

Putting American Civil Rights Movements into International Context July 2006

Grade Level: 9/10

Overview of the Learning Experience:

Events in America often occur within an international context. The American Civil Rights movement is a topic that demands more overt connection to the international movements of the time. These include PanAfricanism, (Marcus) Garveyism, and Rastafarianism. These movements and some of their leaders intersected with the American Civil Rights Movement (CRM). While high school history courses often cover the connection between the American Civil Rights Movement's nonviolent civil disobedience approach and the Gandhian principles of the Indian independence movement, they rarely connect the American CRM to the broader international social movement against European colonization that occurred from the 1920s through the postwar period in Africa. Also, they generally overlook or skim the topic of nonalignment, which relates to the drive for self-determination in post-colonial Africa. This module seeks to connect the American CRM to an array of anti-colonial independence movements of the 20th Century. **The module could be taught either within a 7th or 8th grade American History course or within a high school Global Studies course** The module as I have developed it here reflects its use for high school students who have had exposure to the American Civil Rights movement, but who may not be aware of the international connections of its leaders and philosophies, Thus, the module takes an international perspective first and foremost. It focuses on postwar nationalism and Africanism movements in countries such as Ethiopia, Liberia, and Ghana, and makes connections with the American Civil Rights Movement. This approach allows students to place an important American history period within a more global context.

- Placement Within the Curriculum: Within the New York State 7/8 United States History curriculum, this module might be placed within Unit 11: The Changing Nature of the American People from World War II to the Present. Within the 9/10 Global Studies curriculum it might be placed within Unit 7: The 20th Century Since 1945, and in particular in the section that addressed PanAfricanism (although the module will trace the connections to even earlier periods such the emancipation movement). The module will be tested within the private school curriculum of Poughkeepsie Day School's 9th and 10th grade Social and Cultural Anthropology course.
- Goals and Objectives (Students will be able to):
 - Recall previously learned information about African American slavery condition, and freedom movements (The Civil Rights Movement and to a lesser extent, the emancipation movement).
 - Identify the underlying cause of inequalities experienced by African Americans – i.e., the root goal of free or cheap labor/economic exploitation.
 - Identify the essential goals behind the anti-slavery and Civil Rights Movements (social, economic, and political equality and enfranchisement)
 - Recognize the major colonial and anti-colonial/independence events and geographies occurring in Africa primarily in the 19th and 20th centuries, including: 1) the slave trade, 2) the scramble for Africa, 3) the establishment of Liberia, 4) decolonization, 5) the Italo-Ethiopian War, and 4) the independence of Ghana.
 - Recognize some of the major players involved with both the African American independence movements and the anti-European African/Indian independence movement, including: Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, Haile Selassie, M. Gandhi, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.
 - Investigate the philosophy of Ethiopianism and its evolution into PanAfricanism and its various renditions (Garveyism and Rastafarianism).
 - Investigate the international philosophical influences upon MLK Jr. (e.g, Gandhi's passive resistance concept) and Malcolm X (Pan Africanist separatism/Ethiopianism/nonalignment)
 - Analyze the points of intersection and divergence between the American and African experiences.
- New York State Social Studies Learning Standards Addressed and Performance Indicators Assessed
 - Standard 1: History of the United States and New YorkStudents will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York

- Standard 2: World History

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives

- Standard 3: Geography

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live – local, national and global – including the distribution of peoples, places and environments over the Earth’s surface.

Essential Question(s):

- To what extent is the struggle for human rights universal?
- How does the African-American relationship with European-Americans parallel the African-European relationship in the imperial era?
- In what ways do the African American freedom movements, particularly the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, intersect with the African independence movements of the 19th and 20th centuries?

Time Allotment (classroom time):

- Three class periods (Poughkeepsie Day School uses block scheduling, so this equates to six 45-minute class periods).

Vocabulary (key terms):

- Triangle trade/slave trade
- Economic exploitation
- African diaspora
- Ethiopianism
- PanAfricanism
- Garveyism
- Rastafarianism
- Anti-colonialism
- Emancipation
- Abolition
- Scramble for Africa
- Separatism
- Passive resistance/civil disobedience
- Non-alignment movement
- Civil Rights Movement 1954-1968
- Locations: Liberia, Ethiopia, Ghana
- Organizations: American Anti-Slavery Society, Organization for African Unity, American Negro Academy
- Individuals: Frederick Douglass, Alexander Crummel, W.E.B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, Haile Selassie, M. Gandhi, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.

Materials/Resources: (Please include all documents containing directions for students)

- What materials/resources are needed by students
 - Readings:
 - A) The class will read two handouts –
 - 1) Brunelle, G. 2004? The World Economy and Colonial Expansion, pp 461-474 in *Encyclopedia of European Social History: From 1350-2000, vol 1*, ed. P. Stearns., Detroit: Charles Scribner ad Sons.
 - 2) Meriwether, J. 2000. Introduction in *Proudly we can be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
 - B) Teams will access their own online research materials for their presentations on day three of the lesson plan.
 - No special materials are required for challenged or gifted learners students are assessed based on their own abilities rather than in comparison to each other. Some students may require extra help to get through readings, but this would not require special materials (only more one-on-one teacher/student time).

