

LESSON TITLE: **Human Rights in National Memory**RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL(S) FOR IMPLEMENTATION: **United States History Grades 10 - 12**INSTRUCTIONAL TIME OR CLASS SESSIONS REQUIRED: **4 days; approx. 80-minute class periods**LESSON AUTHOR: **Semira Markos**AUTHOR AFFILIATION (SCHOOL OR OTHER INSTITUTION): **Hunterdon Central Regional H.S.**

BRIEF DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF LESSON

In this lesson, students explore and deconstruct nationalism in historical interpretation and consider how politics, power and identity influence the recognition of human rights violations and issues in contemporary society as well as in the context of national history. This lesson/project should be done at the end of a US history course or following a unit on the Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s and 1970s. It can also be done in an upper class elective course relating to human rights and genocide. Students will need prior knowledge on American history from 1700s – 1950 including the creation of the United Nations and the 30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This lesson plan requires four class days and is designed for approximately 80 minute blocks.

NJ CORE CURRICULUM STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN LESSON

- A. **6.1.12.A.13.b** - Analyze the effectiveness of national legislation, policies, and Supreme Court decisions (i.e., the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Equal Rights Amendment, Title VII, Title IX, Affirmative Action, Brown v. Board of Education, and Roe v. Wade) in promoting civil liberties and equal opportunities.
- B. **6.1.12.D.4.e** - Analyze the impact of the Civil War and the 14th Amendment on the development of the country and on the relationship between the national and state governments.
- C. **6.1.12.D.14.b** - Assess the effectiveness of actions taken to address the causes of continuing urban tensions and violence.

COMMON CORE CURRICULUM STANDARDS REFERENCED IN LESSON

- 1. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3**
Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- 2. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7**
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- 3. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8**
Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT CONNECTIONS IN LESSON

A. Reading primary and secondary sources and evaluating them for perspective, relevance, authority, and historical context.

B. Develop reading annotations into discussion questions.

D. Synthesize learned concepts and perspectives to develop a social action and civic engagement initiative.

LESSON GOALS/OBJECTIVES—Students will be able to:

- 1. Analyze various sources and perspectives to determine the ways in which groups and nations develop and interpret their historical memory.**
- 2. Explain the extent to which a nation's history and memory can be a tool to further or hinder current human rights struggles.**

LESSON METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

****Prior to the first day of the lesson**, students should have read and annotated the first set of readings, two primary source text accounts created on an online Q&A forum called Quora, both of which deal with historical memory in Germany. Students should **note vocabulary words and definitions, historical references and relevant context necessary to understand the text, as well as their own questions or reactions**. After completing the reading students should be prepared with noted responses to the reflection/discussion questions.

Day 1

- (20 minutes) Students will be seated at tables in groups of 4 or 5. Students will first develop a definition for the terms in the **DO NOW: “nationalism”, “national memory”, and “human rights.”** Students will then discuss their definitions with each other, examining differences and coming to a consensus on the meaning of these terms. Each student group will then discuss and come to consensus on their responses to questions 2 – 6.

The instructor should circulate throughout the room providing clarifications, asking guiding questions, or listening out for responses that would be good for the class to hear later.

Possible answers:

- **How does a society create nationalism?**
 - (creating symbols, celebrating certain events, heroes, and holidays, competing with rival nations, expanding its territory, engaging in a war effort, building and displaying military strength, reinforcing a culture of obedience to authority, repression or alienation of dissenters)
- **How does a society create and maintain national memory?**
 - (recounting its origins, defining citizenship and origin of its peoples, marking its transformations and progress, creating books, curriculum, historical sites, monuments, and museums for educational or commemorative purposes)

