

Suzanne Lynch, PhD
Fulbright Hays – University of Detroit Mercy
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Introduction:

My project looks at using the film *Black Orpheus* (*Orfeu Negro*) as a model for teaching the research project. This project is, in part, a plan to contribute to the college's mission to internationalize the curriculum. It focuses on global learning as a means to reach discipline goals. The approach necessitates the inclusion of a focused study of Brazil from a Brazilian perspective. In other words, this project takes the approach that in order to meet the objectives of the research project from a 21st century context, students must learn to see through the lens of others. This unit uses the film *Black Orpheus* to explore the process of analysis, to discover points of inquiry, to build knowledge through encounters with difference, and to document this process through the production of a successful research paper.

Unit Goals:

1. Students will complete a mini research paper, exploring a singular aspect of Brazilian community presented in the film *Black Orpheus*.
2. Students will read and discuss articles related to the history and culture of Brazil.
3. Students will be able to speak with authority about issues relating to Brazilian culture represented in the film.

Learning Objectives:

1. Formulate a thesis statement that speaks to one issue in the film of *Black Orpheus* and provide support for the claims made in the thesis statement with an examination of the primary text with legitimate secondary sources.
2. Use Standard English grammar and compose a short research paper that is coherent, unified, and developed.
3. Employ logic to articulate, organize, and support an effective and valid written argument that supports the thesis and responds to probable objections without resorting to distortion.
4. Work with legitimate secondary sources that speak to issues of Brazilian culture.
5. Synthesize and integrate secondary sources effectively and clearly.

6. Use critical strategies to analyze, evaluate, and/or interpret the culture represented in the film *Black Orpheus*
7. Make use of standard scholarly styles using MLA documentation and citation and create a correct works cited page.

Essential Questions:

1. What did the film get wrong and right?
2. What is the concept of racial democracy and how does the film speak to this idea?
3. How does the film document agents of power in the Brazilian community?
4. Greek mythology is a story of religion. It is a story that has transcended time. It gives us a window into the past and into the mind of the Greeks. It is a source of continuous inspiration for many of us. What is the inspiration in *Black Orpheus*?
5. How does the film speak to ideas of commodification and what is the consequence of this discourse?
6. What is the role of female sexuality in the film?
7. How does carnival speak to ideas of identify politics, cultural performance, and specularization of urban spaces?
8. What is the difference between bossa nova and samba and why how does the selection of each speak to specific agendas?
9. What is the history of carnival through 1956 and is it accurately represented in the film?
10. How any why does the film make a conscious effort to balance the hyper sexuality of women in carnival?
11. How do we balance the film's depiction of reality with the knowledge that this is a modern-day myth?

Summary of Film:

Black Orpheus, directed by the French-Brazilian filmmaker, was initially released in 1959. The film presents a mythical love story set in a Brazilian carnival in a poor community. This film's story mimics that of the Greek legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, who both lose their lives in their quest for love. Superscripted onto this theme is the story of Orfeu and Eurydice, two Brazilian lovers who manage to lose their love and their lives amidst the chaos of carnival.

Rationale:

The goal of this lesson, which focuses on analysis and research, satisfies English 2's objective to use critical strategies to analyze and evaluate and or interpret dramatic works.

Additionally, it satisfies the goal of using secondary resources in framing an academic argument. At the same time, this lesson also speaks to the mission of Focus International in that it introduces students to a culture outside of the American culture.

This unit on film analysis will come midway in the semester and will function as preparation for students' first research paper. For the students' individual research papers, they will focus on a film of their choosing and will present an analytical discussion about one issue discussed in film. Our in-class watching of *Black Orpheus* will function as a model of how to conduct research and how to incorporate various voices into one fluent text.

