

## **Banquet at the Alhambra/Place Out of Time Synthesis**

*A semester long portfolio/authentic assessment project for multiple classes of 10<sup>th</sup> grade Early Western/Middle Eastern Civilization.*

This project is based on the cooperation of at least two classes who will agree to work together over a semester of research, indirect contact and debate, and the production of a medieval banquet featuring historical characters from the period of 700 - 1450CE. At this banquet the students will recreate the artistic, cultural, and intellectual dynamic of the medieval Christian and Islamic worlds as their characters complete a debate on three moral questions. Student teams will have worked throughout the term to research, document, and argue the following:

1. Is it morally justified for a society to violently subjugate another?
2. Is there a religious obligation to repress rituals and practices of a subject people that are offensive to the faith and sensibilities of the dominating power?
3. Should a society compromise its beliefs and principles in order to gain economic or political advantage?

This debate is based on the an event in Spanish history when Bartolome de Los Casas and Jun Gines de Sepulveda debated in Valladolid in 1550/51 on the condition of the Indian peoples in what is now the West Indies, Mexico, and Peru. During this debate King Charles IX temporarily suspended all further exploration and conquest of the New World while trying to reconcile duty to God and with a commitment to the power, prestige, and well being of his country.

Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO's)

1. Students will synthesize the knowledge of medieval society gained throughout the course in order to realistically construct an intellectual response to an abstract proposition logically consistent with the historical character portrayed.

2. Students will present a medieval banquet that practically demonstrates the rich artistic, cultural, and philosophical heritage of the medieval era for the education and enjoyment of the community.

#### Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO's)

- I. Students will conduct detailed historical research for the purpose of understanding a historical character well enough to create a biography and refer to source documentation when available in order to justify positions and opinions in the debate.
  
- II. Students will collaborate to create costumes, artwork, the appearance of architectural detail, and produce props in order to recreate the impression of a room at the Alhambra.
  
- III. Students will perform music or drama as might have been seen at a banquet for esteemed guests.
  
- IV. Students portraying characters will introduce themselves and offer greetings in the vernacular language of the person portrayed when possible. (Europeans to use Middle English, Old French, etc.)
  
- V. Each character will be represented by a poster in the hallway leading to the banquet portraying some aspect of themselves. These might include:
  - a. a drawing based on a historical portrait
  - b. their name lettered in an accurate calligraphic style
  - c. a quotation from their writings in both the original language and an English translation.

#### Operations

Students will work in groups of three with an assigned historical character to each. Within each group students will organize themselves (with instructor's help as needed) into the following:

- Historical Research leader
- Character Portrayal leader
- Artist/Linguist/Photo Documentation leader

Each student in a group will thus be in a leadership position having a primary responsibility for their specific product while being obligated to assist others as needed as well as to receive assistance.

Once organized student groups will receive a name of a character that they will be responsible for creating as well as the three questions and an assessment timetable. In order to receive full credit each group must complete each step, appear at the banquet, and turn in a group portfolio. This project will have the weighted grade equivalent to term research paper for which it serves as an alternative.

Communications between the classes can be achieved via a computer network or through written documents sent by courier.

Timetable (by sequence of events only)

I. Groups organized and name of character with brief identifying data and a list of suggested sources to begin research.

II. Groups produce a biography of their character to include notes on dress, speech, career, name of writings if any and location of authoritative sources.

III. One class receives one of the questions and sends/posts greetings to the other class with a brief character introduction along with a position on the question. If using hard copy all the greetings and positions are posted in the classroom.

IV. The receiving class exchanges greetings and replies to the positions of the first group.

V. All groups turn in research log #1 charting their progress and presenting their sources in MLA format.

VI. The process is repeated for questions 2&3.

VII. All groups turn in research log #2.

VIII. Groups present their characters and the results of their work to the class for critique. At this point all groups should have a response to each question along with Supporting evidence and precedent.

IX. Formal presentation by characters in costume  
(greetings and abbreviated arguments)

X. Banquet at the Alhambra. After the dining and  
entertainment is over characters will present their  
positions on the issues responding in debate fashion to  
opposing viewpoints.

XI. Completed

Portfolio Checklist.

- Group names and assignments
- Character biography
- Research Log #1 w/bibliography
- Research Log #2 w/bibliography
- Group presentation to class w/written summary of  
positions
- Dress Rehearsal in costume
- Introduction and greeting in vernacular.
- Character poster
- Snapshot of character and team at the banquet
- Self-reflection essay.

Characters-Middle Eastern Civilization

- Muhammad Bin Qasam
- Salah al-Din
- Abu Hamid al-Ghazali
- Al-Idrisi
- Ibn Khaldun
- Um al Muqtadir-billah
- Azdah bint al-Harith bin Kaldah
- Shajarat al-Durr
- Raizia Sultana
- Ibn Sina (Avicenna)
- Ibd Maimus (Maimonides)
- Ibn Rushd (Averroes)
- Abd al-Rahman III
- Ibn Khatib
- Ibn Tufail (Abubacer)

Characters-Western Civilization

- Roger Bacon
- St Francis of Asisi
- St Dominic
- St Thomas Aquinas

Hugh of Payen  
Bernard of Clairveaux  
Hildegard of Bingham  
Eleanor of Aquitaine  
Anna Comnena  
Julian of Norwich  
Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar  
William of Ockham  
John Duns Scotus  
Baldwin IV  
Richard I Coeur de Lion

A few odd Internet resources:

<http://www.jamil.com/personalities/>  
Pakistani site with detailed biographical information on  
Muslim scholars and scientists of this period

<http://us.geocities.com/rfaizer/biblio/islam>  
Dr Rizwi S. Fazier bibliography of medieval Islam (with his  
personal favorites and primary source material noted)  
Dr. Faizer is a scholar at McGill University  
[rfaizer@yahoo.com](mailto:rfaizer@yahoo.com)

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/mamluk/Scholarship.html>  
A massive bibliography of scholarly books and reviews.

[http://www.stanford.edu/group/sh1/Spains/project/demo/lisbon/islam\\_jihad.html](http://www.stanford.edu/group/sh1/Spains/project/demo/lisbon/islam_jihad.html)  
Beautiful, comprehensive web site devoted to Spain/Andalus,  
Islam and the Crusades, etc.

<http://www.rsiss.net/syllabi/islam.html>  
Outline of a 16 week curriculum on Islam from RSIS  
(Religious Studies in Secondary Schools)

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/duncan.htm>  
The best, single online source on Shajarat al-Durr, the  
Ayyubid Sultana and probably the most researched and  
written about Muslim woman of the medieval period.

<http://www.dnai.com/~gui/awairproductinfo.html>  
*A Medieval Banquet In The Alhambra Palace*, edited by Aubrey  
Shabbas and distributed by AWAIR: Arab World and Islamic  
Resources and School Services.