- **How does a society define and protect human rights?**
 - A. (according to natural rights that are basic and necessary to survive and flourish, or the Four Freedoms, the 1948 UDHR; by creating constitutions that uphold human rights, creating laws to expand, define, or protect rights, by enforcing laws, by challenging violations of rights in court)
 - **How can nationalism be used to violate human rights?**
 - A. (efforts to engage in war, expand territory and the power of government, protect national security by restricting dissent and surveillance, and define a nation's history according to perspectives most favorable to groups in power)
 - B. (these could violate property rights, lead to war crimes, violate free speech, privacy, and downplay the contributions and struggles of minorities in a country)
 - **How can human rights arguments be used to fuel nationalism?**
 - A. (peoples' struggles for human rights can lead to self-determination, defining a group identity, demanding independence, creating a nation)
 - B. (governments can rally military action against other countries using claims of human rights violations)
2. (10 – 15 minutes) Discuss students' responses as a class and highlight, question, or elaborate on their contributions as needed.
3. (5 minutes) Before students begin discussion of the first set of readings, introduce the goals of the lesson for the next two days:
- **Analyze various sources and perspectives to determine the ways in which groups and nations develop and interpret their historical memory.**
 - **Explain the extent to which a nation's history and memory can be a tool to further or hinder current human rights struggles.**
4. (25 minutes) Students should take out their annotations and reflections on the first two. Instruct students to use their notes and answers to the reflection questions to discuss question #5 and 6:
- *Based on what you read and the discussion you had with your group, revisit your definitions of nationalism, patriotism, and human rights. What change(s) would you make to your definition(s) and why?*
 - *If you were to design a memorial or a field trip for students of United States history, what historical sites or events would you select to recognize and learn from human rights issues in U. S. history?*
5. As they address these two questions, students will review their collective understanding of the reading and **share their reactions and reflections on the questions**. In their discussion, students will use protocols, skills, and appropriate language for effective class discussion (see attached discussion rubric). Students will also **address questions that their group members had** about the text and each other's responses.

The instructor should circulate throughout the room providing clarifications, asking guiding questions, or listening for ideas that would be good for the class to hear later. As needed, the instructor should discuss

students' responses with the full class and highlight, question, or elaborate on their contributions as needed.

6. (10 – 15 minutes) Solicit group responses and note them on the board for questions 3 and 6: **possible answers may include** *genocide of Native American peoples, slavery (the trade, the institution and its laws, and the culture), persecution of religious or political minorities and dissenters, exploitation of migrant and poor workers, persecution of workers unions, child labor, economic and political oppression of women, race riots in major American cities, practice of lynching, police brutality, American imperialism in territories)*
7. Introduce the homework reading: “America’s Willful Ignorance.” Review the directions for the homework assignment. Students will **annotate** the readings: note vocabulary words and definitions, historical references and relevant context necessary to understand the reference, their reactions to what they read, as well as at least one own discussion question they will pose to their group.

At the end of Day One, the instructor should collect the first two stages of student work: Do Now and responses to reflection questions 1 – 6. Review and note feedback as needed.

Day 2

8. (5 minutes) Return student work from the previous class session (reflection on history education in Germany) and provide feedback; students will need to refer to the readings and their reflections to continue the activity. Review the goals and objectives of this lesson, emphasizing that the next set of sources will require students to read more critically, connect back to claims and arguments presented in the previous lesson, and develop their inquiry skills by considering further research.
9. (10 minutes) Students should rejoin their groups and pose their discussion questions on “America’s Willful Ignorance...” and use examples or references to the text for context and in their responses. Students may also ask for more clarification questions (definitions and vocabulary, explanations of context historical references etc.)

As an additional point of discussion, ask students the following: **What human rights issues do the authors address as concerns in American society? What examples do the authors provide?...** and discuss with their group: **In what ways are these issues influenced by history and national memory?**

10. (30 minutes) Introduce the source information for the TEDTalk Video, the speaker’s background and the discussion questions. *The speaker is Brian Stevenson who heads the Equal Justice Initiative, a non-profit organization that works to reduce poverty and challenge inequity in the criminal justice system.* Students will watch the video as a class and note stated facts and statistics, the speaker’s points or opinions, as well as their own questions or reactions. **Specifically ask students to consider how a society’s identity can be defined by its economic and technological successes as well as failures in protecting human rights.**
11. (10 minutes) Students will discuss reflection questions 7 - 10 with their group.

The instructor should circulate throughout the room providing clarifications, asking guiding questions, or listening out for responses that would be good for the class to hear later. Discuss students' responses as a class and highlight, question, or elaborate on their contributions as needed.

