

American Studies Summer Work 2020

Google Code: chvacqw

Text Book Link

<http://wnorton.com/ebooklite/give-me-liberty-3e-ch1-4/welcome.asp>



Thomas Hart Benton's *The Sources of Country Music*
1975

Mr. Cehovsky - History
mcehovsky@fairfieldschools.org
mcehovsky@fairfieldschools.net

Mr. Pollex - English
mpollex@fairfieldschools.org

Summer Reading / Creating / Collaborating 2020-2021

Objectives:

- Instill a critical thinking approach to society and culture
- Develop a collaborative learning community for American Studies
- Expand creativity and freedom of expression

Overarching Question:

- What is the idea of America?

Required Reading:

- *Give Me Liberty*: first three chapters--assessed in the opening week of class.
- Horwitz, *A Voyage Long and Strange* *
- Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (excerpts)
- Schweikert et. al, *A Patriot's History of the United States* (excerpts)
- Loewen, "Memorial Essay"

*check out these books during exam week

Assignments:

A Voyage Long and Strange: Emulation

Step 1: Read the Prologue, Chp 8 "The South: DeSoto does Dixie", Chp 13 "A Tale of Two Rocks"

Step 2: In a single page response, describe the thesis/purpose/aim of this book. Choose a passage or two that best illustrates Horwitz' purpose, analyzing how your selection is central to the argument of the text.

Step 3: Write a Horwitz inspired fragment from one of your summer journeys, this year or last. (Emulate how Horwitz moves from narrative to commentary and his mode of lifting a facade to reveal an inner truth. For example your site could be a NJ boardwalk, an Appalachian cabin, or a summer scene on Post Rd in Fairfield. Choose something that interests you personally.

Post your blog with accompanying picture on our shared google site page

A New Memorial: response to Loewen

Step 1- Read James Loewen's analysis about monuments depicting historical events across the United States. Identify 5 key points you discovered from these readings.

Step 2 - In and around the Fairfield community (although you can do this in any part of the United States if you are traveling this summer); photograph/record 5 (+5 per member if working with partners) historic monuments on public display. What does each monument communicate to the public at large? Discover what evidence you believe should each of the monuments you

studied also include. Simply, what other parts of the history should be known?

Step 3 - If you were given the task of designing a monument that was to be erected at Sherman Green or Town Hall, describe in detail what that monument should be in 2020. Write what the plaque/inscription would say.

Post your work on our shared .net google site: 'A New Memorial'

“A People’s History” vs. “A Patriot’s History: ” Zinn vs. Schweikert et. al.: Investigate Bias.

Step 1: Read the excerpts and in a brief response of one page, describe the greatest differences (use specifics) between these two versions of history and explain how the same facts can be evaluated so differently. What are the different motives of the writers, and are both legitimate in your opinion? Explain.

Step 2: What major news story over the summer interests you? Choose one story and find a contrast of opinions from credible news organizations (i.e. Peggy Noonan *WSJ* vs. Maureen Dowd *NYT*). This should be two arguments presenting differing views on the same story.

Cut and paste both stories (with links) into a google doc. In a single page response at the end, investigate: how do the same facts lead to different conclusions? Where does the truth lie?

Post your document to our shared .net site-- 'Investigate Bias'.

Differing Perspectives

A. Read Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States Chapter 1 Columbus, the Indians and Human Progress*. <http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/zinncol1.html>

B. Read Larry Schweikart and Michael Allen’s *A Patriot’s History of the United States*

Introduction and Columbus material in Chapter 1 found in the following link

<http://ready4itall.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/A-Patriots-History-of-the-US-Ytsewolf.pdf>

Create a “Fake News” Story:

How is fake news made? Read the following exposé--

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/us/fake-news-hillary-clinton-cameron-harris.html>

Invent a topic that you think would “sell” to a group of your choice (beyond liberal or conservative, consider other groups: Nascar fans, Opera goers, Elon Musk fanatics, etc.

Create: the story, the visual, and even create a “web-hosting” site that would appear legitimate to your audience.

Post your fake news on our shared .net site: 'Fake News'.

A Film Blog: a summer film release (or streaming TV show)

Choose a film or tv series you see over the summer that you think has interesting societal relevance. Take a screenshot from this film/show that you think expresses an insight or argument about life/culture. Explain the artistry in the image (in terms of the overall film), and what its creators are attempting to portray about our culture. Write this as if it was a blog post and you are a ‘film critic’. Your audience is educated, literate, some are members of the Academy . . . they know of your show but they may not have seen it (so some intense summary is needed.) *Post on our .net site: 'Film Blog'.*

