stories from Uncle George Terrell, Old Harbert, and Aunt Crissy, enslaved elders of the plantation.³³ These storytellers were both role models for Harris and the basis of his Uncle Remus character. Harris later worked at *The Atlanta Constitution* newspaper from 1876 to 1900. As an editor and journalist, he supported the New South, a vision of regional and racial reconciliation after Reconstruction.

In the introduction to *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*, Harris wrote that "A number of the plantation legends originally appeared in ... The Atlanta Constitution- and in that shape they attracted the attention of various gentlemen who were kind enough to suggest that they would prove to be valuable contributions to myth-literature."³⁴ He acknowledged that "few Negroes ... will acknowledge to a stranger that they know anything of these legends; and yet to relate one of the stories is the surest road to their confidence and esteem,"³⁵ and that his familiarity with plantation life was what had allowed him to collect these stories.

Harris's race has been a controversial issue surrounding his Uncle Remus stories almost since publication. According to Mark Twain, when Harris visited him, he "deeply disappointed a number of children who had flocked eagerly to ... glimpse [the] illustrious sage and oracle of the nation's nurseries. [When they saw him,] They said: 'Why, he's white!' They were grieved about it."³⁶ The children had assumed that the author of the Uncle Remus stories was black. Similarly, in 1981, *The Color Purple* author Alice Walker claimed Harris "stole a good part of [her] heritage"³⁷ by profiting from black folktales as a white man. Likewise, when Julius Lester rewrote the Brer Rabbit stories, he removed Uncle Remus, and therefore changed "the focus from fictional stereotyped storyteller to rebellious trickster hero, Brer Rabbit, and the tales themselves... Lester's collection participates in the work of Black storytellers who resist retellings of Black folklore, predominantly written by White adaptors, that cater to White audiences."³⁸

Conversely, Robert Cochran argues in his article "Black Father: The Subversive Achievement of Joel Chandler Harris" that Harris's book filled a gap, as it allowed everyone, including African Americans, to share these stories with their children, spreading "the wit and wisdom he heard at the knee of George Terrell and Harbet are passed onto a new generation by mothers reading to their children."³⁹ He further argues that Harris did not steal the stories- they were given to him as he sat and listened to the enslaved storytellers on the Turner plantation. He was a teenager, still a child in many ways, when "he sat at the feet of the black men who became his models for Uncle Remus... His evenings listening to George Terrell and Harbert were absolutely critical formative experiences; such scenes were what he knew of childhood. These wise men were in the deepest sense (emotionally, spiritually, culturally) his fathers... [He] was both nourished as a child and trained as an artist by black storytellers who were in turn both mentors and fathers to a boy"⁴⁰ Harris cannot have stolen these stories if they were given to him oral, just as they have been passed down for generations.

Likewise, in his book *Going to the Territory*, Ralph Ellison described his childhood segregated school system's annual May Day celebrations:

On May Day children from all the Negro schools were assembled... we competed in wrapping

dozens of maypoles and engaged in the mass dancing of a variety of European folk dances... there were those who found the sight of young Negroes dancing European folk dances absurd, if not comic, but their prejudiced eyes missed the point of the exercise in democratic education. For in learning such dances, we were gaining an appreciation of the backgrounds and cultures of our fellow Americans whose backgrounds lay in Europe. And not only did it narrow the psychological distance between them and ourselves, but we saw learning their dances as an artistic challenge. And while there were those who thought that we were stepping out of the role assigned Negroes and were expressing a desire to become white, we ignored them. For we know that dancing such dances would no more alter our racial identity or social status than would our singing of Bach chorales... we were being introduced to one of the most precious of American freedoms, which is our freedom to broaden our personal culture by absorbing the cultures of others.⁴¹

Ellison believes that interacting with cultures other than our own is an American experience, and that in a country with so many cultures, people who learn from other backgrounds than their own benefit the most. Later in the same chapter, he aligns Uncle Remus with Aesop as literary teachers that “taught us that comedy is a disguised form of philosophical instruction; and especially when it allows us to glimpse the animal instincts lying beneath the surface of our civilized affectations.”⁴²

In summation, the debate over Harris’s right to record and profit from the Brer Rabbit stories has raged since they were first published. Many writers and scholars, black and white, have been divided over the issue. Is it cultural appropriation or appreciation? Who has the right to tell which stories? In class debate and discussion of this topic should be deep and insightful, and lead students to more nuanced discussions in the future.

