**Mz. Hope’s *Othello* Unit**

**Unit package includes these activities:**

* **Film viewing guide:** Thematically based, linked to current events Graffiti wall
* **Shakespearean insults**
* **Elizabethan/ Contemporary terms** and **Basic Shakespearology** (activity if time)
* **Words Shakespeare invented video**
* **Drama terminology** (quiz on this later!)
* **The Tragic Hero** and **The Great Chain of Being**
* **Shakespeare’s themes in our current events**
* **Take a Position activity**
* **Sociogram assignment and example**

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| **28****Movie****Insults** | **29****Movie****Terms and Shakespearology** | **30****Movie** | **31****Themes: organize into 5 categories, get in groups for tracing****Homework:****Current events**  | **1****Hand out Terms and Devices****Quizlet Practice Quiz!** |
| **4****Act 1, scene 1 and 3****Assignment: Sociogram, due June 15.**  | **5****Act 2, scene 3**  | **6****Act**  | **7****Act**  | **8****Quiz on Drama terms** |
| **11****Act**  | **12****Act**  | **13****Act**  | **14** | **15****Grammar Quiz!** |
| **18****Final!** | **19****Final!** | **20****NO CLASS!****School exams****A C** | **21****School exams****Howl?****B D** | **22****Curriculum completion day!** |

***Othello***

**Film Viewing Guide**

**Part one:** We will take three days to watch a film version of Othello. While you watch, jot down a list of themes (not statements!). Allow yourself to just flow with this, as we will have time later to organize and analyze. What stands out to you? Remember that **theme reflects and explores the human condition:** while Shakespeare’s plays were written over 400 years ago, he wrote as though he were a psychologist, mining the human experience. He did not tell us what he thought. Part of his genius was that for every view he posits or every character positioned to reveal a viewpoint, he provides a counterpoint. We are left to think for ourselves.

**Part two:** In groups of three, compare your lists. What is similar, what is different? Attempt to organize them into **five categories**. Share out.

**Part three: Choose ONE.** You will now go into the close reading of the play searching for evidence from the text (three examples) which illuminates or represents in some manner, this theme. For example, you could choose one character and align them with the theme of jealousy, then trace their behavior from the beginning to the middle to the end of the play, looking out for how they interact with this theme. Remember to note the Act, the scene, and the line number.

**Part four: Bonus marks!**

Memorize a quote which you think best exemplifies this theme and perform it for the class.

**Shakespeare’s Current Events Assignment**

Find an article in a current newspaper or site that exemplifies the theme prompt you have chosen in class, after watching the film version of the play. Print this article and accompany it with one paragraph in which you outline how that theme is connected to both *Othello* and to our contemporary world. For an example of the theme of scapegoating, we could look at how millions of Muslims can be blamed for the terrorist attacks committed by a few; who is scapegoated in *Othello*? Include a very brief summary of the newspaper article and then your analysis of how this theme was explored in the play. Include the Act and the scene and the line numbers, formatted as such: Act 3, scene 2, lines 1-12. Title your paragraph: *Unscrupulous leader driven by ambition* (This might link Macbeth with Trump). Print the article and the paragraph and have it ready to add to our **Graffiti Wall.**

**The Tragic Hero**

1. A person of high estate in a story where his decline is part of an exceptional calamity.
2. The sufferings of the tragic hero are part of the mental or emotional suffering which is more significant than any physical suffering. His suffering contrasts ironically with his earlier glory or happy state. *He contributes to his own calamities:* “Men themselves are the authors of their present woes.”
3. He possesses a fatal flaw, illustrating that he is mortal, with man’s weaknesses.
4. The fatal flaw carries with it a touch of greatness, and joined to some strong aspect of the tragic hero: nobility of the mind or genius. The onlooker is stirred not only by sympathy or pity, but by admiration, terror, and awe.
5. The tragic hero is a man of action, but he is also a man of thought. His feelings are deep, and his soul is searching. His miseries are compounded because he knows that serious problems have no simple answers. He may believe he is acting justly.
6. There is an element of catharsis in the reader/onlooker through vicarious experience.
7. There may be a suggestion of Fate (see Chain of Being) which may be seen in forces deemed larger than life, such as the person’s religion, his past, or the ideals of his society.

**The Great Chain of Being**

The Elizabethans viewed the universe as a tug of war between good and evil and pictured this struggle as a chain with God at one end and Satan at the other. The chain was only as strong as its weakest link, which is man, for man does unnatural things. When there is disorder in one place in the chain, there will be disorder in other places (such as floods, wars, comets, etc.). The concepts of the Great Chain of Being were influenced to some degree by astrology (astrologers believe that the heavenly bodies affected the affairs of men).

This chain was used to justify the hierarchal structure of society: upper class versus lower, men above women, the construction of race, etc.

There is a link here to the remnants of pagan belief. While the Elizabethans were a Christian society on the surface or on paper, they had many superstitions and practices and suspicions based on centuries of pagan belief in Britain. For further study on this, explore the Celts and the appropriation of their art into the Church, gargoyles, witch hunts, the medicalization of birth and women’s knowledge, horseshoes, the Maypole, “jumping the broom.”