

2013-2014 Lesson Study Grant

PART I: BACKGROUND

Title: “Indigenous Views of the Colonial Period in Perú: Guamán Poma de Ayala and *Primer nueva crónica y buen gobierno*”

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Discipline: Modern Languages, Spanish

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Course Name: Latin American Culture and Civilization

Course Description:

This course introduces the complex social, cultural, historical, geographical, and political contexts of the space we understand today as “Latin America.” In order to approach some of the principle issues that have marked the trajectory of Latin American civilizations and cultures—from pre-Columbian times through the present day—we analyze a wide variety of “cultural texts”—a textbook, maps, literature, art, music, primary historical documents, newspapers, Internet, and film. Special attention is paid to the legacy of colonialism, manifested in the continuation of asymmetrical political, economic, and social relationships established during the early sixteenth century. Our course is structured around topics such as the legacy of cultural encounters, “mestizaje”/hybridity, colonialism, discourses of social identities, and modern nation building.

Abstract:

Spanish 321 is the first upper level cultural studies course that Spanish majors and minors take after three semesters of language courses. This class challenges students to develop analytical and critical thinking skills in the foreign language (specifically those of *close reading*). Until they come to 321, students have been able to identify simple cultural similarities and differences between particular contexts. However, in their first encounter with historical content in Spanish, students are unable to recognize that control and access to information, class hierarchies, language, race, religion and other social factors have influenced the historical sources we access today.

As a means of developing analytical skills regarding Spanish cultural products and the power hierarchies imbedded in their writing, we decided to focus our lesson study on a chronicle finished around 1615 by indigenous Peruvian author Guamán Poma de Ayala, titled *Primer nueva crónica y buen gobierno*. In this 800-page handwritten manuscript

sent to King Philip III of Spain, Ayala creates a historical account of the Andes from the earliest human beings to the Incas and the Spanish conquest; and denounces the corruption and abuses of the Spanish toward the indigenous tribes. Ayala offers both text and illustrations to make his argument. For our lesson study we focused on Ayala's illustrations to design an introductory lesson, which challenges conceptions of History writing, authorship, and at the same time, introduced the study of language as a power structure.

PART II: THE LESSON

Learning Goals:

As mentioned above, this course is designed to provide students a broad overview of Latin American culture from pre-Colombian civilization until the present day. Students will learn about major historical moments and the cultural practices and products that emerge from them. This is the first class in the major in which students are focused on content rather than language. The historical and cultural knowledge offered in the course forms the foundation for upper-level, more specific culture and literature courses.

With the disciplinary and development goals in mind, at the end of the lesson study, students will be able to:

- Identify Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala and describe his life and work in the context of the colonial period in Peru.
- Analyze the illustrations from different perspectives (artistic, historic, anthropologic, and sociologic).
- Explain how Ayala uses drawings to communicate his message to the power of the Spanish Crown.
- Develop their own interpretation of the illustrations based on their knowledge of the historical and cultural period.

Other desired outcomes of this study include: creating a low stress atmosphere for students to engage each other on a critical thinking task; stimulate student discussion surrounding indigenous historical sources; question the status quo of historical documents; establish a culture of collaboration and an archive of lessons for future instructors of Spanish 321.

Pedagogical Theories:

Bloom's Taxonomy and some of the American Council on Teaching Foreign Language's (ACTFL) 5 C's (culture, communication, connection, communities, and comparisons)

LESSON PLAN

This lesson plan represents the unit presented on the Conquest and colonization periods. Students had read and discussed the Spanish Conquest of Spain from a historical perspective.

Student preparation:

In the class before the lesson students were assigned the task of watching a video, reading a brief introduction to Ayala's work, and answering some comprehension questions. They were also asked to look at the images they would be working on in class. (See appendix)

The first twenty minutes of class were dedicated to recalling information regarding the author, mediums of cultural communication in pre-Columbian civilizations and characteristics of the European Renaissance art (Ayala was aware of and used Renaissance sensibilities).

As a class we examined one image together establishing a set of useful vocabulary, aspects of the image that communicate a message and then different ways of viewing the image.

From there the class was split into groups of four. Each group was given 15 minutes and the task of interpreting their own image. Inside the groups, each member had the job of looking at the image from a different perspective: a historian, sociologist, anthropologist, or an art critic. Each of these "fields" would provide the group four different sets of information they could use to put together an informed interpretation of Ayala's message.

After putting their skills together each group would present their interpretation of the author's message and explain what elements of the image contributed to the communication of the message.

PART III: THE STUDY

APPROACH:**Plan for conducting observations and collecting evidence**

We planned for Dr. Granados to observe the class. Evidence of student learning was taken in the form of the presentations students performed and in an exam at the end of the unit.

OBSERVATIONS

Students in this class enjoyed working in small groups. They took a few minutes to clarify and establish their roles. In some of the groups the more talented students got to work quickly while weaker students struggled to understand of what their job consisted.

Dr. Brougham went to each group reiterating instructions and helping groups stay on task.