12. (10 minutes) Ask groups to choose the best question their group members created for #10 and pose them to the class.
13. Introduce the homework reading: "Texas Schools Officials..." and "Schools of American Historiography". Students will **annotate** the readings: note vocabulary words and definitions, historical references and relevant context necessary to understand the reference, their reactions to what they read, as well as at least responses to the reflection questions #11 – 15.

The instructor should collect student responses to the reflections questions for the video. Review and note feedback as needed.

Day 3

14. (5 minutes) Return student work from the previous class (reflection on the TEDTalk Video and the articles on textbooks and historiography; students will need to refer to previous readings and their reflections to continue the activity. Review the goals and objectives of this lesson, emphasizing that the next set of sources will require students to read more critically, connect back to claims and arguments presented in the previous lesson, and develop their inquiry skills by considering further research.
15. (20 minutes) Students will rejoin their groups and **review their notes and reflections on the two readings they completed for homework**. Circulate throughout the room providing clarifications, asking guiding questions, or listening out for responses that would be good for the class to hear later.
16. (10 minutes) Review students' responses to questions #11 – 15 as a class and highlight, question, or elaborate on their contributions as needed.
17. (10 minutes) Model for students the ways in which they can turn their response to questions 3 and 6 into the basis of a social action plan. Present students with the example of the memorial at "Wounded Knee Massacre". Show students images of the grave site and conditions of the grounds, as well as the sign post erected at the site. Ask students what story, lessons about human rights, emotional impact, and level of growth and reflection the site might inspire for visitors. Suggest different ways the site can be made more educational and commemorative, such as commissioning a statue, art work or building a small museum nearby.
18. (15 minutes) Ask students to **revisit their responses for question #3 and #6** and use their group's ideas and discussion to choose create a list of possible topics for their social action plan project. Students should select one human rights related historical event, figure, or organization from the 20th century which their project will propose to commemorate or create an educational experience for students learning about history and their contemporary society.

Day 4 (extend as needed for project work)

19. (5 minutes) Introduce the project and directions. Each group may **choose from three options:** a proposal for a class field trip to an historical site or a design proposal for an historical monument or memorial or a plan for a special exhibit in a museum.
20. (45 minutes) Allow students to use the linked resources to brainstorm ideas for their social action **plan and prepare a draft proposal.** Students will need access to computers and class textbooks. Students may write their group's proposal in a Google Doc or design a poster that advertises their ideas. Let students know that they will share their proposal in 5-minute informal presentation to the class. **The group's written proposal must:**
- Identify a specific historical event and locate a site in the United States relevant to this event
 - Offer a rationale:
 1. explaining the necessity for American students to visit and learn about this event and site
 2. connecting the historical event to a current human rights issue and justifying why the group believes this issue must be prioritized.
 3. suggesting ways in which students and schools can share their learning with their families or their communities.
21. (10 - 15 minutes) Each group will informally present their draft proposal to the class and ask for feedback before beginning further research for the project. Students can remain seated or stand at the front of the classroom. Listeners should ask questions or note and share positive or constructive feedback based on the rubric and criteria of the project sheet.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE (HOW WILL YOU KNOW, BASED ON ACTUAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND WORK PRODUCTS, THAT THE GOALS OF THE LESSON ARE BEING ACHIEVED?)

- A. Students will be assessed based on their participation in the group and full class discussion using the rubric: their contribution of questions, comments, listening and responding to classmates, referring to text and prior knowledge, relevant previous lessons and activities.**
- B. Students will be assessed based on their written responses to the reflection questions at each stage of the activity, including the Do Now.**
- C. Students will be assessed on their annotation of the texts.**
- D. Student will be assessed on their application of these concepts to a social action plan proposal and presentation which will be graded based on the attached rubric.**

LEARNING RESOURCES

- A. Universal Declaration of Human Rights - <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- B. Quora response to "How do German Students Learn about the Holocaust?" - http://www.slate.com/blogs/quora/2014/02/06/how_do_german_students_learn_about_the_holocaust.html
- C. Quora response: Apr 12, 2013 - <https://www.quora.com/Germany/What-is-it-like-for-people-growing-up-in-Germany-to-learn-about-the-Holocaust-in-school/answers/2361671>
- D. TED Talk Video: Brian Stevenson - https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice

- E. Washington Post Article: "Texas Officials: Schools should teach that slavery was a side issue to the Civil war"
- https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/150-years-later-schools-are-still-a-battlefield-for-interpreting-civil-war/2015/07/05/e8fbd57e-2001-11e5-bf41-c23f5d3face1_story.html?utm_term=.ad145d18f306
- F. Schools of American Historiography (appendix)
- G. Discussion Rubric (appendix)

EXTENSION RESOURCES

Extended Activities:

- A. Formal Research and Presentation of:
- Contact
 - Memorial Sites Design Project – Using draft proposal
 - Student Field Trip Planning Project – Using draft proposal

Research Resources/Readings:

- A. <https://www.nps.gov/americanindian/>
- B. <https://www.nationalparks.org/connect/blog/labor-day-weekend-honor-legacy-pullman-strike>
- C. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/04/women-equality-national-monument/477828/>
- D. <http://www.npr.org/2016/06/24/483385747/obama-names-lgbt-landmark-as-national-monument>
- E. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/28/education/28civil.html?mcubz=1>
- F. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/germans/germans/education.html>
- G. <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/06/09/world/teaching-nazi-past-to-german-youth.html?mcubz=1&pagewanted=print>
- H. <http://www.blackpast.org/national-african-american-historic-landmarks-state>
- I. <https://ejj.org/national-lynching-memorial>
- J. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/18-major-moments-hispanic-history_us_55f70275e4b042295e370d3c

MODIFICATIONS OR ADAPTATIONS OF THE LESSON FOR DIFFERENTIATED LEARNERS (CLASSIFIED STUDENTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, OTEHRS)

1. For higher level students, close reading of text may be assigned for homework.
2. Group students to account for and balancing varying levels of literacy, questions, and discussion skills.
3. Provide translations of text in other languages.
4. Ask students to use historical examples relevant to their family, cultural, geographical background.
5. Provide highlighted or annotated versions of the texts for struggling learners.

Materials

DO NOW

1. With a partner define the three terms below. *Make sure you examine and discuss your definitions as a group before using them to answer the questions below.*

Nationalism	National Memory	Human Rights

For each question below, provide one example from American history (1600 – 1970):

2. How does a society create nationalism?
3. How does a society create and maintain national memory?
4. How does a society define and protect human rights?
5. How can nationalism be used to violate human rights?
6. How can human rights arguments be used to fuel nationalism?

How Do German Children Learn About the Holocaust?

By *Quora Contributor*

FEB. 6 2014 9:19 AM

A former concentration camp prisoner, right, attends a ceremony at the memorial site of the former Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oswiecim, Poland, on Jan. 27, 2014.

Photo by Janek Skarzynski/AFP/Getty Images



This question originally appeared on [Quora](#).

Answer by contributor, who wonders a lot about Germany and her fellow Germans:

I will make this one a little more personal because I understood the question to be aimed in that way. I was born in 1985, so it was the generation of my grandparents and great-grandparents who were alive during World War II. I think for me, there were roughly three stages of realization.

Knowing there was some war in the not too distant past: I knew that my grandfather had been involved in a war, but that was something very distant for me. He only told the story how he had to ride a horse but was afraid of horses. The whole idea of war was not something I could understand at that time. But it was also clear from movies and stuff that Germany lost the war and that something horrible happened back then.

Learning about World War II and the Holocaust at school: Overall, I think we learned about this time period at least three times. The first time the Holocaust came up in detail was in grade three or four, at the age of 9 or 10. The whole topic had a weird fascination for me because it made sense of a lot of small things in German culture, and finally we learned all about it. At the same time, I was horrified. I couldn't imagine how people could believe these screwed-up ideas and do such horrible things in the name of these ideas. But it was a horror like I have for the witch trials and stuff like that. I didn't make the connection between the war my grandfather fought and World War II. Later, we went to the Dachau Concentration Camp (as most schools around Munich do), and it was interesting and informative but not really disturbing. In Germany, the whole idea of "your own people" is not encouraged, and there is not a big feeling of unity (except if it's about football/soccer)...

