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Making Meaning of May 4 **K-12 Teaching Plan**

Name of Educator: Thomas D'Ambrosio

Educator's Teaching Plan Number & Title: Project 42, "NEH Making Meaning of May 4 1970: Pedagogy Project"

Level of Students for Educator's Teaching Plan: Grades 9-10

Subject Area for Educator's Teaching Plan: Information Literacy, Research Skills and Methods

Educator's State: New York

Description of Educator's Teaching Plan: Students see the lasting positive change resulting from student protest movements—with a few examples being the Voting Rights and Fair Housing Acts and diverse faculty across the country—while understanding that significant obstacles remain today to civil rights and many forms of equality. Sources incl.: *The War at Home*; *The Fog of War*; *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Topics incl.: draft—lottery/end; Dow Chemical protests; successes and failures; *arrogance of power*.

This educational teaching plan was developed during Kent State University's Summer 2021 workshop titled Making Meaning of May 4: The 1970 Kent State Shootings in US History. The workshop was supported by Kent State and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant program titled *Landmarks of American History and Culture: Workshops for School Teachers*.

This teaching plan is shared to promote understanding of the Kent State shootings on May 4, 1970; enhance humanities education across the disciplines; and illustrate the meaning of May 4 for today.

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NEH Making Meaning of May 4, 1970 Pedagogy Project

Introduction/Overview/Unit Rationale

The impact of the Vietnam War student protests had lasting effects on US society. I will attempt to show how resistance to the war not only raised demands and expectations for a more peaceful and just society, but resulted in The Voting Rights Act, The Fair Housing Act, the first African American woman running for president, a more diverse faculty on university campuses, the addition of Women's, African American and Chicano studies departments across the nation, the voting age being lowered to 18, and the end of the military draft. Even though progress was made towards a more liberal and open democratic society in the 1960s, significant obstacles to civil rights, gender, wealth, and racial equality continued from the 1970s to the present day.

Theme of Course: Protest and Social Change in US History During the 1960s

Theme Related to NEH Making Meaning of May 4, 1970: The Kent State Shootings in the Arc of US History

Unit Goals:

Students will learn that protest takes many forms and does not always realize objectives in the immediate term.

Students will learn that social change often comes at a cost to others, and the beneficiaries are often future generations.

Students will learn the First Amendment does not protect them from punishment or state violence.

Students will learn that **structural change** is much more difficult than **incremental change**.

New York State High School Social Studies Standards:

11.9 COLD WAR (1945 – 1990): In the period following World War II, the United States entered into an extended era of international conflict called the Cold War which influenced foreign and domestic policy for more than 40 years.

(Standards: 1, 2, 3; Themes: TCC, GOV, ECON)

Students will examine reasons for declining public confidence in government, including America's involvement in Vietnam, student protests, the growing antiwar movement, and the Watergate affair.

Technological Needs

Laptop Computer or Chrome Book

Smartboard for Presentation of Videos

Learning Platform (Google Classroom, Blackboard, Moodle)

Materials Needed to Complete the Unit

DVD's of the films *The War at Home*, *Fire in the Heartland* and *The Fog of War*

LESSON SCHEDULE

Day 1 A History of the US Military Conscription

Begin with a few discussion questions: How Does America fight wars? What should the role be of citizen participation in war? Would you go voluntarily, if drafted, or not at all? Why or why not?

View Selective Service and the World Wars PBS

<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/1d5ab4a0-486e-4aef-a262-bead4fa788bd/selective-service-and-the-world-wars-the-draft/> (4.56)

Vietnam: The Origins of the Conflict – The Draft

<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/fe89547e-78be-466b-8e73-dacf236c4fbf/vietnam-the-origins-of-the-conflict-the-draft/> (5.05)

Fault Lines: Economic and Racial Division in Vietnam-era America – The Draft

<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/25f04a9a-0cad-421b-92ad-39ce1b9f8ea7/fault-lines-economic-and-racial-divisions-in-vietnam-era-america-the-draft/> (7.22)

Kahoot Quiz: In preparation for tomorrow's *Draft Lottery Exercise* students will do a Kahoot Quiz in class on the material they watched. The lower scores can be used as a sampler of how fair or unfair an academic ranking system could be for choosing soldiers for the military. You can point out the fact that women were not drafted to go to Vietnam, but fulfilled other support roles in the conflict, which could lead to a gender discussion that can be incorporated into some of the lessons later in the unit.

