



Zora Neale Hurston: Health and Spirituality in the Caribbean and US South

Workshop and Curriculum Guide

*Center for Latin
American Studies*

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY





Contents

A. Workshop Agenda

B. Lesson Plans

1. Teaching the African Diaspora with *Their Eyes Were Watching God*: Students Researching Through Fieldwork and Fiction
2. Oral Histories & Zora Neale Hurston
3. Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy

*Center for Latin
American Studies*

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY


TUSKEGEE
UNIVERSITY
1881



Zora Neale Hurston: Health and Spirituality in the Caribbean and US South
(April 24-25 Tuskegee University)
Teacher Workshop Agenda

Friday, April 24

6:00- 8:00 pm A conversation on *Poto Mitan*

Saturday, April 25

8:00- 8:10 am Welcome, Introduction

8:10-9:30 am Session 1 Vanderbilt scholars Tatiana McInnis and Ifeoma Nwankwo)

9:15-10:35 am Session 2 Tuskegee scholars Zanice Bond and Rhonda Collier)

10:35-10:45 Break

10:45-11:30 Discussion of Curriculum Materials

11:30-12:00pm Evaluation and Lunch

Resources from the workshop can be found on <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/zora/>

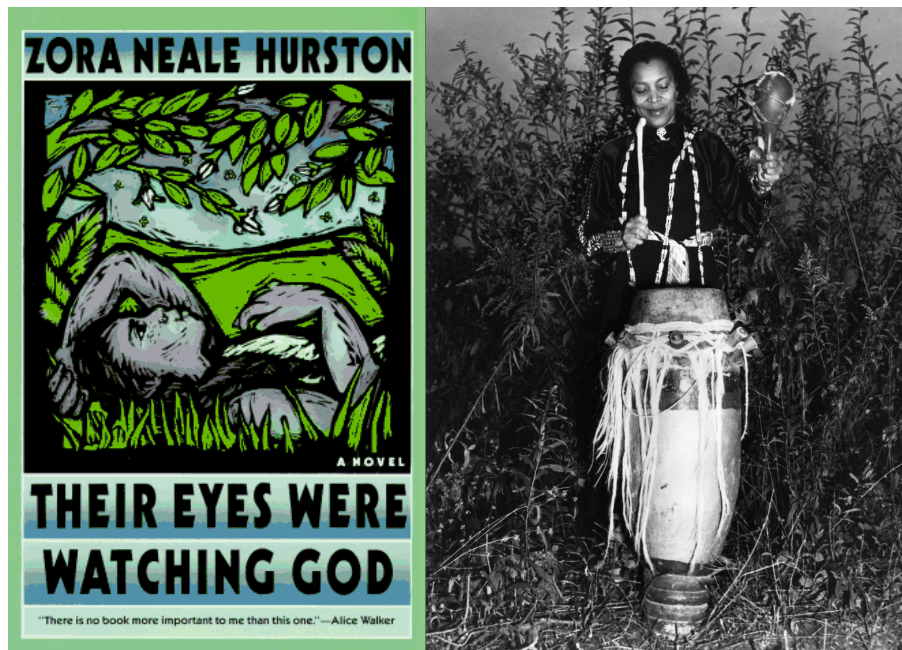
*Center for Latin
American Studies*

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY



Teaching the African Diaspora in the Americas with *Their Eyes Were Watching God*:

Students Researching through Fieldwork and Fiction



Lesson Guide

*Center for Latin
American Studies*

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY

Teaching the African Diaspora in the Americas with *Their Eyes Were Watching God*: Using Fiction to do Textual Research on Gender, Race, and Spirituality

Jamie Lee Marks

Vanderbilt University, Center for Latin American Studies

Overview

Grade levels: 10th-12th Grade

Subject areas: Language Arts/English/Literature

Interdisciplinary Connections: This Lesson Plan is an extension or framework plan for discussion *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston. It could be modified to discuss any chapter/portion of the novel or to discuss chapters from *Tell My Horse* in a social studies class that is studying the Caribbean. It connects with Geography, Human Geography, Sociology, and World History as well.

Key words: global competency, research skills, Zora Neale Hurston, close reading, annotating, dual-entry journal, Latin America, race and racism, gender, spirituality, Haiti, Jamaica, the U.S. South

Summary

This lesson plan can be used either as an extension plan or a general plan for a discussion of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* in a High School English/Literature/Language Arts Class. It can be modified to discuss other works, and for use in social studies classrooms, in conjunction with CLAS' lesson plan on the documentary *Poto Mitan*.

In this lesson, students will briefly learn about Zora Neale Hurston's work as a social scientist who studied folklore and culture in the black diaspora across the U.S. and Latin America. Students will discuss the major questions Hurston addressed in her research on the African Diaspora, and how they might have impacted her while writing *Their Eyes Were Watching God* during a research trip in Haiti. They will then use this framework to develop a research question about folklore, experience, and culture that they will trace through the novel. A special focus on gender, race, and spirituality is a suggestion, but teachers can amend this to whichever themes in the text they'd like to highlight, making it easy applicable to multiple approaches to the text. This activity will stimulate a close reading of the text and a research and evidence-based approach to discussing the novel. It will also urge students to see social science and literature as connected, and to connect insights and questions about the human experience from literature to the study of cultures in the U.S. and beyond.

Contents and Materials

Lesson Guide Content

1. Learning Objectives
2. Lesson Plan Staging and Alternate Ideas
3. Curriculum Relevance/Common Core Standards

4. Appendix

- Glossary
- Double-Entry Journal
- Zora Neale Hurston Biography Timeline
- Excerpt of Tell My Horse (from her work in Jamaica)
- PDF of PowerPoint Slides (file available on CLAS website as well)

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Contextualize Zora Neale Hurston's fiction as part of a her life's work as a social scientist/collector of folk narrative in the Haiti, Jamaica, and the U.S. South in a way that facilitates a deeper understanding of the novel
- Define diaspora, fieldwork, folklore and oral tradition
- Identify key questions about the human experience that drive the structure of Hurston's plot and character development, such as gender roles, labor, racial identity inequality and spirituality, and reflect on their transnational relevance
- Gather information on, discuss, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on passages in the *Their Eyes Were Watching God* that relate to student-generated questions about social experience and folklore in the text (PBL related)
- Refine their understanding of literary devices that enable them to comprehend, interpret, and draw conclusions about the work of Zora Neale Hurston
- Consider the relationship between social science and fiction/the arts (STEM + Arts= STEAM!)

