

The Sympathizer / Apocalypse Now Lesson Plan

Grade Level - 11+

Duration - Several Days

Goal - To show and reflect how the Vietnamese were portrayed in popular culture during the Vietnam War.

To show how important accurate representation is in popular culture.

Objective - Aligns with the district equity goal to promote various underrepresented voices within a topic.

Materials - Copies of "The Sympathizer" by Viet Thanh Nguyen and a copy of Apocalypse Now (1979).

Activities - After reading chapter 12 in "The Sympathizer" have students write a short reflection on the following prompt: Was the protagonist successful or not in his mission to have the people of Vietnam accurately represented in the movie? After students have written their responses, lead them in a discussion about their answers.

The movie the protagonist is sent work on is alluded to as "Apocalypse Now" many times. It would be helpful before watching the movie if the students got some background on the film I suggest a search and study. Give them 15 minutes on a computer or smart phone and find all the information they can about "Apocalypse Now", critical reviews, cast, original reception, anything. Have them write this down and when they are done come back together as a class to discuss and record their findings.

Next have the students watch "Apocalypse Now" while taking careful notes as to how the Vietnamese are portrayed in the film.

After the film have the students reflect and discuss the following questions in a write, pair, share format:

1. How were the people of Vietnam portrayed in "Apocalypse Now"?
2. How do you feel the film would have changed if there had been someone to give voice to the Vietnamese people? In other words, how would the film be different if the Vietnamese were accurately portrayed.
3. What is something that you think lacks authentic representation? Why?

After this I would do a Socratic seminar for a summative assessment on the following question: Is authentic representation always important? Why?

Assess the Socratic seminar with the standard discussion rubric.