



Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

The Middle East As Net Exporter of Religion

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Lesson Plan 2:

Viewing Middle Eastern Religions

General Description of Lesson Plan: In this activity students will examine then identify how several images relate to the themes of this module. In particular, how the images relate to each other, the faith or category the image belongs to and finally the Middle Eastern religious paradigm. The procedure to create the final product (essay or a presentation) is highly formulaic and in part scripted; however, the student will be forced to develop higher order thinking skills and utilize critical visual literacy. By using images as a starting point to examine the concepts identified in the module students and teachers can more freely examine the complex relationships between these faiths within the paradigm.

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Subject Area(s): World History, Political Science

For Grade Level(s): Grades 11-12 or Grades 9-10 (honors)

Time Needed: 1-2 weeks total. Presentations will vary with class size and student choice. Teacher may need to model activity more than once to ensure student success.

Outcomes/Objectives:

In order to look more closely at images, students will examine photos and use them as evidence demonstrating the Middle Eastern religious paradigm. In doing so, students will examine and compare details and create conceptual bridges between images, across religious affiliation and explain those bridges in either written or oral form. Students will practice their critical thinking and critical analysis.

Materials: LCD/digital projector

Suggested Procedure(s):

1) Students have the option to either compose an essay or lead a presentation using a selection of images (no fewer than three) from the Image Resource Bank.

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Suggested Procedure(s):

2) Students must select at minimum three images by one of the following categories:

- a) Representational art
- b) Architecture
- c) Religious Artifact
- d) Images of devotional practice
- e) System of Faith: Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, monotheism

(Several images overlap into multiple categories. The lead teacher should briefly review student selections to prevent confusion and subsequently misguided analysis.)

3) Once students are aware of their assignment and the guidelines that they are subject to, the teacher should prepare a forum for students to briefly examine and discuss each of images in teams of three. The teacher can allow students to deconstruct each image for 3-5 min. each. This will allow them to note features and make an informed decision regarding his or her selection. (Allow half to one full class period, depending upon ability and maturity.)

3) Details of the essay and presentation may be modified to fit the particular needs of a class. Generally speaking the following steps for the essay and presentation will be identical and should be followed closely:

Step 1: Examine the image. Describe the features central to each independent image. Avoid attaching meaning to anything, as that would be analysis. In this step avoid subjective descriptions and phrases at all cost!

Step 2: Note commonality between images. Note every common feature found in each image. Notice repetitions, shapes, symbols and themes. Also note what is different between each image, what two of the three have that is noticeably missing from the third. (Remember to avoid conclusions in this step, simply notice what is and is not present.)

Presenters--using a Power Point presentation is ideal, as it will allow you to visually arrange images on one slide. Written essays must do this comparison in the text of the essay.

Step 3: Interpret symbols. Additional research will be required for step 3. Once the images have been carefully examined now students can interpret what they see. The captions in the Image Resource Bank are invaluable for this step. Additionally, students should look up specific features that are not expressly noted in the captions. Cite all references.

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Step 4: Middle Eastern Religious Paradigm. In each image, analyze the primary features with the Middle Eastern religious paradigm in mind. What parts of the paradigm do the particular features represent? Note the importance of the feature and its relationship to the particular system of faith it represents. Different images may emphasize different elements of the paradigm, make note of this. Note the various ways one element of the paradigm can be represented in multiple ways; or how one image or symbol can represent various elements in different contexts.

Step 5: General Analysis & Conclusion. Students should use this final section to analyze all three images and their associations together. This is taking a broad view of their selection and students are free to conclude their findings and articulate the major revelations of their analysis. What did they learn about the particular faith(s) involved, about the paradigm, about the Middle East as a region, about the politics decision (good and bad) by religious and political leaders?

[Note to Teachers: step 5 is the most difficult to complete for developing minds as it demands a high level of critical thinking and the ability to make lucid and creative connections between disparate elements of religion, politics, art and faith/devotion. Encourage students (especially for 9th and 10th graders) to be creative and encourage them to take risks in their analysis. However, carefully supervise the analysis of the presenters as they risk public embarrassment if they stray too far from reason in their creativity.]

Presentations should be 10-15 min in length. Essays should be minimum of three pages (double spaced).

6) As students work on their assignment (out side class time) it is wise for the teacher to model steps 1-3 in class. Images should be related to the Middle Eastern religious paradigm, but should not be taken directly from the Image Resource Bank.