Materials Needed

Materials Needed In-class:

- the students will need a copy of the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
- copies of the double-entry journal worksheet (Appendix)
- ZNH Fieldwork Lesson Plan PowerPoint (Appendix and Digital)

For teachers' reference:

- Glossary
- Zora Neale Hurston Biography Timeline
- Excerpt of Tell My Horse (from her work in Jamaica)
- List of Related Resources in the CLAS Lending Library and Online

Lesson Plan

Lesson Parts

Part I: Engagement This section leads the lesson with an activity to familiarize students with Zora Neale Hurston's work as an anthropologist in Jamaica and Haiti and engage student interest in the scholarly questions that drove Hurston's work.

Part II: Research (Textual Analysis) and Synthesis. In this section, students work to identify key questions that drive the structure of Hurston's plot and character development and engage in close reading activities to trace those themes and questions through *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Part III: This section has **culminating activities and assessment** opportunities that you can select from to complete this literature unit.

Part I: Engagement

1. Play audiofile of Zora Neale Hurston singing a U.S. Southern folk song, "Halimuhfack" and talking about where how she learned it. <https://www.floridamemory.com/audio/hurston.php>

In the file, Hurston comments about the process of learning songs from community members. In essence, she introduces the process of participant observation/fieldwork and its importance in collecting and writing about folklore.

2. Ask students:

Where did she find out about this song?
How did she learn it?
Why do you think she wanted to learn it?

After a brief discussion ask them: What else could we learn about human experiences and culture from participant observation, or fieldwork?

[Participant observation: learning about a culture or community through participating in its activities, observing, and taking detailed notes

Fieldwork: living among a group of people for the purpose of learning about their culture.]

Alternative Warm Ups: depending on class theme/educator preference: instead of listening to that song, play an audio clip of Hurston's interviews about zombies in Haiti (<http://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2013/01/07/zora-neale-hurston-on-zombies/>), or read an excerpt of her work from Jamaica (Appendix: A4) to engage student interest in fieldwork and Hurston's work in Latin America. We have a collected volume of Hurston's work in the Caribbean at the CLAS lending library if you'd like to choose another passage on voodoo, zombies, or any other fascinating topic from her fieldwork for students to read and discuss as a doorway to discussing fieldwork and themes in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. (PPT)

3. Introduce Zora Neale Hurston as an anthropologist who wanted to be “the authority on Afro-American **Folklore**.”¹ She worked in the U.S. and Latin America, following her questions to various communities that are part of the African Diaspora.

[folklore: the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth]

- a. show map of transatlantic slave trade (a recap for students) and discuss the term diaspora as referring to individuals with similar heritages/histories living across different geographic locales (PPT)

[diaspora- Scattering of language, culture, or people. A dispersion of a people, language, or culture that was formerly concentrated in one place. Example- the African Diaspora.]

- b. show map showing Zora Neale Hurston’s fieldwork locations as a social scientist (one that shows the transatlantic region, and then one that zooms into the Americas). Specifically outlines that Zora Neale Hurston wrote *Their Eyes Were Watching God* while in Haiti. (PPT)

4. Outline some questions that guided Zora Neale Hurston’s fieldwork in Jamaica and Haiti (PPT). Informally ask about/discuss any possible connections between these themes and themes in the novel. This will also help the students with step 4 by modeling a discussion about fieldwork themes/questions. Tell students they will work in groups to outline some questions that Hurston may have had about the folklore and practices of communities represented in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Have the class come up with one as a group, modeling 1-2 ideas for driving research questions:

Examples of model research questions:

What did individuals in Eatonville believe about religion?

Does women’s work differ culturally from men’s work?

What role does gossip play in community life?

Break into groups and check in with groups, assist them in drafting a question.

Homework: Tell students to review the text, and annotate a few passages from the book that relate to one of their group’s questions [a nice blog on annotation strategies and the Common Core: <http://catlintucker.com/2013/04/common-core-reading-understanding-analyzing-complex-texts/>]

¹ Hemenway, Robert E. Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography. Urbana [Ill].: University of Illinois Press, 1980.
Print n 87

Part II: Day 2

[Instructor should come prepared with one piece of textual evidence that addresses your example question]

1. Re-Activate and Share

- a. Students break into their research groups and confirm their guiding research question for the text. Teacher checks in with each group, making sure they are ready for group share.
- b. Report back/Feedback: student groups share their research questions with the class

2. **Research and Annotate** (RL.11-12.1-5, 10). Tell students they will do “fieldwork” in the text, and seek to answer their questions with textual evidence. Ask groups to use their guiding research question to create double-journal fieldnotes using passages, quotes, and plot points from the novel. Draw two columns on the board, or bring a document to show on a digital screen with your question and quote already filled in, and model an example using your example research question. Share your question, and the quote, and ask for open-class input on how the quote you chose might relate to your question.

