

National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute

“The Immigrant Experience in California through Literature & Theatre”

San José State University - Summer 2022

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Topic/Theme	Remembering the Vietnam War: Balancing the Narrative Andrew Lam’s <i>Perfume Dreams</i> in Conversation with Tim O’Brien’s <i>The Things They Carried</i> and the power of monuments
Institute Text Inspiration	<i>Perfume Dreams</i> and <i>East Eats West</i> by Andrew Lam
Student Grade Level	12th grade IB Lang and Lit
Lesson Plan Length	3 80-minute blocks
Unit Overview	This mini-unit is designed as a culmination of our study of <i>The Things They Carried</i> as a way to consider how we memorialize war through stories. Monuments are a way of storytelling.
Essential Questions & Skills	How do monuments tell a story, and who should be in control of the narrative? How can we achieve what Chimamanda Adichie calls a “balance of stories”?
Key Student Learning Objectives	Students will consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “... the changing historical, cultural and social contexts in which particular texts are <i>written and received</i>.” • “...how the <i>formal elements of the text, genre and structure</i> can not only be seen to influence meaning but can also be influenced by context. • “...the attitudes and values expressed by literary texts and their <i>impact on readers</i>. Students should be able to recognize that: – there can be very different readings of the same text – the context of reception, including the individual reader, influences the way a text is read – different values may be in contention within a text. Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss a visual and a written text critically and analytically • Bring two literary texts into conversation to yield greater understanding of an idea • Participate meaningfully and specifically in seminar on reading • Write a thoughtful reflection steeped in readings
Sequence of Key Learning Activities	1- Read <i>The Things They Carried</i> (4 weeks) prior to unit 2- 3 day mini unit following sequence in this Google Slide presentation

Name | Grade Level

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Texts and Materials Used	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Andrew Lam: “Child of Two Worlds” from <i>Perfume Dreams</i> and “From Rice Fields to Microchips: The Vietnamese Story in California” from <i>East Eats West</i>2) Ken Burns and Lynn Novick Documentary: <i>The Vietnam War</i>3) Worksheet with links to images and information on Vietnam War monuments and memorials4) Viet Thanh Nguyen on CBS This Morning
Assessments	<p>1) Presentation: Imagine this: You and your partner are challenged with curating the complicated history of the Vietnam War. What story would you tell to make it as true as possible? What and whom would you want to honor? Where might you place those monuments? You have 30 minutes to work together. You must: 1) “Curate” at least 5 monuments 2) Pick their location with explanation 3) Describe what they might look like 4) Explain the arc of the story you were hoping to tell with your choices</p> <p>Check out this initiative from the Mellon Foundation to give you some ideas! You can think beyond stone and bronze! Get creative!</p> <p>2) Response Paper As a wrap up, write a one-page reflection on your understanding of the Vietnamese diaspora and its relationship to war based on the reading and the youtube clip.</p>