7) Teacher should lead post lesson discussion using the discussion questions as a starting point (see *guiding questions* below).

Evaluation/Assessment Strategies:

- 1) Class participation in the image selection and discussion forum; (10%)
- 2) Written product/presentation (75%)
- 3) Student participation as an audience member & post presentation discussion (15%)

Teachers can add graded criteria where necessary to accommodate the maturity and size of your class.

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Evaluation Rubrics:

Examining Images Essay

Teacher Name: **Mr. Shea**

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Image Deconstruction	Identifies the full content within the image.	Identifies most of the content within the image.	Identifies some of the content within the image.	Identifies little/none of the content within the image.
Identify common elements	Identifies the common elements between all the images selected.	Identifies most of the common elements between two of the images selected.	Identifies some of the elements between two of the images selected.	Fails to identify common elements between images.
Interpret symbols	Interprets a significant number of symbols in each of the images.	Interprets a few of symbols in each of the images.	Interprets one or two of the symbols in each of the images.	Fails to interpret symbols in each of the images.
Middle Eastern Religious Paradigm	Identify how each of the images relate to one of several elements of the Middle Eastern religious paradigm.	Identify how some of the images relate to one of several elements of the Middle Eastern religious paradigm.	Identify how one of the images relate to one of several elements of the Middle Eastern religious paradigm.	Fails to make connections between the images and the Middle Eastern religious paradigm.
Analysis and Conclusions	Successfully makes a strong analysis of all of the images and explains how they relate to each other as a whole.	Makes a reasonable analysis of the images and explains how they relate to each other.	Makes a weak analysis of the images as a whole and explain how they relate to each other.	Fails to make an analysis or explain how the images relate to each other.
Mechanics	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	A few grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.
Paragraph Construction	All paragraphs include introductory sentence, explanations or details, and concluding sentence.	Most paragraphs include introductory sentence, explanations or details, and concluding sentence.	Paragraphs included related information but were typically not constructed well.	Paragraphing structure was not clear and sentences were not typically related within the paragraphs.
Sources	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but a few are not in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but many are not in the desired format.	Some sources are not accurately documented.

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Visual Presentation

Teacher Name: **Mr. Shea**

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Image Deconstruction	Identifies the full content within the image.	Identifies most of the content within the image.	Identifies some of the content within the image.	Identifies little/none of the content within the image.
Identify common elements	Identifies the common elements between all the images selected.	Identifies most of the common elements between two of the images selected.	Identifies some of the elements between two of the images selected.	Fails to identify common elements between images.
Interpret symbols	Interprets a significant number of symbols in each of the images	Interprets a few of symbols in each of the images	Interprets one or two of the symbols in each of the images	Fails to interpret symbols in each of the images.
Middle Eastern Religious Paradigm	Identify how each of the images relate to one of several elements of the Middle Eastern religious paradigm.	Identify how some of the images relate to one of several elements of the Middle Eastern religious paradigm.	Identify how one of the images relate to one of several elements of the Middle Eastern religious paradigm.	Fails to make connections between the images and the Middle Eastern religious paradigm.
Analysis and Conclusions	Successfully makes a strong analysis of all of the images and explains how they relate to each other as a whole.	Makes a reasonable analysis of the images and explains how they relate to each other.	Makes a weak analysis of the images as a whole and explain how they relate to each other.	Fails to make an analysis or explain how the images relate to each other.
Preparedness	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student seems prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.	The student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.	Student does not seem at all prepared to present.
Props	Student uses presentation device (ppt), which helps make their presentation clear, and helps the audience clearly follow the flow of information.	Student uses presentation device (ppt) which helps make their presentation somewhat clear and aids the flow of information.	Student uses presentation device (ppt) but does not make the speaker's points more clear or help the flow of information.	The student has no visual aid.
Speaks Clearly	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, and mispronounces no words.	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, but mispronounces one word.	Speaks clearly and distinctly most (94-85%) of the time. Mispronounces no more than one word.	Often mumbles or cannot be understood OR mispronounces more than one word.

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Use these guiding questions to spur discussion in your classroom:

1. What role do images play in propagating stereotypes? How powerful can images be?
2. How can images be used and misused to fuel religious and political polemics?
3. What advantage does slow and deliberate examination of images offer society as a whole? Where should this kind of examination take place?
4. What is the greatest difference between the short takes used on television and still images used in magazines, newspapers and online?
5. What benefit did you gain through closely examining these images? How might the work you did benefit you as a student, as a human being?