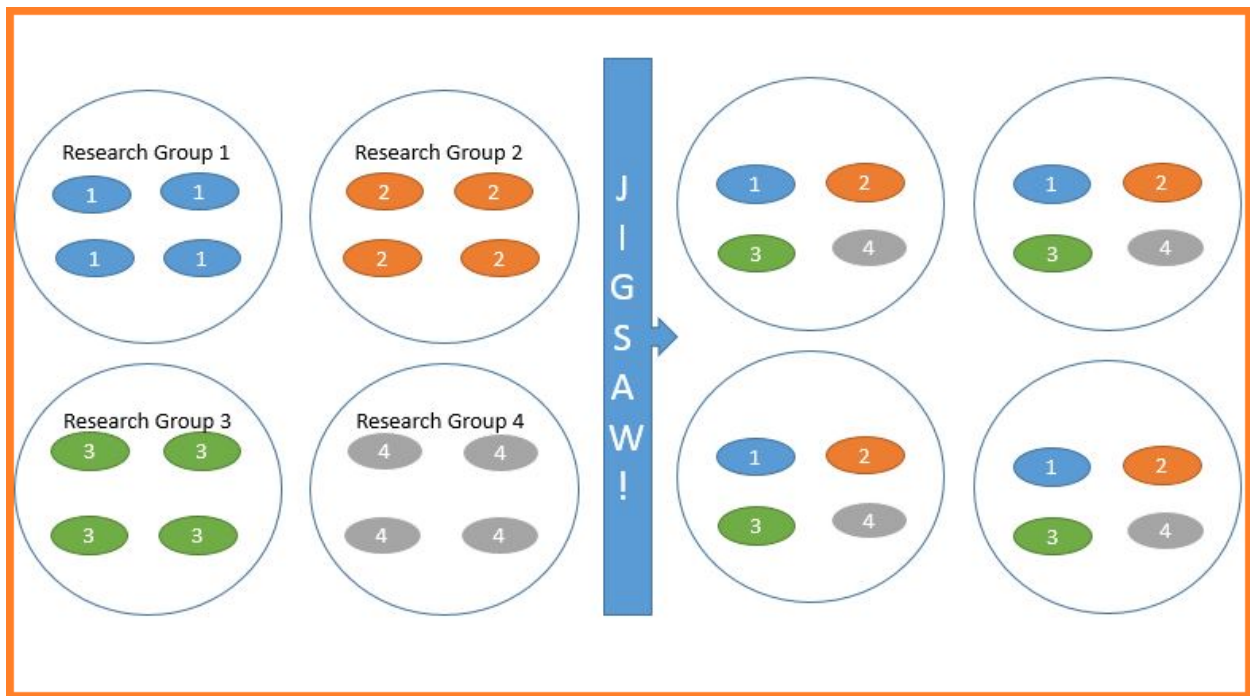
Example of Modeling Dual-Entry Journal

Question: Is there gender equality in this community?

Observation from the Text: “Why must Joe be so mad with her for making him look small when he did it to her all the time?” (p.77)

Observation from my Head (elicit from the class how they think the quote you chose relates to your research question): Janie considers and is angered by an unfair gender standard. She thinks men consistently put down women and expect them to be calm about it, while the reverse does not work out. Women who insult their male partners, even when insulted first, can suffer drastic and public consequences that men do not face when they do the same.

3. **Share results.** Depending on educator preference, (a) have your students jigsaw and share their question and textual evidence or (b) have ask research groups prepare a presentation to share with the class that outlines their research questions and textual evidence that helped them to answer it.



Example of Jigsaw Discussion Set up.

Part III: Ideas for Assessment Opportunities and/or Culminating Activities

1. **Write about your research and share.** Have student research groups use their research they gathered the evidence they gathered to craft a group-report. What might Hurston be trying to show the reader about _____? Groups share their work with the class in a presentation, or could craft a blog, audio recording, or even online slideshow/webinar to share more widely (following PBL real audience suggestion)
2. **Observe and reflect.** Spend 1-3 days conducting observation research in places you already go in your daily life with your guardians or at school (neighborhood centers, after-school activities, restaurants, parks). How do individuals interact? Do any of the questions that Hurston had about Haiti, or about life in Eatonville, FL relate to our lives? What did you find?
3. **Connect to global questions.** Is the research question your group chose to explore in the novel one you could ask of other communities in the Americas (North, Central and South)? How could they be explored? Where would you want to explore them, and why? What would you expect to find?

Curriculum Contents/ Standards

Tennessee/Common Core ELA Anchor Standards

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.8

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6 [Culminating Activity 1]

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4 [Culminating Activity 1]

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of

reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature » Grade 11-12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.9

Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.10

By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

English Language Arts Standards » Writing » Grade 11-12

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Interdisciplinary Connections

African American History

AAH.4 Identify and explain the Middle Passage as one of the largest forced migrations in human history. (C, H)

AAH.24 Assess the literary contributions made by African Americans. (C)

Sociology

S.7 Identify and apply the elements of culture. (C)

World Geography

WG.15 Analyze how cultural characteristics, including the world's major languages, ethnicities, religions, and issues of gender link or divide regions. (C, G)

WG.19 Analyze past and present trends in human migration and cultural interaction as they are influenced by social, economic, political, and environmental factors. (C, E, G, H, P)

Appendix

Contents

- A1 Glossary
- A2 *Their Eyes Were Watching God* Double Entry "Fieldnote" Journal
- A3 Zora Neale Hurston's Life, Research, and Writing Timeline
- A4 Excerpt from *Tell My Horse* (from her work in Jamaica)
- A5 PDF of PowerPoint Slides (file available on CLAS website as well)
- A6 List of Related Resources in the CLAS Lending Library and Online
- A7 Citations from Lesson Plan

[A1] Lesson Glossary

Diaspora/African Diaspora

Diaspora (noun): Scattering of language, culture, or people. A dispersion of a people, language, or culture that was formerly concentrated in one place. Example- the African Diaspora.

Participant Observation/Fieldwork

A technique of field research, used in anthropology and sociology, by which an investigator (participant observer) studies the life of a group by sharing in its activities.

Folklore

the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth]

Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes refer to various notes recorded by scientists during or after their observation of a specific phenomenon they are studying. Fieldnotes are particularly valued in descriptive sciences such as ethnography, biology, geology, and archaeology, each of which have long traditions in this area.

[A2] *Their Eyes Were Watching God* Double Entry "Fieldnote" Journal

Use this journal to organize evidence you can find in the text that will help you answer your group's guiding question.

