



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1991 Volume IV: Recent American Poetry: Expanding the Canon

Spanish-American Voices in American Poetry

Guide for Curriculum Unit 91.04.02
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The objective of this unit is to expose students to poetry written by Hispanic writers. My purpose is to develop discussion and inspire creative poetry writing in Spanish, English or both languages. This unit will be presented to an eighth-grade language class. All the poems which I have selected are available in English translations. This unit consists of two parts; the first part gives an overview of Spanish-American poetry and studies poems by the Spanish writer Federico Garcia Lorca and the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. The second part studies the poetry of several Nuyorican poets who write in English, Spanish and sometimes "Spanglish." In both parts of the unit the poems are studied for their musicality, content, and style. The poetry which I have selected will promote discussion, develop vocabulary and inspire writing. The themes of the poems for this introduction of the student to poetry are universal in nature, and cover a variety of topics which the students will be able to recognize as part of their everyday experiences. The second part of this unit is intended for students who, like the writers themselves, are second generation Puerto Ricans. The students will be exposed to poetry they would not be familiar with in their traditional English classes. It is a poetry of denunciation of social injustices, but is also a poetry of celebration of Puerto Rican life and culture; it will allow the students to identify with and feel pride in their cultural heritage. I recommend this unit for middle and upper Spanish, bilingual classes and classes where the teachers wish to expose students to the poetry of Hispanic writers.

(Recommended for Spanish, English and Bilingual, Middle and High School)

Key Words

Bilingualism Poetry Spanish English Puerto Rico Cuban Latin America Literature Hispanic Rican

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