Anton Nguyen

Dr. Warner

English 112B

6 December 2016

Unit of Study: *Recitatif* and Secret Life of Bees

This unit of study will focus on the Harlem Renaissance literature and will touch upon literary works of the Black Arts movement. These important movements help sparked a cultural, and social change within United States society. What started in the 1920’s became an inspiration for many artists, musician, writers, and scholars many decades later. In a span of four to five weeks the students will be reading different short stories from authors of the Harlem Renaissance. The Secret Life of Bee will be assigned toward the second week of this unit of study.

The main objective is to have students critically analyze the novel while alluding the some of the in class texts and activities during the unit of study. These students will be able to empathize with the characters in lieu of the social events of pre-Civil Rights, Civil Rights, and the decades afterwards. The students will enrich their knowledge of these eras and will demonstrate it in research papers, presentation, and take home and in-class assignments.

First introductory piece to this unit will be an in class reading of *Recitatif* by Toni Morrison. This short story will be divided into certain reading roles that will be assigned to students. This activity is an inspiration from the Chapter 5, “Finding Your Writing Voice”, of Teaching Writing Grades 7-12 in an Era of Assessment. The in-class reading will have a powerful impact for students, as they are all able to participate in the reading. Short quizzes and reader response questions will be assigned at the end of class. “Recitatif” will not stretch throughout two or three class sessions.

As we move further along into this unit of study, the students will begin reading The Secret Life of Bees and assign daily chapters to read in preparation for each class session. During these next few weeks, I will dedicate the first 20-30 minutes to read short stories and poems from Harlem Renaissance writers and follow a discussion and writing response after each activity. As we enter into the second phrase of class, during this segment we discuss the assigned readings of The Secret Life Bees and will always follow a five-to-ten minute quiz to ensure the students have all done the reading. If time is allotted the class will be able to enjoy the film adaptation of The Secret Life of Bees.

There will be two major essays during this unit of study. The first will be *Recitatif* and I will have student write a persuasive essay, where I ask them to take a position on friendships and whether it changes over time.The second essay will be at the end of the unit of study on The Secret Life of Bees. Students will be able to be able choose to write about a reoccurring theme in the novel or write a comparative essay on *Recitatif* or any other Harlem Renaissance or Black Arts Movement literature.

At the conclusion of this unit of study I would expect students to have the ability to make reasonable statements and draw conclusion about the many different texts read in and outside of class as they give ample support. I would want student to have to ability to compare works that express a universal theme and provide examples to support the views of each literature.

**List of Potential In-class reads:**

“Sonny’s Blues” by James Baldwin

*Witness* by Karen Hesse

“The Gilded Six-Bits” by Zora Neale Hurston

“Dutchman” by Amiri Baraka

“On Aging”, “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”, “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou

“Mother To Son”, “I, Too”, “Let America Be America Again”, “Harlem” by Langston Hughes

“America”, “If We Must Die”, “A Red Flower”, “Outcast” by Claude Mckay

“Letter to My Sister” by Anne Spencer

“To Be in Love”, “Sadie and Maud”, “The Bean Eaters”, “The Mother” by Gwendolyn Brooks

Any variety of poems and short stories will follow with journal entries with the aims to have student write and construct ideas within a brief period of time. Small quizzes with also be assign in order to help students engage, be accountable, and be evaluated with a participation grade.

Works Cited

“Harlem Renaissance | Glossary Terms | Poetry Foundation.” *Poetry Foundation*,

Poetry Foundation. Web.

Morrison, Toni, and Doris Lessing. *Recitatif Toni Morrison*. Barcelona, Difusión,

2010, www.eluprogram.com/recitatif.pdf.

Nilsen, Aileen P., and Kenneth L. Donelson. "Literature for Today's Young Adults."

Literature for Today's Young Adults 8 (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

“Ohio Reading Road Trip | Resources for Teachers.” *Ohio Reading Road Trip |*

*Resources for Teachers*, [www.orrt.org/teachers/index.asp](http://www.orrt.org/teachers/index.asp).

“The Secret Life of Bees,” director. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2008.

Vet, Josh. “The Secret Life of Bees Unit Plan.” 20 Apr. 2011.

Warner, Mary L., and Jonathan H. Lovell. Teaching Writing Grades 7-12 in an Era of

Assessment. N.p.: Pearson, 2014. Print.