Name:

Group's Guiding Question:

Observation from the Text (plot point, observation, quote)	Observation from my head (your reaction, connections you see, interpretation of meaning, relationship to the question)

--	--

[A3] Zora Neale Hurston's Transnational Life, Research, and Writing

Alabama, Florida, Nashville, New York, Washington DC, Haiti, Jamaica, Honduras

Jan 7, 1891 Zora Neale Hurston Born

Zora Neale Hurston is born in Notasulga, Alabama. She is the fifth of eight children born to John and Lucy Potts Hurston.

1892 Move to Eatonville, Florida

The Hurston family moves to Eatonville, an incorporated, self-governed, all-black town north of Orlando, Florida. Incorporated in 1887, it is the oldest such town in the United States.

1917 Twentysomething High-Schooler

After leaving home and school and working a number of odd jobs to support herself, Hurston moves to Baltimore, Maryland. In order to qualify for a free high school education, 26-year-old Hurston lies about her age, claiming her birth year as 1901. She maintains the falsehood until her death.

Jun 1918 High School Graduation

Hurston completes her high school graduation requirements at Morgan Academy in Baltimore. After graduation, she works as a waitress and a manicurist to earn money.

1919 Hurston at Howard University

Hurston enrolls at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

1925 Transfer to Barnard College

Hurston submits the short story "Spunk" and the play *Color Struck* to a literary contest sponsored by Opportunity and wins second place for both. In the same year, she receives a scholarship to Barnard College and transfers, studying anthropology with the scholar Franz Boas.

1926 Hurston Visits Harlem, starts her career as a fieldworker/social scientist

Hurston travels to Harlem to conduct field research for Boas on black life. She meets several other young black artists, including Langston Hughes. Several of Hurston's short stories are published during this time. She and Hughes also launch the short-lived but influential black literary journal *Fire!!*

1927 Hurston travels to Florida to do fieldwork, marries Herbert Sheen

Jul 7, 1931 Divorce with Sheen

Jan 10, 1932 Hurston's musical *The Great Day* premieres on Broadway.

1934 Hurston's play *All Ye Live Long Day* premieres at Rollins College, Winter Park FL

On her way up to Chicago from Florida to direct a folk concert, she stopped at Fisk University in Nashville, TN to speak with the school's president Thomas Jones. With a view toward hiring Hurston as a full professor, Jones proposed sending Hurston to Yale to undertake additional training. The Rosenwald Fund proposed to subsidize a chair for her at Fisk, but decided instead to offer her a fellowship for doctoral study at Colucia.

May 1934 Hurston's first novel, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, is published. She begins to study for a doctorate (never completed) at Columbia University with the help of a Rosenwald Fellowship

1935 Hurston publishes a collection of black folklore entitled *Mules and Men*.

1936 Hurston is awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to study obeah, the practice of sorcery in the West Indies. From April to September she conducts research in **Jamaica**.

1937 Her Guggenheim fellowship extended, Hurston continues her research in **Haiti**. While there, she writes *Their Eyes Were Watching God* in seven weeks. She returns to the United States shortly before the 18 September publication of the novel.

1938 Hurston writes and publishes *Tell My Horse*, an account of West Indian obeah practices based on her research.

1939 Hurston is hired by the Federal Writers' Project to record African-American folklore, songs, and labor conditions.

Later in the year she accepts a position as a drama instructor at North Carolina College for Negroes. Her novel *Moses, Man of the Mountain* is published. She marries Albert Price III.

[Link: Florida Memory Project](#)

1942 Her memoir *Dust Tracks on a Road* is published to critical praise. It receives the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for its take on race relations.

1943 After a brief and tumultuous marriage, Hurston and Price's divorce is finalized.

1947 Hurston moves to **Honduras** to research the black experience in Central America. She writes the novel *Seraph on the Suwanee*, which is published the following year.

1950 A financially strapped Hurston takes a job as a maid in Florida. She continues to publish well-regarded essays in the Saturday Evening Post and other publications.

1952 The Pittsburgh Courier hires Hurston to cover the sensational case of Ruby McCollum, a black woman who shot and killed her white lover, whom she accused of rape.

1957 Hurston begins a two-year stint as a columnist for the Fort Pierce Chronicle. During this time she also works as a substitute teacher at a local school.

1959 Hurston suffers a stroke and is forced to move into the St. Lucie County Welfare Home.

Jan 28, 1960 Zora Neale Hurston dies of hypertensive heart disease at the St. Lucie County Welfare Home. Penniless and alone at the time of her death, her neighbors take up a collection to pay for her funeral. She is buried in an unmarked grave.

Aug 1973 Intrigued by Hurston's life story, the writer Alice Walker locates the site of her grave and purchases a headstone for it. The inscription reads "Zora Neale Hurston: A Genius of the South."

A4

“The Rooster's Nest” by Zora Neale Hurston

Jamaica, British West Indies, has something else besides its mountains of majesty and its quick, green valleys. Jamaica has its moments when the land, as in St. Mary's, thrusts out its sensuous bosom to the sea. Jamaica has its "bush." That is, the island has more usable plants for medicinal and edible purposes than any other spot on earth. Jamaica has its Norman W. Manley, that brilliant young barrister who looks like the younger Pitt in yellow skin, and who can do as much with a jury as Darrow or Liebowitz ever did. The island has its craze among the peasants known as Pocomania, which looks as if it might be translated into "a little crazy." But Brother Levi says it means "something out of nothing." It is important to a great number of people in Jamaica, so perhaps we ought to peep in on it a while.

The two greatest leaders of the cult in Jamaica are Mother Saul, who is the most regal woman since Sheba went to see Solomon, and Brother Levi, who is a scrontous-looking man himself.

Brother Levi said that this cult all started in a joke but worked on into something important. It was "dry" Pocomania when it began. Then it got "spirit" in it and "wet." What with the music and the barbaric rituals, I became interested and took up around the place. I witnessed a wonderful ceremony with candles. I asked Brother Levi why this ceremony and he said, "We hold candle march after Joseph. Joseph came from cave where Christ was born in the manger with a candle. He was walking before Mary and her baby. You know Christ was not born in the manger. Mary and Joseph were too afraid for that. He Was born in a cave and He never came out until He was six months old. The three wise men see the star but they can't find Him because He is hid in cave. When they can't find Him after six months, they make a magic ceremony and the angel come tell Joseph the men wanted to see Him. That day was called 'Christ must day' because it means 'Christ must find today,' so we have Christmas day, but the majority of people are ignorant. They think Him born that day."