Visiting Auschwitz: When I was 16, I participated in a student exchange with a Polish school, and we went to Poland for two weeks. In general, we had a great time, and the people were lovely. But of course, as a German when you are in Poland, you have to visit Auschwitz. This name stands for everything that happened, and the gate with its infamous writing is known everywhere. We came there as a mixed German-Polish group, and were separated so everybody could have a tour in their native language. So we were only 15 German teenagers, and that made it pretty intense. For me, it was the first time that I really understood the full monstrosity of the Holocaust, not only intellectually but also emotionally—and made the connection to my own family. If you have never been to Auschwitz, **this is what you see there**.

And when I saw these things that were taken from the prisoners (there is also one room just filled with hair), all the pieces came together in my mind, and I realized the first time on an emotional basis the whole horror. And I think I was not the only one. I found the toughest guy in our group, who would normally never show feelings, standing in front of a display cabinet with baby shoes crying. When the tour ended, we didn't know how to look our Polish friends in the eyes again, because I think most of us felt unbelievably guilty as it was "our"

grandparents who did that to "their" grandparents (together with many, many other innocent people). I remember us even talking about the fact that we were insecure on how to deal with that. Luckily, our Polish friends were pretty cool: When they saw us again after their tour and saw that we were all shocked and some still crying, they came up to us and told us that we shouldn't be ashamed at all and that we are not responsible for the deeds of our ancestors. It took me a few years to get to the point where I could really feel that way, but I got there.

And that is how I feel today about it. The Holocaust was horrible, and I think as a country, we have the responsibility not to forget about it and also to do what we can to let something like that never happen again.

But personally I think I am not different from any other person on this planet: able to do the best and the worst. And it is my own responsibility what I make of that; for that, it doesn't matter what my grandfather has or has not done. Of course it would be nice to have ancestors I could be simply proud of, but in the end, who can? Every country has dark spots in history; ours just happen to be huge and pretty recent.

What is it like for people growing up in Germany to learn about the Holocaust in school?

What is it like to learn that your own people have committed such crimes just two generations ago? How does one deal with that emotionally, and how, if at all, does it change one's view of the world, and the German people?

Anonymous

Written Apr 12, 2013

One of the key points in the question details definitely is the wording "*your own people*". Growing up post-cold war, in the center of Europe, it's a time and place in the world where that sentiment has been less emphasized. The concept of a people was so over the top abused in the first half of the 20th century, not only but most sadly in Germany, that the pendulum in that place swung in the opposite direction. Flags are rarely flown apart from sports events (and even that's a fairly recent development); you're not gonna assemble in school every morning and pledge to your country. Actually, you will never *ever* do that. Patriotism is still highly frowned upon. You will meet enough adults who can't sing the national anthem. Many people have stronger ties with the region they are from and also with Europe than in other places. They have nice maps on [Atlas of European Values](#) on this.

So you could say your view on the German people is unlikely to change for the worse because the *modus vivendi* isn't over the top positive to begin with. Cynics and outsiders regularly call it a **guilt complex** but those... don't understand the first thing about Germans and their mentality. A visit or even spending a decade of your adult life there isn't enough time to ever understand it, if you haven't grown up in Germany yourself; most modern, young Germans have very balanced and matter-of-fact view on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.

Germany is the nation that travels abroad the most. If you were even a lower middle-class kid (so that encompasses the vast majority), you'd still be taken to other countries maybe a few times per year, probably you lived close to a (non-visible) border in what used to be West Germany. It wasn't/isn't nearly as multi-cultural a society as the US or the UK but you were/are sure to be in constant contact with other countries/cultures and considered them interesting and friendly, normal. At that point, **you won't even begin to comprehend the why when someone tells you there used to be constant war and your country was at fault.**

Furthermore, as a kid - and you will get in touch with the Holocaust as a kid - history isn't exactly your prime concern, anywhere in the world, unless maybe your parents make it one. You gradually grow up with all the TV, the books, the news and indeed the stories and teachings in school as you slowly start understanding more about

the atrocities that happened. You'll hear about many other wars that happened on the very soil you stand on since at least the Romans. First, you tend to lump them all in together as things that happened long ago (what's the difference between 50 or 2000 years to a child) but one, the last one, will start to stand out over time.