One of the surprising observations was to see the students given the role of Historian could not make the connections between what they had previously learned and the assigned image. Students had a very difficult time connecting the written “story” of history with the visual “image” or interpretation of that story. In fact, they had a hard time understanding how an image simple tells a story. There were other students who struggled to connect the idea of art critic or anthropologist to their image. Some images would have more evidence than others for each discipline.

Because of the challenges and the sheer number of students in the class (26) it was difficult for the professor to circulate to every group often enough. At points, while groups waited for her help, students shut down and began discussing topics not related to the course. Also, because of the extra help they needed, the class time grew short and half the presentations needed to be postponed for the next meeting.

Challenges

- Some students had a difficult time analyzing their image because they either had not studied or remembered previous lessons (history, for example), or didn’t clearly understand what elements to look for according to their specific role.
- In some cases their analysis was more descriptive than analytical. In a couple of cases the students resourced only to reiterated elements discussed in the pre-activity.
- When they became confused or ran out of items to discuss their discussions broke down into English
- In most presentations one person did the talking
- We did not finish with all the groups before the end of the 55 minutes.

At the end of this particular unit Dr. Brougham put one of the images from the lesson study on the exam for them to interpret. This seemed to be the most challenging part of the exam.

While the students enjoyed the challenge of the lesson, they did not quite have the necessary analytic skills developed to reach the desired outcome. While the lesson itself had its challenges, the lesson study illuminated a few key observations:

Lessons learned

This lesson study illuminated several challenges that may not have been otherwise noted by an instructor. After discussing the results of the observation and the exam we put together a list of ideas to implement the next time one of us teaches this lesson.

- Cap the course at 20 students
- Spend time with other images in prior units discussion how images tell stories

- Spend more time as a class analyzing a drawing. Divide the groups into larger groups of anthropologists, historians, etc. to develop questions according to their “discipline” and practice answering the questions.
- Use the time as a large group to write out a theme and the author’s message so that students are clear about what they are expected to produce once given the individual task.

APPENDIX

LESSON MATERIALS

Nueva corónica y buen gobierno (1615/1616)

Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala

Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala (1550- c. 1616) es una figura poco conocida del Virreinato del Perú. Nativo de Tawantinsuyo, Guamán Poma escribió una carta de más de 800 páginas destinada al rey Felipe III de España. En esta carta, titulada [*El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*](#), se ilustra con texto y con dibujos la historia de Tawantinsuyo y de la conquista de los españoles; Guamán Poma delata los abusos de los españoles hacia la gente indígena bajo la administración colonial, con la esperanza de corregir la corrupción de los oficiales y la explotación de los andinos bajo el Virreinato. Ve este video en YouTube sobre su vida y obra: <http://youtu.be/dbPCvX9k1U4>.

El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno nunca se publicó en el siglo XVII y hasta hoy día no se sabe mucho de su contexto. En 1920 el texto se descubrió en la biblioteca real de Dinamarca en Copenhagen y se publicó poco después. El texto en sí es un ejemplo de la multiculturalidad con palabras y conceptos en castellano, quechua y aymara. Tal vez el elemento más conocido del texto son las imágenes que Guamán Poma dibujó para ilustrar su historia de las dinastías indígenas y su contacto con los españoles. Vamos a enfocarnos en dichas imágenes. Hay muchas. Es importante ser paciente y pasar buen rato buscando buenas imágenes para las respuestas a las preguntas (a continuación).

Sitio del texto entero digitalizado:

<http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/titlepage/es/image/>

Antes de venir a la clase:

1. Piensen en las culturas precolombinas que hemos estudiado. Haga una lista de maneras en que se comunicaban. (Por ejemplo: los olmecas crearon unos bloques con dibujos de vegetales e insectos).

2. Revisa la imagen del "[Contador mayor y tesoro](#)". Explica los distintos elementos de la lámina.
3. Estudia el folio [668], [CAVILDO DE LA Q\[VE\]XA...](#), y comente la relación entre el texto y la imagen. El texto al lado de la lámina es una transcripción del original.
4. Pensando en las imágenes, desde tu perspectiva, ¿cuáles son algunas preocupaciones posibles de Guamán Poma en su obra?
5. ¿Cuál imagen te provoca la reacción más fuerte? ¿Cómo? ¿Por qué?

Link to Guaman Poma de Ayala's text:

<http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/info/en/frontpage.htm>

STUDY MATERIALS

VI. Láminas (20 puntos). Usted es un(a) investigador(a) cultural. Encuentras esta lámina en un cuaderno y necesitas explicar lo que significa a un estudiante de la Universidad de Wisconsin-La Crosse.

1. ¿Quién es el autor/artista? (2 puntos)
2. ¿Cómo se llama la obra en la que aparece? (3 puntos)
3. ¿Qué momento histórico narra y por qué es importante? (5 puntos)
4. ¿Quiénes son las personas en el dibujo y cómo muestra el autor la relación entre ellos? (5)
5. ¿Cómo refleja el arte barroco? (5)