I went to the various "tables" set in Pocomania, which boils down to a mixture of African obeah and Christianity enlivened by very beautiful singing. I went to a "Sun Dial" -- that is a ceremony around the clock (24 hours long). The place was decorated from the gate in, with braided palm fronds and quacca bush. Inside the temple, the wall behind the altar was papered with newspapers.

There, the ceremony was in the open air. A long table covered with white. Under this table, on the ground, lighted candles to attract the spirits. There was a mysterious bottle which guaranteed "the spirit come." The Shepherd entered followed by the Sword Boy, carrying a wooden sword. After him came the Symbol Boy with a cross, chanting. Then came the Unter Boy with a supple jack, a switch very much like a rattan cane in his hand. During the ceremony he flogged those who were "not in spirit" that is, those who sat still. They are said to "cramp" the others who are in spirit. The Governess followed the Unter Bov. She has charge of all the

women, but otherwise she functions something like the Mambo of Haiti. She aids the Shepherd and generally fires the meeting by leading the songs and whipping up the crowd. There followed then the Shepherd Boy who is the "armor-bearer" to the Shepherd.

Their ceremony is exciting at times with singing, marching, baptisms at sacred pools in the yard. Miraculous "cures" (Mother Saul actually sat down upon a screaming Chinese boy to cure him of insanity); and the dancing about the tables with that tremendous exhalation of the breath to set the rhythm. That is the most characteristic thing of the whole ceremony. That dancing about the lighted candle pattern on the ground and that way of making a rhythmic instrument and of the breathing apparatus -- such is Pocomania, but what I have discussed certainly is not all of it.


These "Balm yards" are deep in the lives of the Jamaican peasants. A Balm Yard is a place where they give baths, and the people who operate these yards are to their followers both doctor and priest. Sometimes he or she diagnoses a case as a natural ailment, and a bath or series of baths in infusions of secret plants is prescribed. More often the diagnosis is that the patient has been "hurt" by a duppy, and the bath is given to drive the spirit off. The Balm Yard with a reputation is never lacking for business. These anonymous rulers of the common people have decreed certain rules and regulations for events in life that are rigidly adhered to. For instance the customs about birth and death. The childbed and the person of the newborn baby must be protected from the dead by marks made with bluing. When it is moved from this room, the open Bible must precede it to keep off the duppies, and so on.

Tables are usually set because something for which a ceremony has been performed is accomplished. The grateful recipient of favor from the gods then sets a table of thanksgiving. No one except the heads of the Balm Yard and the supplicants are told what it is for. Most of the country products are served with plenty of raw rum. The first and most important thing is a small piece of bread in a small glass of water as a symbol of plenty.


Excerpt from:

Hurston, Zora N, and Henry L. Gates. *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2009. Print

Sample Provided by Harper Perennial: <http://zoranealehurston.com/books/tell-my-horse>



Teaching the African
Diaspora in the Americas
with *Their Eyes Were
Watching God*:
Students Researching
through Fieldwork and
Fiction






warm up

Listen to this recording of Zora Neale
Hurston singing a U.S. Southern folk
song, “**Halimuhfack**” and talking about
where how she learned it.

[https://www.floridamemory.com/
audio/hurston.php](https://www.floridamemory.com/audio/hurston.php)




warm up

Where did she find out about this
song?


How did she learn it?

Why do you think she wanted to learn
it?



warm up


What else could we learn about human experiences from **participant observation**, or **fieldwork**?



Zora Neale Hurston's Fieldwork

She wanted to be “the authority on Afro-American **folklore**,” and worked in various parts of the U.S. and Latin America. She followed her questions to various communities that are part of the African Diaspora

African Diaspora in the Americas



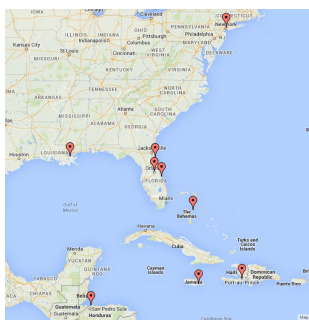
SLAVE TRADE FROM AFRICA TO THE AMERICAS 1650-1860

Between 1650 and 1860, approximately 10 to 15 million enslaved people were transported from western Africa to the Americas. Most were shipped to the West Indies, Central America, and South America.

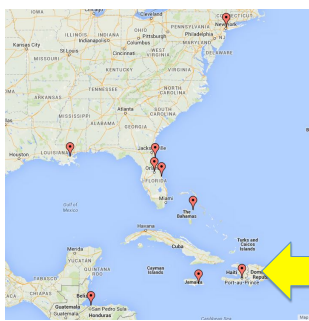
Zora Neale Hurston's Fieldwork



Zora Neale Hurston's Fieldwork



Zora Neale Hurston's Fieldwork



Wrote *Their Eyes Were Watching God* while doing research in Haiti

Themes she explored in Jamaica and Haiti...

Spirituality, ceremonies (Christian inspired and voodoo), faith/beliefs, rituals

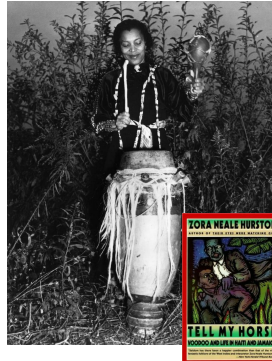
Belief in Zombies

Gender Roles

Race/Racism

Relationships with Plants and Non-human Animals

Farming/Food Production





Now that you've read *Their Eyes Were Watching God...*

What questions about human experience are addressed in the novel? What about life and culture in Eatonville is discussed in the text?

