

Rosalie Norris

NEH Institute: The Immigrant Experience in California through Literature & Theatre
Final Curriculum Assignment

August 2017

Haunted By Ghosts Curriculum Map

Students will take a dive into the world of the unknown in this ghost themed unit aimed at exploring ourselves and our world through ghost stories and AN investigation of how the past can haunt the present. Students will begin from a place of **wonder** by brainstorming an expansive definition of what we mean by “ghosts”? Students will **read** and **listen** to excerpts from texts that approach our theme from a variety of perspectives, with a focus on multicultural sources. Students will **explore** the physical world by visiting a series of historic graveyards and other ghost-related local sites. Student will **investigate** stories from folks in the community, mining our community for local ghost stories. Finally students will **create** a theatrical ghost story performance piece that they will **share** with the community. Our unit will end as we **reflect** on our deeper understanding of ghosts.

Wonder:

What haunts us as individuals, as a community, as a nation?

What is a Ghost? How can we expand our definition beyond what we quickly associate with Halloween and Haunted Houses? What does it mean to be haunted?

What is the difference between a memory and a ghost?

Read:

“Can Ghosts Cross The Ocean?” Chapter from [East Eats West](#) by Andrew Lam

Chapter on Ghosts from [The Woman Warrior](#) by Maxine Hong Kingston

[Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island](#) by Judy Yung

[La Llorona: The Weeping Woman a Hispanic Legend Told in Spanish and English](#)

by Joe Hayes

[Ghosts](#) Raina Telgemeier's graphic novel

Excerpts from [Ghostland: An American History in Haunted Places](#) by Colin Dickey

Listen:

[Spiritual Cleansing: A Mexican Ghost Story](#) (NPR)

[Barbershop: The Ghosts Of Detroit's Past](#) (NPR)

Explore:

The Greater Boston Area is rich with historical graveyards. Students will embark on walking tours of the following sites (descriptions borrowed from websites):

Bennington Street Cemetery: This plot dating from 1838, one of the first planned open spaces of East Boston, has an unusually high number of epitaphs in foreign languages, thanks to the number of immigrants buried there.

Granary Burial Ground: This cemetery teems with early American notables, including John Hancock, Paul Revere, Benjamin Franklin's parents (notable for being Benjamin Franklin's parents), Samuel Adams, James Otis, and five victims of the Boston Massacre

Sleepy Hollow Cemetery: This nearly 32-acre cemetery dates from 1855, and includes such literary notables as Louis May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Mount Auburn Cemetery: Mount Auburn Cemetery is the first landscaped rural or “garden” cemetery in the United States. Established in 1831 in Watertown and Cambridge, Massachusetts, the cemetery was not only designed as a resting place for the deceased, but also as an attraction and pleasure ground, with picturesque landscapes, winding paths, a variety of horticulture, and sculptural art. Its success inspired other cemeteries’ designs and in turn articulated the need for public parks and gardens launching the American parks movement.

Investigate:

Interviewing project: students will sit down with a neighbor, a friend, a family member, etc. to learn about the ghost stories haunting community.

Create:

Students will devise an original theater piece based on any of the ideas we’ve explored.

Share:

Students will perform their piece for the community.

Reflect:

We will come back to our working definition of “What is a Ghost?” and try to finalize our definition incorporating what we’ve learned from this experience.