Lesson 1: Myths & Legends

Essential Questions:

- What are myths/legends/fairy tales?
- Why do they matter?
- What do they tell us?

Background for Teachers:

Myth v Legend v Religion: What is a myth? Myths generally answer very big, existential questions about life, the universe, and everything. They don’t have to be true to have truth; the lesson or moral at the end is the truth being passed to the listener- it does not matter if the events of the story are factually accurate. In fact, myths are often fantastical and part of a current or past religious tradition, and therefore likely to not be a historical account of the past.

While Freud believed that societies move from orality to literacy as they developed, like children growing into adults, this attitude betrays the colonizer mindset of his time. Many societies throughout history have lacked the written word and yet built complex societal laws, histories, and mythologies. Before the invention of the printing press, most of the world was functionally illiterate, even if the elites were literate.

There is a strong connection between orality, remembering information across time through verbal transmission, and the use of song, rhythm, humor, and visuals to aid that memory. Examples in this unit include the songs about La Llorona and the Drinking Gourd; other examples include cultural practices like prayer beads used to keep track of specific parts of a cycle of prayers.

Orality v Written Stories: “Orality, by definition, deals with societies which do not use any form of phonetic writing... The relation between an individual and his society is acoustic, between himself and his tradition, his law, his government.”⁴⁵ In an oral tradition culture, all cultural information must be passed down and remembered. “Such language has to be memorized. There is no other way of guaranteeing its survival. Ritualization becomes the means to memorization. The memories are personal, belonging to every man, woman, and child in the community, yet their content, the language preserved, is communal, something shared by the community as expressing its tradition and its historical identity.”⁴⁶ This idea can lead into the discussion of students’ schema about cultural norms, etc.

Class Activities:

- Establish norms for discussing religious/spiritual beliefs other than one’s own with respect
- Connect to schema re: fairy tales/legends/bedtime stories from childhood, schoolyard rhymes, mysterious things we “just know” like the S symbol, Miss Mary Mack, etc.

Lesson 2: Music

Essential Questions:

- How do people encode cultural information in song?
- Why would people still sing these songs after the information becomes irrelevant?
- Does cultural information ever really become irrelevant?

Background for Teachers:

- Text choices: La Llorona, Follow the Drinking Gourd (see bibliography for sources)

Class Activities:

- Listen to the song(s) one time, just absorbing the sounds and message orally.
- Listen again, annotating a copy of the lyrics (translated if necessary) with questions, thoughts, etc.
- Read a prose version of this story.
 - There is a video of a prose version of Follow the Drinking Gourd in the Bibliography from Reading Rainbow.
 - There are multiple versions of La Llorona in prose in the bibliography.
- Discussion: What is the message of the song? Why did people sing this? Is this information still relevant today? (La Llorona as song during the Mexican Revolution v the legend version; Follow the Drinking Gourd’s lyrics)

Lesson 3: Cultural Appropriation vs. Appreciation

Essential Questions:

- What is cultural appropriation?
- Who can tell what stories?
- How does being an outsider to a culture change/bias/influence how a story is told?

Background for Teachers:

- Text choices: Brer Rabbit, La Llorona

Class Activities:

- La Llorona: Compare textual and musical versions, especially those found in "La Llorona in juvenile hall". Discuss La Llorona's pop culture appearance in mainstream American media, e.g. *Supernatural* S01E01, *Grimm* S02E09, *The Curse of La Llorona* (2019), *Coco* (2017).
- Brer Rabbit: Read selections of Brer Rabbit/Hare stories & compare the plots/archetypes/themes/moral across multiple accounts. Read biography of Joel Chandler Harris & discuss the appropriateness of his authorship. (Compare with Theal in South Africa & Enid Blyton in UK)
 - Suggested stories:
 - "XVII Mr. Rabbit Nibbles Up The Butter" (Harris 1921, 81-87)
 - "Story of the Hare" (Theal 1886, 178-185)
 - "Brer Rabbit and the Butter" (Blyton 2016, 144-149)

XVII Mr. Rabbit Nibbles Up The Butter⁴³ (Edited by Jessie Piper into Standard English)

Uncle Remus told the boy a story:

Brer Rabbit, Brer Fox, and Brer Possum have put provisions together in the same shanty, but the roof has begun to leak. The three animals get together to work on patching the roof one day, and place all their food in the springhouse to keep them cool. Brer Rabbit, stomach growling, decides to go steal some of Brer Fox's butter. He stops working, raising his ear, and claims to hear someone calling him from far away. He jumps down, goes to the springhouse, and eats some butter before returning to work. He tells Brer Fox that his children called him home, because his wife has taken ill. A little while later, he repeats the act, jumps down, eats more butter, and says his wife has gotten worse. He does it again, a third time, and eats all the butter. When he returns, Brer Fox asks after Mrs. Rabbit, and Brer Rabbit says that she has died. Brer Fox and Brer Possum sympathize and they keep working until dinner, when Brer Fox and Brer Possum try to cheer Brer Rabbit up. Brer Fox sends Brer Possum to fetch the butter from the springhouse, but Brer Possum returns empty handed. Brer Rabbit, looking solemn, says he suspects that the butter did not dry up, as Brer Possum suggested, but instead melted in someone's mouth.

They all go up to the springhouse, Brer Rabbit says he sees tracks all around, and if they all go to sleep, he can catch the butter thief. As Brer Fox and Brer Possum drift off to sleep, Brer Rabbit stays up. He smears butter from his paws on Brer Possum's mouth, goes off to eat the dinner that Brer Fox was setting up, then comes back to wake up Brer Fox and frame Brer Possum. Brer Fox argues that Brer Possum, who denies stealing the butter, was the first one to the springhouse, and the first to report the butter missing, and it's on his face! Brer Possum, seeing he has been backed into a corner, proposes a solution: build a big brush pile, set

it on fire, and each of them will try to jump over it- the one who falls in is the butter thief. Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox agree, and they build the big pile and light it on fire. Brer Rabbit jumps over the fire like a bird in flight. Brer Fox jumps over but the end of his tail catches fire.

Uncle Remus asked the boy if he's seen a fox, and isn't the end of his tail white? That's the scar of the brushfire- they are marked. The boys asked about Brer Possum.

Brer Possum runs back, takes a big jump, and lands right in the fire and dies.

The boy protested that Brer Possum didn't steal the butter- the punishment is unjust. Uncle Remus tells the moral: "In this world, lots of folks have got to suffer for other folks' sins. Looks like it's mighty wrong; but it's just that way. Tribulation seems like she's waiting round the corner to catch one and all of us, honey."

Lesson 4: Indigenous Religion & Christianity

Essential Questions:

- How have indigenous religious figures interacted with the religious values of the colonizer (specifically Christianity)?

Background for Teachers:

- Text choices: La Santa Muerte, Anansi, Los duendes

Class Activities:

- Anansi: Examine how Anansi has changed from a god, in a West African pantheon, to a folktale figure and anti-slavery folk hero- how Anansi stopped being a god and became a role model for resisting slavery.
- La Santa Muerte: Examine how La Santa Muerte compares to indigenous Mesoamerican goddesses and how the Catholic church has pushed back against her worship as part of Catholic practice. How and why has she become associated with the cartels & other "undesirable" parts of society?
- Los duendes: Examine how los duendes reflect European archetypes like elves/gnomes/fairies etc. How do they intersect with Christianity?

Lesson 5: Project Time and Presentation of Projects

Background for Teachers:

- Suggested in class time for working on projects: 2 90 minute blocks or equivalent
- Suggested presentation method for students is a roundtable presentation. Small classes may only have one group; ideal group size is 4-6 students with an adult facilitator. Example Roundtable procedures below.

Class Activities:

- Project:
 - Students chose 1 myth. Students artistically represent how their chosen myth has changed & evolved over time and space. Has it traveled along slave trade routes? Has it spread through immigration? How does it compare to similar myths in other parts of the world? Have the themes/morals changed over time?
- Presentation of Projects

Example of Roundtable Procedure/Worksheet

Audience Member Roundtable Checklist

(Fill out one per presenter)

Opening

__ Student introduces general topic

__ Student explains how their myth changed over time and/or space.

Sources and Evidence

__ Student shares one of her/his sources. The student shares how this source helped them support their claim.

__ Student shares a second source. The student shares how this source helped them support their claim.

__ Student shares how she/he knew at least one of their sources was reliable and credible.

Conclusions and Reflections

__ Student reflects on success and struggles in the researching or writing process.

__ Student reflects on how this assignment will help him or her in the future.

__ Student shares reflection on ONE of the 21st Century Skills

__ *Exemplary* Student shares BOTH reflections on 21st Century Skills

Potential Follow Up Questions

- Why did you choose this particular topic?
- Why do you think it is important that people (students and adults) know about this topic?
- Did you know anything about this topic before doing your research?
- Did you find the research process to be easy or difficult? Why?
- Did you find the creative process to be easy or difficult? Why?
- How did you know you were using reliable sources?
- What has this task or skill helped you learn about yourself or the world around you?
- Do you think you will continue learning about this topic? Why or why not?
- Were you surprised about anything when you learned about this topic?