Oral Histories & Zora Neale Hurston

Lesson Guide

Author: Tatiana McInnis
Vanderbilt University

Overview and Objectives

Grade levels: 6-12th grade (can be adapted)

Subject areas: Language Arts/Social Studies/ Technology

Duration: 3 sessions

Topic: Oral Histories and Zora Neale Hurston's Audio Recordings

Prior Knowledge:

Students will ideally have studied other work by Hurston and have a working understanding of her tendency to write stories about story-telling, and her use of vernacular to facilitate connections between vernacular and oral histories and cultures. Having prior knowledge of use of vernacular and working definitions of oral histories, students should be able to articulate the stakes of understanding and engaging with these cultures as they link to issues of race, gender, and representation (as in, diversifying who we are studying and how we are studying them).

Summary:

This lesson could be used as an extension plan on a unit on *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, or on rhetoric, vernacular, folklore, and/or social studies methods in a Human Geography, US History, Sociology, or Geography course. Oral histories as a focus could be adapted to many questions across the social sciences/language arts and literature classroom.

In this lesson, students will:

- Develop a definition of oral histories/oral culture/orality and be able to articulate the important distinction between oral and written histories
- Create their own written/oral histories
- Close-read story and analyze how Hurston merges the form of the parable/folk tale to produce a story about story-telling in "Magnolia Flower."
- Engage a focused analysis of the story's content and style to consider how Hurston addresses issues of Black and Native American interactions, the memory of nature, colorism, gender roles, etc. (could be tailored to educator goals)

Content of Lesson Guide

1. Objectives and Connections to Prior Knowledge
2. Materials
3. Activity Staging
4. Curriculum Relevance/Common Core Standards
5. Glossary

Materials

- Internet Access/Projector
- Paper/ Pencil and other art supplies
- Recording Device (camera, smart phone, etc.)
- If possible, access to a computer lab

Lesson Plan

Day 1

Activities:

- A. Think-Pair-Share (15-20 minutes): Have students individually think of a funny story to share with one of their classmates. Encourage students not to write these stories (yet) just to think of them and organize them in their minds to talk about with their peers. Allow 5 minutes for students to share their stories with each other.
- B. Have students work individually and write down the story they have just told to their students. If they feel compelled, they can add art/ draw/ decorate the written pages in ways that help further convey the meaning of these stories (allow 10-15 minutes)
- C. Have students exchange their written stories and each reader should take notes/discussion about things that changed from the written and oral forms of the story.
- D. Have student's write brief self-reflection on what challenges they experienced in translating their stories to the written word.
 - a. Was anything lost or gained in the written form?
 - b. Do they prefer telling or writing the stories?
 - c. If the story was different (i.e., instead of funny, telling a sad, dramatic, angry story) do you think you would prefer to talk or write about it? Why?
 - d. From your own experience, what do you think oral history is?
 - e. What does sharing oral histories allow us to do that writing does not?
- E. Show video of Dr. Nwankwo defining "oral history" to spark closing discussion and reiteration of oral history and how it relates to the stories the students have created.
- F. Homework:

Assign "Magnolia Flower" (please refer to the appendix; also available at: http://www.pf.jcu.cz/stru/katedry/aj/doc/kocmichova/Z_N_Hurston_Magnolia_Flower.pdf) and "Story in Harlem Slang" (please refer to the appendix; also available at: http://www.loa.org/images/pdf/Hurston_Harlem_Slang.pdf)

As students read, ask them to annotate how Hurston captures the sound of speech/vernacular (particularly in "Story in Harlem Slang" and how she shows the importance of telling stories, the way we tell stories, and who (or what) gets to tell stories.

Day 2

Activities:

- A. Students should have read "Magnolia Flower" and "Story in Harlem Slang"

- before the class session.
- B. In small groups, have students discuss their initial reactions to the stories, with particular attention to vernacular and Hurston’s meta-storytelling. Have students repeat the conclusions drawn in small groups to the broader class.
 - C. General Discussion Questions to be answered using jigsaw technique. Break class into three groups to answer each question.
 - a. How does each of the stories call attention to the difference between writing stories and listening to stories?
 - b. How does the use of “slang” help us think about the challenges of writing how people speak? Can we think of any current scenarios that highlight this challenge (hint at texting)?
 - c. Why do you think Hurston chose to personify nature in “Magnolia Flower”? What commentary is she presenting by allowing things to speak that normally would not speak?
 - D. If possible, in a computer lab, have students listen to at least three of Zora Neale Hurston’s audio-recordings (folk songs accessible on <https://www.floridamemory.com/collections/folklife/people/?id=hurston>) and have students choose one and answer the following questions in an in-class written assignment:
 - a. How does the song you have chosen present a story you might not have otherwise have heard?
 - b. How does Hurston introduce this song? Is there anything in the framing of the song that makes us think about oral cultures in different ways? Pay particular attention to:
 - i. How and where these songs are developed and transmitted? What do they reveal about working conditions and about WHO is using oral history to communicate and document history?
 - ii. What story is being provided within the songs?
 - E. After addressing questions in written form, have entire class discuss their findings as a larger group.
 - F. If for whatever reason access to a computer lab is limited, play “Tampa” (available on the aforementioned website) for the entire class and have them answer the aforementioned questions in writing and then discuss as a group.

Day 3

Activities:

- A. Show oral histories by Darria Hudson (MA Divinity), Carlin Rushing (MA Divinity), and Annie Castro, (English PhD candidate), available on <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/zoraclas/>. Hudson discusses Hurston’s ethical inclusion of working-class voices in her work, Rushing describes her experience of teaching *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and Castro discusses the relationship between oral culture/histories and spirituality, focusing on her research on *Mules and Men* and *Tell My Horse*. While not analyzing the works the students will have read, the histories will give a sense of Hurston’s importance, as well as model how the students might approach their own histories.

- B. Depending on resources in a given classroom, either:
- a. Have students partner up and spend ~10 minutes preparing what they would like to record. If working with partners, students might prefer interview format (modeled by Annie Castro’s video) or a monologue (modeled by Carlin Rushing’s video).
 - b. If resources allow, each pair could be given a recording device—allow 15-20 minutes to complete recording for both students (histories should be 3-5 minutes long).
 - c. After students record their oral histories, have them write short-self reflections of the experience of recording their histories: What specific challenges did they experience? What did they enjoy about their histories?
 - d. If resources allow, upload oral histories on a WordPress blog, or similar website, and require students to comment on at least two of their peers’ histories with discussion questions or an analysis of the video itself.