I doubt there is a sudden enlightenment, even if one account or the other might resonate with you more for whatever reason (e.g. your primary school teacher telling you vividly how they were constantly afraid of the sirens when he was your age; hearing the explosions coming closer in the bomb shelter).

Also have a look at similar Quora questions, where people share such sentiments, e.g., [*What's it like growing up in Germany and seeing WWII movies as a child?*](#) That description is fairly apt, you're all the time watching these black and white documentaries which quite automatically provide a disconnect to the modern world, your world. So, while you know all these things and also that they happened on your soil (more or less), **it takes getting much older until you realize your grandparents might have been involved**. This is maybe what you mean with "thoughtful people" in the question details, it's obviously not the case for young kids, however thoughtful they are.

If you're lucky and your grandparents are still alive, you can then ask them, maybe they'll answer. Maybe here the shock occurs, if you yourself are now closely and tangibly connected with the past, way more than any movie, textbook or documentary ever could provide. Accounts of that are also on Quora: [*What does it feel like to grow up with parents or grandparents who supported the Nazis?*](#)

This personal relation is so different from the one with "your own people" and, maybe contrary to past times and other countries, so much more powerful that it is way more likely to ever create a state of shock. It doesn't happen to everyone and again, you won't rationally understand from your own perspective and thus are possibly finding it easy to deal with it emotionally, but despite the easy option of dismissal, it'll provide much food for thought for many years to come.

Concerning the last part of your helpful question details ("only two generations ago"): My late mother used to say that it will be a very different world when everyone involved is dead, and for better or worse that could seem to prove true.

Day 1 - Reflection and Discussion Questions:

1. According to these two accounts, what experiences do Germans have when learning about the Holocaust?
2. What misconceptions about German society do these accounts address?
3. In the first account, the author says, *“Every country has dark spots in history; ours just happens to be huge and pretty recent.”* What would you identify as “dark spots” in American history?
4. How are these descriptions of German students’ education/understanding of their national history different from your education/understanding of American history?
5. Based on what you read and the discussion you had with your group, revisit your definitions of nationalism, national memory, and human rights. What change would you make to your definition and why?
6. Most landmarks in America are devoted to achievements and celebrate natural beauty, military efforts, or technological triumph. If you were to design a field trip for students of American history, what historical sites or events would you choose to recognize and memorialize human rights issues in American history? *(Browse through the linked resources in Classroom for ideas.)*

Homework 2

Read and annotate the two articles below. Note vocabulary words and definitions, historical references and relevant context necessary to understand the text, as well as your own questions or reactions.

America's Willful Ignorance of Our History of Lynching Feeds Racial Hatred

It's easy to focus on individual racist acts and condemn the actors. But that doesn't get us closer to solving the problem of racism.

CHRISTEN A. SMITH, MELISSA N. STUCKEY

MARCH 18, 2015



iStockPhoto/© ftwitty

National condemnation of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon chapter at the University of Oklahoma has a cruel irony that highlights a painful truth: By singly condemning individual racist acts and refusing to talk openly about our country's complex relationship to anti-black violence, we allow racial hatred to fester under our noses.

As a nation, we need to do two things in response to the SAE scandal: Take a long hard look at the history of state-sanctioned, anti-black violence, and recognize that this violence has been an integral part of our nation's culture for quite some time.

When the racist chant that fraternity members sang on their way to a party came to light, condemnation of SAE was understandably swift and sharp: Two fraternity members identified from the video have been expelled. The university has soundly denounced the fraternity's actions and shut down its campus activities.

In all likelihood, the O.U. SAE members knew their chant was racist. That's why they sang it in private rather than in public. But this is not really about them, now, is it? This college crisis is about our collective responsibility as a society to address, openly and honestly, tough issues of race. If you think it is O.K. to use the N-word and propone lynching in a song, then a history lesson probably won't help you. But it can help those of us who do not wish to be racist.