Please rate this student using the 21st Century Rubric for the Communication & Collaboration.

| Communication and collaboration: Articulate ideas clearly and effectively to a variety of audiences using multiple modes | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Exemplary 5 | Competent 4 | Emerging 3 | Novice 2 |
| Skillfully articulates information and ideas in a clear, concise and complete manner. Communicates effectively to diverse audiences using multiple methods. | Articulates information and ideas clearly using multiple methods. Recognizes multiple perspectives and modifies communication to suit audience. | Articulates key information and ideas in an organized way to a general audience. | Attempts to articulate some elements of information and ideas. |

Roundtable Procedures & Reflection (Complete individually)

Part One: Introduction & Myth

Introduce yourself

"The myth I researched was _____"

Explain how the earliest version of the myth, and how it changed over time and/or location.

Part Two: Choose two sources that you used to help support your claim. Then explain how each helped you answer your claim or how you used it in your counterclaim.

"The first source I used is an (article/video/infographic/other) titled:

_____ by

and published by _____.

I know it is reliable because _____
_____"

"Another source I used is an (article/video/infographic/other) titled:

_____ by

and published by _____.

I know it is reliable because _____
_____"

Part Three: Conclusions and Reflections - Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What do you think you did the best with on this assignment? Why do you feel that way?

2.What was the most challenging aspect of this assignment? What did you do to help overcome these challenges?

3.How do you think the experience of researching and writing this paper will prepare you for the future? [Think about other classes, college, having a job, being a good community member]

Share a reflection on ONE of the 21st century skills that you used to complete this process.

Exemplary element: Share BOTH of your 21st Century Skills reflections with your group.

Reflection of 21st Century Skills: In 2-3 Sentences, use the language from the rubric to rate yourself based on the Initiative, Self-Direction and Accountability rubric.

| Initiative, Self-Direction and Accountability: Manage time and resources to produce high quality results in a timely manner | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Exemplary 5 | Competent 4 | Emerging 3 | Novice 2 |
| Effectively manages time and resources to produce high quality results in a timely manner, while guiding and leading peers. | Manages time and resources to produce high quality results in a timely manner. | Demonstrates initial time management skills and produces a finished quality results. | Is aware of deadlines and takes initial steps towards producing results. |

I would say that I am (*novice/emerging/competent/exemplary*) in Initiative, Self-direction and Accountability because I : .

As you continue to work on independent projects, what steps can you take to improve on your self-direction

and initiative?

| Accessing and Analyzing Information: Use research tools to access and evaluate information from multiple sources | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Exemplary 5 | Competent 4 | Emerging 3 | Novice 2 |
| Comparatively evaluates information sources using consistent, objective criteria specific to research goal. Accesses multiple sources of related and connected information. | Uses carefully selected search techniques. Evaluates multiple information sources using consistent criteria. | Uses multiple sources to access relevant and non relevant information. | Uses research tools to access information. |

Based on the Accessing and Analyzing Information rubric, I would say that I am

(*novice/emerging/competent/exemplary*) in Accessing and Analyzing Information because:

How did this project improve your research skills?

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Appendix on Implementing District Standards

Relevant Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks:

- INQ 9–12.6 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- INQ 9–12.11 Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical)
- INQ 9–12.12 Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- INQ 9–12.15 Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.
- HIST 9–12.1 Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
- HIST 9–12.3 Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- HIST 9–12.4 Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives. (e.g., immigration, labor, the role of women).
- HIST 9–12.5 Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.
- HIST 9–12.6 Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.
- HIST 9–12.7 Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time

- GEO 9-12.1 Use maps and other geographic representations to analyze the relationships between the locations of places and their political, cultural, and economic history
- GEO 9-12.2 Evaluate the impact of human activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of the various places and regions in the United States
- GEO 9-12.3 Evaluate the impact of economic activities, political decisions, cultural practices, and climate variability on human migration, resource use, and settlement patterns

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