- What materials/resources are needed by teachers?
 - Internet access, access to a photocopier, reading handouts

Procedure:

This module includes 3 lessons in a block schedule setting (the equivalent of six 45-minute sessions in a traditional setting)

Lesson One: Recall of African-American Experiences

In this lesson, the students will recall and share existing knowledge about the American anti-slavery movement and to a greater degree, the American Civil Rights Movement

1) Writing to recall and generate ideas for discussion. (20 minutes)

The teacher should tell students that they are going to do some silent writing and that the class will then discuss the ideas generated by the writing exercise. Students should write in their notebooks, starting with a fresh page so that it can be torn out and handed in.

- Students will be asked to write for 5 minutes about what they believe were the goals of the Civil Rights Movement and then to generate a list the major events, players, and places
- Once the students have completed their writing, the teacher should ask that they not speak but immediately begin another writing stint, this time about what they believe to be the purpose of slavery and the goals of the abolition/anti-slavery movement in America. They should again generate a list of names, events, dates, and places associated with this topic.
- When they are done, students should begin the third and final stint of writing. This time, they should write about their impressions of the present-day circumstances of African Americans. Were the goals of the anti-slavery movement and/or civil rights movements achieved in their view (why/why not)?

2) Discussion of ideas and brief re-emersion into the history of slavery, emancipation, and the civil rights movements (50 minutes) This exercise works best if students are sitting in a circle format or in another formation that allows them to look at each other and converse. Poughkeepsie Day School uses conference tables (possible with classes of about 15 students).

- The teacher will ask students to share one of their three writing samples (their choice). They may either read it directly or summarize the ideas.
- Discussion should raise some of the basic concepts and important people, places and events of the African American experience. The teacher should ensure that the “3 E’s” -- economic exploitation, equality, and enfranchisement -- are put on the board and reviewed if they have not been explicitly identified in discussion.
- Assuming that students may have limited recall of civil rights movement history, and thus write about only a few people and events, the teacher may wish to jog memories by accessing websites with information about the history of slavery, anti-slavery and the ACRM. The classroom will need an overhead projector with capacity to project internet data. A good websites for slavery and abolitionism information is: <http://www.liu.edu/cwis/CWP/library/aaslavy.htm> A good website for ACRM information is: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/timeline/civil_01.html
- The teacher may wish to comment on the continuities raised in the writing – for example that the same concerns and goals seem to be at the heart of the African American experience in all three time periods (mid 19th century, mid 20th century, and today)

3) Segue to Exploration of The African Experience (20 minutes)

- The goal of the writing and discussion exercises above is to set the stage for students to recognize parallels between the African American and African experiences under white rule and the resistance movements that emerged. The teacher may wish to mention that there is often a focus on the divergent approaches of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X with respect to gaining ground for blacks and that each of these individuals gained inspiration from a different philosophical approach rooted in a different international context. King was influenced by Gandhi’s nonviolent or passive resistance approach (expand upon what that means) within the context of the Indian independence movement, while Malcolm X was more influenced by the philosophy of separatism (again, explain) associated with African independence from various European powers in the early to mid 20th Century. This commentary focuses student attention on the two icons of the ACRM with which they are likely most familiar and gives them a tantalizing piece of new information in the form of connecting these individuals to the international context of emancipation from oppressing forces (European imperialists) that is often ignored in studies of the AMCR.

Homework: Students will write follow-up commentaries of 1-2 paragraphs each to their in-class writing pieces in which they add new ideas based on what they learned in class. They will also read a general piece on European expansionism (which includes a section on Africa). This is the piece by Gayle Brunelle listed under “Materials”.

Lesson Two: The History of African-European Relations

This lesson begins with a lecture providing both a review of information about the African slave trade/triangle trade, its geography and general history, and an introduction to the subsequent period of European intervention, known as the Scramble for Africa in the late 19th Century. It then provides the students with a chance to do team research on aspects of the African anti-colonial movements and their intersection with the African American freedom/rights movements.