*** If there is not access to digital publishing and/or recording technology available for multiple students to work simultaneously, have students practice their histories with partners while individual students record their histories with instructor. Have students who have finished either a) help other students practice or b) begin reflection process.

Glossary

Vernacular

A language or dialect spoken by the common people of a region (usually different from official/literary standards).

This lesson plan specifically focuses on the relationship between Black Vernacular English/African American Vernacular English and oppression and self-expression. Oral history research values multiple perspectives across formal educational levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, regional communities, etc., and provides an inclusive model for researching the human experience.

BVE- Black Vernacular English

AAVE- African American Vernacular English

[Pullum, Geoffrey K. “African American Vernacular English is Not Standard English with Mistakes.”](#)

Pullum, Geoffrey K. “African American Vernacular English is Not Standard English with Mistakes.” Rebecca S. Wheeler (ed.) *The Workings of Language*. Westport CT: Praeger, 1999.

Folklore

the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth].

Oral History

The collection and study of historical information using sound recordings of interviews with people having personal knowledge of past events.

Oral history is a tool for learning about people, places, and events. Explain to students that we learn about the past (and how we feel about things going on now) by asking people to tell them stories about it. These stories are called oral history.

Curriculum Contents/ Standards

Tennessee College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1](#)
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2](#)
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10](#)
Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Tennessee College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1](#)
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6](#)
Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9](#)
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Tennessee College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#)
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4](#) [Culminating Activity 1]
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Tennessee English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature » Grade 11-12

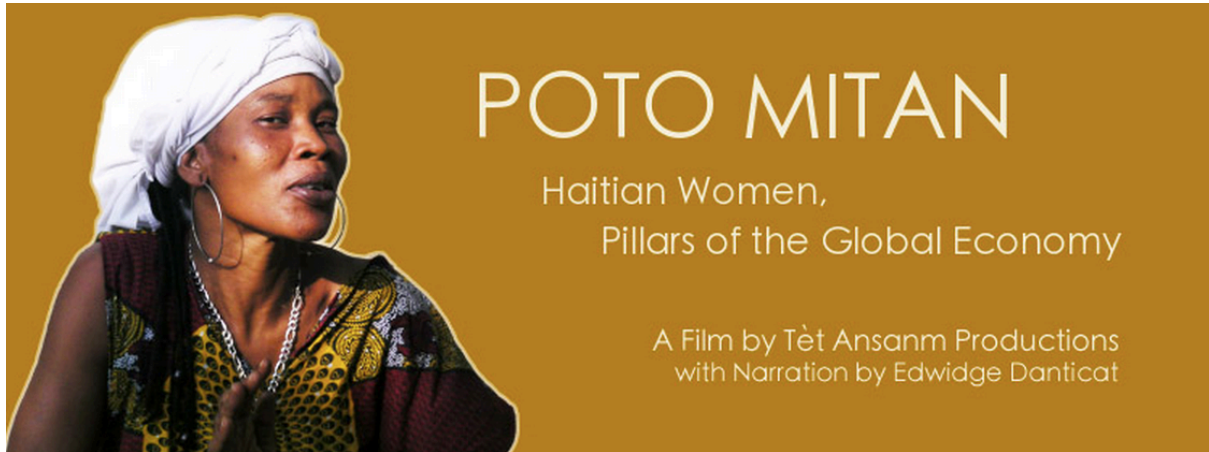
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1](#)
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2](#)
Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3](#)
Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Tennessee English Language Arts Standards » Writing » Grade 11-12

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9](#)
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Tennessee Anchor Standard for Literacy in All Subjects

- RH 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- RH 3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- RH 7 (technology): Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- WHST 10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- SL 1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.



LESSON GUIDE

Through five Haitian women’s compelling lives, *Poto Mitan* gives an insider perspective on globalization, Haiti’s contemporary political/ economic crisis, and the resilient women challenging this system.

“Everyone else has spoken for Haitian women, yet, we have a history of speaking for ourselves. I support *Poto Mitan* because it offers us a rare glimpse into how Haitian women in the struggle understand their complex conditions and what they are doing for themselves.”

—Ulysse, Haitian-American scholar/activist/performer

**Poto Mitan:
Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy
Lesson Guide**

Author: Ke Wang

Vanderbilt University, Center for Latin American Studies

Overview

Grade levels: 7th to 12th grade

Subject areas: Social studies (Economics, Geography, Human geography, Sociology)

Duration: 3 sessions, 50 minutes/session

Key words: Haiti, Globalization, Neoliberalism, Collective power, Women's role and voice

In *Poto Mitan*, each of the five women's personal story explains neoliberal globalization, how it is gendered, and how it impacts Haiti: inhumane working/ living conditions, violence, poverty, lack of education, and poor health care.

This lesson has been designed to use this 45-minute documentary *Poto Mitan* as a case study for in-depth discussion on:

- Globalization
- Indicators of economic development: GDP, Gini coefficient, CPI, inflation, etc.
- Economic concepts including but are not limited to: Reaganomics, Neoliberalism, and Structural Adjustment
- Individual-level, national-level, and international-level facts and policies about Haiti's economy

Curriculum Contents/ Standards

Alabama Social Studies:

- Geography, 7th grade:
 - Analyzing transnational relationships
 - Explaining globalization and its impact on people in all regions of the world
- Human Geography, high school elective:
 - Explain how economic interdependence and globalization impact many countries and their populations
 - Interpret human geography as it relates to gender
- Sociology, high school elective:
 - Explain methods and tools of research used by sociologists to study human society, including surveys, polls, statistics, demographic information, case studies, participant observations, and program evaluations.
 - Identifying major ethical and social issues facing modern society
- Economics, 12th grade:

