

Brazilian History and Culture

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I. Goals

Below a course description lists themes that teachers must incorporate in designing their AP World History curriculum. The goals with this lesson are twofold: First I want students to understand Brazilian history and culture from colonialism to the modern era. While I'm not so concerned with specific dates and people, I want students to be familiar with the general narrative of how Brazil has transitioned politically from Portuguese colony to monarchy to Republic and how resources like sugar and gold have affected patterns of both forced and voluntary migration, thus affecting current demographics. Students should also be able to draw comparisons between Brazil and other colonies, countries and regions. To enrich the contextual facts that the Brazilian narrative weaves, I'd also like students to explore the role that Brazil's cultural and ethnic diversity have played in creating and shaping several uniquely Brazilian traditions like Candomblé, samba and capoeira.

II. & III. Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions

What are key events in Brazilian colonization?

What crops ensured Portuguese profit from Brazil?

Describe the social structure of Portuguese Brazil and be able to compare this with social structures in Spanish America.

How did Brazil gain independence from Portugal?

Characterize the political and economic situation in Brazil from independence to the New Republic (1891).

Discuss the impacts of slavery on Brazilian society.

Assess the legacy of Vargas.

What social, environmental, economic and political challenges does Brazil face today?

How have foreign peoples and cultures combined in the creation of Brazilian institutions?

Though not evenly, the lesson will draw from several of the themes listed below by the College Board as guiding principles of the AP World History course. Also see the attached student worksheet of questions they must answer by the conclusion of the unit.

THE COURSE

The purpose of the AP World History course is to develop greater understanding of the evolution of global processes and contacts in different types of human societies. This understanding is advanced through a combination of selective factual knowledge and appropriate analytical skills. The course highlights the nature of changes in global frameworks and their causes and consequences, as well as comparisons among major societies. It emphasizes relevant factual knowledge, leading interpretive issues, and skills in analyzing types of historical evidence. Periodization, explicitly discussed, forms an organizing principle to address change and continuity throughout the course. Specific themes provide further organization to the course, along with consistent attention to contacts among societies that form the core of world history as a field of study.

Themes

The AP World History course requires students to engage with the dynamics of continuity and change across the historical periods that are included in the course. Students should be taught to analyze the processes and causes involved in these continuities and changes. In order to do so, students and teachers should focus on FIVE overarching themes which serve throughout the course as unifying threads, helping students to put what is particular about each period or society into a larger framework. The themes also provide ways to make comparisons over time and facilitate cross-period questions. Each theme should receive approximately equal attention over the course of the year.

1. Interaction between humans and the environment
 - Demography and disease • Migration • Patterns of settlement • Technology
2. Development and interaction of cultures
 - Religions • Belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies • Science and technology
 - The arts and architecture
3. State-building, expansion, and conflict
 - Political structures and forms of governance • Empires • Nations and nationalism
 - Revolts and revolutions • Regional, transregional, and global structures and organizations
4. Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems
 - Agricultural and pastoral production • Trade and commerce • Labor systems
 - Industrialization • Capitalism and socialism
5. Development and transformation of social structures
 - Gender roles and relations • Family and kinship • Racial and ethnic constructions
 - Social and economic classes

IV. The Plan

Days One and Two: Use my PowerPoint (available for download from this Web site: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/brazil10/>) summarizing key events in Brazilian history. Many of the photos in the PowerPoint are shots taken while in Brazil. I hope to incorporate a few anecdotal experiences while reviewing the presentation. A few of the slides are also hyperlinked.

Day Three, Option A: Show the PBS Wide Angle episode *Brazil in Black and White*, available in full from the PBS Web site: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/brazil-in-black-and-white/video-full-episode/2104/>

The episode provides a glimpse at just how ethnically diverse and racially ambiguous Brazil is, how deeply rooted social inequality has become and how the government is attempting to implement an affirmative action policy for admissions to the University of Brasília. Prior to viewing I would ask students to answer four questions in their notebooks:

1. Given what we've covered of Brazilian history and culture over the past two days, do you think race is a statistically significant factor today in a Brazilian's access

- to opportunity, education, attainment of wealth, etc.? Answer on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being not significant and 5 being very significant.
2. If you had to classify your own race, how would you do so?
 3. From your U.S. history classes, what policies have we adopted and what Supreme Court cases have set precedent on Affirmative Action?
 4. What is the argument for Affirmative Action?