Homework

Read

The Vietnam Draft

<https://thevietnamwar.info/vietnam-war-draft/>

Day 2 The Vietnam War Draft Lottery

Start with the *Vietnam War Draft Lottery* exercise.

Have students describe how they feel about being called or not called? How would they react if they had to interrupt their future and go off to war? Is such a system ever justified, why or why not?

View Vietnam Draft Videos (4)

<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/9f9895cb-41c3-4b81-a573-b81a505bb019/a-different-kind-of-lottery-understanding-the-draft-during-the-vietnam-war-media-gallery/>

Each Video is about 2:30.

Activity Have students write a few sentences about these stories on index cards, and how they made an impact on their thinking about going to war. Ask “What were some of the more compelling points made in each interview”? **ASSESSMENT**

Homework:

Read

The Draft Debate

<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/42a2a14e-4ff5-439e-9bbf-95da2939045f/the-all-volunteer-force-todays-military-and-draft-debate-the-draft/>

Student Diary: Each student will start a diary either as a student preparing to go to the Vietnam War, or a student exempted from the Draft, based on the results of the earlier exercise. They will do this daily until the end of the unit. It will be part of the final **ASSESSMENT**.

Day 3 The Vietnam War and the 1960s and The Struggle for Civil Rights:

View *Fire in the Heartland* (Excerpt)

Think-Pair-Share Exercise. Have students sum up the main struggles of the 1960's, and explain why there was so much conflict between the government and its citizens. Then have students explain why attitudes have changed about the Vietnam War in some unexpected places:

“For the first 20 years, (Kent State administrators) did everything to bury (the memory of the shootings), and now they have moved toward embracing it.”

— THOMAS GRACE, AUTHOR OF KENT STATE: DEATH AND DISSENT IN THE LONG SIXTIES

Blog Exercise: Have students write a blog entry on the 60s student struggles and how they relate to today's issues. ASSESSMENT

Day 4 From Protest to Resistance: The Vietnam Protests at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

View *The War at Home* (Excerpts)

Letter Writing Exercise. Have students take notes on the Dow Chemical protest because they will be explaining their participation or non-involvement that day in those protests to their parents or other family members in the form of letter home from college, as would have been normal communication in the 1960s. ASSESSMENT

Day 5 The War at Home and the Struggles Ahead

Choose a few students to read their letters home explaining the Dow Chemical protest in Madison, Wisconsin in 1967 to their parents or other family members.

View *The War at Home* Commentary

https://www.democracynow.org/2018/12/28/the_war_at_home_1979_film

Homework:

Students will create and editorial in a newspaper on how “arrogance of power” often leads to disastrous consequences when making political decisions. Introduce the concept of “visibility” and “friction” and why those are important to any social movement. ASSESSMENT

Day 6 Looking Back

Choose several students to read the following article to the class:

The US Military Draft Ends

<https://www.politico.com/story/2012/01/us-military-draft-ends-jan-27-1973-072085>

View *The Fog of War* (Excerpts)

Student groups will discuss government failure, student protests, and how and when resistance and violence may impact social change in the United States.

“Get a Haircut and Get a Real Job” by George Thorogood and the Delaware Destroyers

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA3-InoYsWQ>]

Think-Pair-Share after listening to the song and have students compose their thoughts on index cards about whether the counterculture achieved a bittersweet victory by embracing some of the capitalist values it sought to overturn.

Day 7 Which Way Forward? What were the Successes and Failures of the 1960s?

Blog Writing Exercise. Students will reflect on the major mistaken assumptions about Vietnam by one of the main architects of the War after having viewed *The Fog of War*. Students will compose their thoughts on the successes and failures of the 1960s on a **blog** entitled ***Assessing Strategies for Social Change in the United States***. For reflection, images of the Vietnam War Memorial and students killed in various civil rights protests could be posted around the classroom. ASSESSMENT

Connection Plan to Local High School English Curriculum (Grade 9-10)

The Theme of COURAGE and Social Change – 30 Day Unit

(PROJECT BASED LEARNING UNIT based on TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD BY HARPER LEE).

Product is a PowerPoint Presentation on two individuals who displayed these traits.

My plan would be to insert a few lessons on how protest can effect social change. It would focus on how collective action helped their individual leaders create lasting change in society. Concepts discussed include but are not limited to: **friction, visibility, media and framing, and different historical political systems.**