As a nation, we prefer to downplay the integral role racism has played in forming our country. Yet, the choice to publicly minimize or ignore racial violence, both past and present, is a dangerous one that in fact enables violence against black bodies. Think: Madison, New York, Ferguson. It also allows for the image of a black man hanging from a tree to become a witty line in a fraternity chant. But ultimately, the act of ignoring our history damages and delegitimizes the institutions its perpetrators claim to protect.

Ironically, African-Americans once believed Oklahoma was their "promised land." At the turn of the last century, tens of thousands risked everything in search of freedom there. They instead found themselves violently attacked, lynched like Laura and L. D. Nelson, or driven en masse out of more than 50 towns and cities. Blacks

were even expelled from the bucolic college town of Norman, the home of O.U., in 1897. Forgetting this violence and exclusion naturalizes the absence of black people from wide swaths of contemporary Oklahoma.

Moreover, the histories of anti-black violence and migration in Texas and Oklahoma are intertwined. The majority of Oklahoma's black settlers came from Texas. [Parker Rice and Levi Pettit](#), the students expelled for leading the SAE chant, are from Dallas. Dallas is just down the road from Paris, where [Henry Smith](#) was lynched. It is also close to Waco, where [Jessie Washington](#) was lynched. Prior to living in Oklahoma, the Nelson family lived in the Waco area. Other black Oklahoma settlers originally lived in Paris and Dallas. And just down the road from all of these cities is Austin, state capital and home of the University of Texas, where President Bill Powers said he would open an investigation into the possibility that the racist SAE chant has been [sung at UT as well](#).

Here's another lesson: Anti-black sentiment was never just a black people's problem. In 1919, NAACP President [John Shillady](#), a white man, was beaten by local officials and run out of Austin for trying to organize blacks in that city. We forget these stories at our own risk.

Black Oklahomans and black Texans were also civil rights movement pioneers. Heman Sweatt, Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher, and George W. McLaurin risked life and livelihood to integrate the Universities of Texas and Oklahoma in the 1940s and 1950s. Their school desegregation lawsuits preceded the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 that should have signaled the death knell for school segregation across the United States.

... To be sure, it is important to reproach the fraternity's actions. It is equally important, however, to recognize that SAE did not single-handedly produce the narratives of racial hatred that its chant espouses. As Yale English professor [Jacqueline Goldsby argues](#), lynching has been a cultural logic in our nation. And we have yet to really deal with that.

Instead of confronting the realities of our past head on, we are increasingly turning away from them. In February, an Oklahoma House committee voted to ban AP History in public high schools because, the committee claimed, it only teaches the [negative side of U.S. history](#). In 2010, the Texas school board approved a controversial textbook that waters down slavery. Both states echo similar measures in states like Arizona, where [teaching ethnic studies in public school has been banned](#).

Every year we give lectures on African-American history and culture at our respective universities. Painfully, some of them recount the stories of [Henry Smith, Jessie Washington](#) and the aforementioned Nelsons, black people accused of committing crimes against whites and, shorn of their constitutional rights, brutally lynched in Texas and Oklahoma. Smith was a black man with a mental disability who was tortured to death in front of a crowd of 10,000 people in Paris, Texas, in 1893. Washington, 18, was burned to death by a crowd of over 15,000 people in Waco, Texas, in 1916. Nelson was raped and lynched by white townspeople alongside her 14-year-old son, L.D., in Okemah, Oklahoma, in 1911. The heavy silence that inevitably follows these lectures is often broken by a student, who with raised hand, asks of the crimes alleged against those lynched, "But did they do it?"

The truth is almost [4,000 African-Americans](#)—men, women and children—were lynched in the South between 1877 and 1950. And lynching was not an exclusively Southern phenomenon. Most college students know nothing about this side of America. They have been brought up in a culture that fixates on the [false notion that black people are a threat](#) to white safety and security. Their instinct is to try to rationalize lynching as a justifiable, perhaps even an understandable punishment for a crime rather than racial terrorism. What is frightening about this position is a century ago defenders of lynching used the same arguments to protect their right to kill black people.

Lynching and other forms of racial violence are about power—to control and to exclude. In the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries, it was used to deny African-Americans full access to the American dream. Indeed this violence often occurred just because African-Americans tried to exercise their rights as citizens.