In a 45-minute class you should have plenty of time to show all 4 segments as the running time is roughly 10 minutes per segment. I will debrief after each segment and in particular I imagine the fourth installment will turn some heads as it reveals that kids have to racially classify themselves and submit a photo for review to see if they qualify as Afro-Brazilian, a concept Americans students will likely find odd due to the differences in how our societies view and define race. The PBS Web site includes a set of wonderful follow up questions to stimulate discussion. I will also pull from that set of questions to debrief:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/lessons/brazil-in-black-and-white/issues-to-consider/4325/>

Day Three, Option B: The documentary film *Favela Rising* tells the story of Anderson Sá, who started a band, a community outreach center and a cultural, nonviolent movement called AfroReggae in an attempt to better his community through the arts and education. The film runs approximately 80 minutes so observing it over one 45-minute class period is not possible. However, the story is an immensely compelling tale of how the arts have united a community and provided opportunity in one of Rio's most destitute areas. The protagonist's story is amazing and needs to be shared. Furthermore, the film provides a great introduction into the squatter settlements known as *favelas* and the myriad social problems that exist. The parallels between urban conditions in the U.S. and Brazil makes this film particularly relevant for students today.

My plan for viewing is to provide students with the Fact Sheets comparing Brazil and the U.S. from the appendices in the link below (pages 20–23). I'd also make sure students are familiar with the terms listed in the glossary prior to viewing. In particular the sheet comparing homicide rates should generate brief discussion. As I am only allotting one day for viewing I would ask students to write down a quote or a scene that resonates with them and allow volunteers to share the following day. If you can devote two days to the film I advise it or if your school has a film club this would be a worthwhile choice. The link below includes a five-day series of lesson plans devoted solely to the film and the themes addressed. Many of the ideas are fantastic and worth exploring.

<http://www.favelarising.com/favela-rising-curriculum.pdf>

Day Four: Bring in Rockville Capoeira to provide a demonstration of the art and involve students in teaching them the basic steps. If the theme behind this series of lessons is Brazilian culture I want students to have an opportunity to get out of their seats for a day and physically participate in this Brazilian art form. Obviously some students may not feel comfortable participating and that's OK but I want to provide a hands-on lesson.

Prior to the demonstration the following links will be added to my edline account and I will urge/insist that students view them prior to class. They include a brief explanation and the history of the art form, photos from the late photographer Pierre Verger, and a youtube link.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/brazil-in-black-and-white/handbook-capoeira/2108/>

<http://www.schwarze-goetter-im-exil.de/eng/verger/capoeira/index.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8xxgFpK-NM>

Day Five: Go to the media center to research question number 11 from the below sheet of questions students will submit for an assessment grade.

History and Culture in Brazil

Provide thoughtful and analytical answers to 6 of the questions below. You must write in complete sentences.

1. What claims did the Portuguese have to Brazil? Were these claims disputed and if so, how and why?
2. What were the key crops and resources that ensured the Portuguese would profit from Brazil?
3. Describe at least two patterns of migration affecting Brazilian history.
4. Describe the social structure of Portuguese Brazil. Was this similar to the rigid social hierarchy established in the Spanish colonies?
5. Describe the significance of the African slave trade on Brazil.
6. Emancipation in Brazil came about under far different circumstances than in the United States. Discuss the reasons why the two countries had vastly different experiences.
7. How was independence won for Brazil? Compared with independence movements across the rest of Latin America, what similarities and differences exist?
8. Getúlio Vargas has been described as the most significant figure in Brazilian history. Assess his legacy and discuss why some hold him in such high regard.
9. What are *favelas*? What percentage of the population live in them and what efforts are being made to quell violence?
10. Brazil has experienced a dramatic loss of its rainforest going back to the 1960s. What factors have contributed to deforestation and are there efforts to reverse the trend?
11. Describe an example of cultural diffusion that created a uniquely Brazilian institution.