- Explain that a country's standard of living depends upon its ability to produce goods and services
- Describe methods used to measure overall economic activity, including the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the Consumer Price Index (CPI), inflation, and unemployment.
- Explain why individuals, businesses, and governments trade goods and participate in the global economy.
- Explain tariffs, quotas, embargoes, standards, and subsidies as trade barriers
- Explain why countries sometimes impose trade barriers and sometimes advocate free trade

Tennessee Social Studies:

- Economics, High school:
 - E.56 Define trade barriers, such as quotas and tariffs
 - E.57 Explain why countries sometimes erect barriers to trade such as quotas and tariffs, or through subsidies to domestic producers and the consequences of those trade barriers and subsidies on consumers and producers. (E, G, H)
 - E.60 Explain how changes in exchange rates impact the purchasing power of people in the United States and other countries. (E, G)
- Contemporary Issues, High school:
 - CI.11 Identify and explain current crucial issues and the relevant groups and individuals involved in these issues in the United States and globally, including the creation of a media presentation that integrates multiple sources of information on one such issue. (C, E, G, H, P)
- Sociology, High school:
 - S.35 Describe major social problems and social issues. (C, H)
 - S.36 Analyze causes and effects of social problems and issues. (C, H)
 - S.37 Construct possible solutions to given social problems and offer one solution in a presentation that integrates multiple sources of information from diverse formats and media. (C)

Materials

In-class: the students will need to be able to watch the documentary *Poto Mitan*, which is available through the lending library at Vanderbilt's Center for Latin American Studies. The students will also need to have Internet access.

For teachers' reference:

- [Gapminder](#): an interactive map to show how the development indicators of countries change over time
- For more background information on and some free video clips of the documentary, please visit their main website at <http://www.potomitan.net/>
- Discussion Guide on *Poto Mitan*, authored by Mark Schuller: PDF accessible at <http://www.potomitan.net/downloads/poto-mitan-study-guide.pdf>

Lesson Plan

Day 1:

Activities	Time
<u>Introduction</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask: what do you know about <u>Haiti</u> or the Caribbean? • Share: have a few students share their knowledge • Present: a map showing where Haiti and the Caribbean are • Ask: what is <u>globalization</u>? • Share: have a few students share how they interpret/ experience globalization • Present: background information about the documentary <i>Poto Mitan</i> 	5-10 min
<u>Screening</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All or part of <i>Poto Mitan</i> • Ask students to make notes and pay special attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How the Haiti-U.S. relationship, or more broadly Haiti's relationship to the world, influences Haitian people's life ▪ Economic concepts that are new to them, e.g. Reaganomics, neoliberalism, structural adjustments, and the global assembly line 	Max: 45 min
<u>After-class:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 1: Ask students to pick one new economic construct, gather information (definition and case study), and get prepared to share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group students based on the economic construct they've chosen for their assignment • Assignment 2: Ask students to look up measures of Haiti's economic development: GDP, Gini coefficient, CPI, inflation, unemployment, etc. 	

Day 2:

Activities	Time
<u>Learn the Concepts- part 1, based on assignment 1</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand out to each student the glossary sheet of economic concepts (blank, this is to help students make notes), see <u>appendix 1</u> • Ask students to sit in their respective economic construct groups; Reaganomics group, Neoliberalism group, Structural adjustment group, etc. • Ask students to share their findings within their group and each group to 1) have an agreed-on explanation to their concept and 2) pick one 	25 min

<p>elaborate case study illustrating how the concept has been adopted in real-life economic activities (national, corporate, or individual level)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups will present and non-presenters will make notes 	
<p><u>Learn the Concepts- part 2, based on assignment 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand out to each student the glossary sheet of measures of economic development, see <u>appendix 2</u> • Teacher presents and asks students to make notes on their glossary sheet: measures of Haiti’s economic development (GDP, Gini coefficient, CPI, inflation, unemployment; ask a few students to share what they’ve found through their Assignment 2) • Gapminder activity: teacher uses Gapminder to illustrate the level of Haiti’s economic development as compared to U.S. and other countries; or if the students have access to Internet themselves, students can do this activity within their groups • Ask students what other resources they know to look at development indicators of a country 	25 min

Day 3:

Activities	Time
<p><u>Behind the Label</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In group, ask students to look at the tag on their own shirt (“Made in…”). • Mark the countries of origin on a world map • Gapminder activity: use Gapminder to look up (in group or as a class together) the development indicators of these countries • Based on the information gathered from the Gapminder activity, ask students why factories are built in Haiti and in these countries, ask if this may differentially affect men and women in those countries. If so, why? 	15-20 min
<p><u>Teacher synthesizing the pieces of information, with students’ contribution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on students’ answer to the last question, review the concept of globalization • Together with the students, fill in the chart attached at the end of this lesson plan (see <u>appendix 3</u>); specifically, the class will recall the stories in the documentary, and come up with individual-level, national-level, and international-level facts about Haiti. Ask students to discuss how different aspects of individual life are connected with each other; how the Haitian government’s policies and U.S. policies towards Haiti influence individual life, as presented in the documentary. • Or: split students into groups and ask each group to draft an idea about one part of their daily lives they think might be linked to globalization. The instruction checks in with groups as they develop their ideas, and 	30 min

<p>provides feedbacks and encouragement. Then, have the students jigsaw (mix groups so one member from each group is in each new group, and all ideas from the groups can be discussed). Have each member of the new jigsaw group share its group ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with a reflection activity, asking each student to write about one aspect of his/her daily life that is affected by globalization (homework, could be a blog entry). 	
---	--

Appendix 1
Glossary of Economic Concepts

Concept	Definition	Case Study
Reaganomics		
Neoliberalism		
Structural Adjustment		
...		
...		

Appendix 2
Glossary of Measures of Economic Development

Concept	Definition	Case Study
GDP		
Gini coefficient		
CPI		
Inflation		
Unemployment		

Appendix 3

Facts about Haiti in *Poto Mitan*

(A rough layout of the chart; more information and arrows indicating the relationship between these components can be added)

