



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1995 Volume II: Film and Literature

Lincoln, Douglass and Black Emergence: Literature and Politics, 1840- 1865

Guide for Curriculum Unit 95.02.06
by Michael S. Guzzio

The New Haven school system is currently stressing the need for both cultural diversity and interdisciplinary teaching in the classroom. This curriculum unit will attempt to combine these two goals. It will also stress the citywide English Department goal of involving the students more fully in the reading and writing process.

The multicultural aspect of this unit will involve an understanding of the relationship of blacks and whites from the late slavery period to the Civil War. Specifically, this relationship will be analyzed in the writings of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, leaders of their respective races.

The interdisciplinary concept will be employed by combining history (especially politics), American literature, and film in the curriculum unit. Within the historical context of the period chosen (1840-1865), the unit will have the students analyze and participate in understanding the power of the written word to influence and even inspire political action and historical events. Students will read and analyze the political writings of the time and see how the written word was transformed into political reality.

This paper is the result of a class taken entitled "Literature and Film." Film, therefore, plays an important role in this unit. The culmination of the unit is the viewing and analysis of the Civil War epic, "Glory." The film serves as a visual reinforcement of the unit's theme that literature can influence politics and history.

Reading and writing will take place as students read the literature, watch the films, and then offer their analyses and opinions on the issues. By these means, it is hoped that students will not stand outside of literature and history, but realize that the relationship between literature and history is a deep and ongoing process of which they are a part.

(English or History, grades 11-12)

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>