1) Lecture/Discussion: an introduction to the international context and specifically the history of African (and to a lesser extent Indian) Europeanization/colonization and decolonization (as discussed in their homework reading). The purpose of this lecture is to provide factual information about the African experience and then encourage students to identify parallels in the African European imperialism relationship and African-American – European-American slavery relationship. (one hour)

- The Slave Trade and early Imperialism/Age of Exploration: this discussion uses terms placed on the board as well as projected maps and statistics to introduce or remind students of the history of the exploitative European-African relationship. Terms to place on the board include: African slave trade, or synonyms such as transatlantic trade or triangular trade, middle passage. Maps and statistics on the transatlantic slave trade (to project on a classroom screen) may be found at: <http://africanhistory.about.com/library/bl/bl-slavery-stats4.htm>
- The Scramble for Africa: this discussion also uses internet maps to convey the speed and extent of the European colonization of Africa in the in the late 19th century. A map of Africa in 1914 (after the division of the continent) can be found at <http://www.saburchill.com/history/chapters/empires/0053.html> Points to emphasize are that this was in general at the end of a long period of colonization by European powers and that the specific goals are debatable but the general purpose was economic (extraction of metals and other resources, use of cheap labor to achieve extraction). Note that the map shows that only one area is not colonized. Ask students to identify this “white spot” – Ethiopia and to speculate as to why this escaped colonization. A search of ‘Ethiopian history’ online will turn up numerous explanatory sources.

2) Student Research: Students will work in teams to explore the philosophies, people, and events associated with the African and African-American freedom movements. Teams will be assigned to research groups of concepts that relate to a piece of the puzzle. Ultimately, teams will present their findings and the class should see that there are connections between topics. Students will work in groups of 3 (this will allow for 5 groups in a typical Poughkeepsie Day School classroom). If there are more students in a classroom (say 25), teachers can create more groups and some can research the same concepts

Instructions to students: You will have 45 minutes to research and prepare a presentation of main points around your “concept groupings.” You will need to 1) identify the concepts provided 2) be able to articulately explain their significance within the context of the overall topic (African and African-American oppression) and 3) connect the concepts to each other diagrammatically on the board (with accompanying explanation). You may use laptops or access documents at the school library.

Team One: concept group = Fredrick Douglass, Alexander Crummel, Martin R. Delaney

Team Two: concept group = W.E.B. Dubois, Pan Africanism, Malcolm X

Team Three: concept group = Italo-Ethiopian war, Ethiopianism, Haile Selassie,

Team Four: concept group = Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana, Organization for African Unity

Team Five: concept group = Garveyism, Rastafarianism, Burning Spear 1975 album “Marcus Garvey”

The teacher should circulate throughout the room while the students are engaged in research.

After about 45 minutes, the teams will wrap up their research and collect their reading for the following day

Homework will be to read the Meriwether piece (the introduction from Proudly we can be Africans) and to select a representative section (1-2 paragraphs to read) if possible that they feel reflects the ideas or people they have been researching. They are responsible for the content of the entire reading but should focus on finding something of

relevance to their team presentation so that they can refer to it specifically when presenting their ideas to the class. If they did not progress in their research, students should do more research tonight.

Lesson Three: Presenting and Analyzing the Parallels and Connections: The African and African-American Experiences.

1) Student Team Presentations and Construction of a Comprehensive “Concept” Diagram

Each team will reconvene for 20 minutes to review their research findings and prepare their presentations according to the guidelines below.

The goal of the class presentations is to share their research and collectively begin to build a bigger picture of the movements. Guidelines for the presentations are:

1. Groups should place their concepts (people, terms, places...whatever their team was assigned) on the board and should connect them to each other with arrows that are labeled to show how they connect.
2. Students will explain their concept diagram. Ideally each student will be assigned one concept and will explain it and its connection to the next concept.
3. Students should present their excerpt from the homework reading – read it and explain how it reflects or connects to their research.
4. Students should clearly explain their sense of how this concept grouping fits into the theme of parallels or connections between the ACRM and international movements. (approximately 10 minutes per team).

The teacher should facilitate an understanding of the continuities across time and place of the African and African American experiences by asking students to connect their concepts (visually, using arrows) to the previous group’s concept diagram. In this way a large diagram of interconnected concepts should develop. This exercise will require a large board and will be ongoing as presentations progress. To be most effective, students will require a 5 minute break after several of the presentations.

2) Discussion of the comprehensive diagram in terms of the trends/parallels and intersections (African-American and African experiences).

3) Close by presenting a summary homework assignment – an essay that asks students to process concepts further by writing a short (2-3- page typed) commentary. See details below under “Assessment”.

Assessment:

Lesson One: In-class writing exercise and follow up commentaries.

Lesson Two: team activities: evaluation of student research and teamwork. The actual evaluation will be incorporated into the narratives about team presentations (below)

Lesson Three: team presentations and wrap-up essay

- Student presentations will be evaluated based on accuracy and thoroughness of concept explanations, ability to show how the concepts relate, and general organization and clarity. In non-graded environments (such as Poughkeepsie Day School), teams will be provided with written assessments of their work.
- Individual evaluations will be based on observation of student participation throughout the three-day lesson and on a culminating essay. The student essay question will be: *The pursuit of civil rights by and for dark skinned people of the world has been ongoing and ubiquitous. Do you believe it should be described as a single global movement or as two distinguishable movements – one based in Africa and the other in the United States? Explain using reference to specific people, places, and events.*