This unit will be taught over a three-week period in which students will engage in the following:

1. Watch the film *Black Orpheus*
2. Discuss themes present in the film
3. Read secondary sources relating to ideas presented in the film
4. Work in groups to produce a substantive two-page research discussion, using the film as its focus

The film lends itself to several discussions, including, but not exclusive to the following: Brazil's myth of racial democracy, the religious syncretism of a culture, the social problems represented by life in the favela, the hyper sexuality of women in carnival, and the problems of poverty in Brazil black communities. The film also asks the viewer to engage in the celebration of black Brazilian culture through the music of bossanova. The film attempts to celebrate the favela and the music that comes out of that environment, which is intimately connected to the land and its people. Unfortunately, the film also seems to suggest a commodification of the very culture it celebrates through a mystification that seemingly conceals important socio-historical

contexts. And finally, the film asks that we question the syncretism of Greek myth with Brazilian celebration.

These are all topics ripe for discussion and lend themselves well to productive research and discussion.

Lesson Plan:

(At this point in the semester students will have already been introduced to the formalities of research. They will also understand that the viewing of this film and the subsequent assignments are a means of practice for their upcoming paper.)

Week 1:

Tuesday:

- Discussion and introduction of Brazil
- Viewing of film *Black Orpheus*

Thursday:

- Continuation of the film and beginning of discussion.
- Begin discussion in groups of four – Using SWOT analysis, students will discuss strengths, weaknesses, opportunity and threats of the environment depicted in the film
- Discuss and share findings

Week 2:

Based on the trajectory of the discussion, I will select four substantive excerpts from four different articles that speak to the issues presented in the film. Students will read these

articles at home and they will take a 10-question multiple choice comprehension quiz on the articles before coming to class.

Tuesday:

- Brief overview of history of carnival in Brazil pre-1960
- Brief discussion of the selections that were read at home and discuss how they might be used to help create an argument that the film addresses.
- Students will take notes in preparation for writing

Thursday:

Professor will spend time with each group individually during group work to answer questions, share knowledge, assist with difficulties, and guide the research process.

- In groups of two (maximum of three), students will discuss what topic they would like to present to about the film.
- They will discuss how the secondary research assists in that discussion, and they begin to craft a well-written paragraph addressing a point of argument in the film.

Week 3:

Tuesday:

- Return to working groups. Work on draft of the written, edited, and well-formatted two page paper of substance.

Thursday:

- work on editing and preparing draft for final submission

(Unfinished work must be completed outside of class in preparation for submission.)

Assessment:

The assignment will be graded as a group project and students will be evaluated on their ability to appropriately use MLA, to integrate secondary sources into their text, and to maintain a substantive and focused discussion.

Assignment:

Compose a two page double spaced discussion of a singular idea presented in the film *Black Orpheus*. Be sure to use at least two of the secondary sources given to advance your argument. Your discussion must be singularly focused, showing depth of the issue and advancement of your thesis. Your paper should be written using proper MLA format.

Grading Criteria

1. Have you followed the directions of the basic guidelines?
2. Do your paragraphs have clear topic sentences that guide your paragraphs?
3. Do you have a clear thesis with a claim and a qualification of that argument?
4. Have you used your research appropriately to advance your argument? Is it an integral part of your argument?
5. Do you advance your argument throughout the text?
6. Have you documented appropriately?
7. Have you checked for grammar and spelling?
8. Is your discussion whole and logical? Does your discussion flow clearly and logically?

Materials Used:

Orfeu Negro. Directed by Marcel Camus, Janus Films, 1959.

Fredicksmeyer, Hardy. "Black Orpheus, Myth and Ritual: A Morphological Reading." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, vol.14, no.1, 2007, pp.148-75.

Ickes, Scott. "Carnival of the People: Batucadas and Afoxes." *African Brazilian Culture and Regional Identity in Bahia, Brazil*. U P of Florida, 2013, pp. 142-89.

Stanley, Sharon. "Alternative Temporalities: U.S. Post Racialism and Brazilian Racial Democracy." *Theory and Event*, vol.21, no. 3, 2018, pp. 725-52.