Consider: **Jimmie Lee Jackson and countless others** who were lynched in the pursuit of the right to vote in places like Selma. Whites also **lynched black people to dispossess them from their land** in Georgia, Arkansas and Missouri.

The now infamous **Sigma Alpha Epsilon chant** simply regurgitates the old idea that African-Americans are not legitimate members of American society. “*You can hang them from a tree but they won’t sign with SAE,*” the damning video shows. Maybe, our college students think it is O.K. to sing **racist chants** because we unwittingly sanction racism by refusing to talk about the anti-black violence that lingers.

Day 2 – Reflection and Discussion Questions:

As you watch the TEDTalk video, note vocabulary words and definitions, historical references and relevant context necessary to understand the speaker's arguments, as well as your own questions or reactions.

TED Talk Video: Brian Stevenson

https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice

Notes:

Facts and Statistics	Speaker's Comments/Opinions	My Questions or Reactions

7. What comparison does Stevenson make between Germans' relationship with the history of the Holocaust and Americans' relationship with the history of slavery and the history of Jim Crow?
8. What role does national identity play in debating human rights issues in American history?
9. How does this source contribute to or contradict claims from the first two accounts from German citizens?
10. Write your own discussion question and pose it to your group:

Homework 3**Texas officials: Schools should teach that slavery was ‘side issue’ to Civil War**

By [Emma Brown](#) July 5, 2015

Five million public school students in Texas will begin using new social studies textbooks this fall based on state academic standards that barely address racial segregation. The state’s guidelines for teaching American history also do not mention the Ku Klux Klan or Jim Crow laws.

And when it comes to the Civil War, children are supposed to learn that the conflict was caused by “sectionalism, states’ rights and slavery” — written deliberately in that order to telegraph slavery’s secondary role in driving the conflict, according to some members of the state board of education.

Slavery was a “side issue to the Civil War,” said Pat Hardy, a Republican board member, when the board adopted the standards in 2010. “There would be those who would say the reason for the Civil War was over slavery. No. It was over states’ rights. ...

If teaching history is how society shows younger generations who they are and where they came from, the Civil War presents [unique challenges](#), especially because of the fundamental differences in the way the cause of the war is perceived 150 years after its last battle.

Nowhere is the rejection of slavery’s central role more apparent than in Texas, where elected members of the state board of education [revised state social studies standards in 2010](#) to correct for what they said was a liberal slant.

Students in Texas are required to read the [speech](#) Jefferson Davis gave when he was inaugurated president of the Confederate States of America, an address that does not mention slavery. But students are not required to read a famous [speech](#) by Alexander Stephens, Davis’s vice president, in which he explained that the South’s desire to preserve slavery was the cornerstone of its new government and “the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution.”

Schools of American Historiography

Defining Historiography: Two historians using the same facts may come to two different interpretations of a historical event. Contemporary British and American views of the battles of Lexington and Concord would likely differ because the two sides held different assumptions. Any two historians several years later also hold different assumptions, and produce different historical accounts. Decades later other historians declare that the previous historians only perceived part of the truth. Generation after generation rewrites history and theoretically comes closer to the truth. In actuality each historian reflects the time period in which they live. The study of changing historical interpretations, shifting emphasis, and different methodologies is called historiography.

Domestic History

1. New Left Historiography (1960's-1980's):

Great changes accompanied America's transition into the 1960s. The 1950s had been characterized by a general agreement on national goals, by secure self-confidence, and by an easy categorization of other nations into good guys and bad guys. In the late 1950s, our smug self-assurance dissolved in successive waves of polarization over the issues of racism, imperialism and poverty. The seeming reemergence of conflict in current events stimulated a reexamination of conflict in American history.

The new champions of the theme of conflict in our history constituted an approach termed the "New Left". The "new" theoretically differentiates them from the unimaginative, Socialist Party orientation of the old left of the 1930s and 1940s. The "left" signifies an orientation toward methods and concepts that focus on the masses and their experiences, "history from the bottom up," as it is called. Unlike the old left, the New Left avoids the preconceived molds of Marxist theories, which distorted the facts to fit a foreign doctrine. The historians of the New Left demand the inclusion of those features of our history that explain how we came to be a violent, racist, repressive society.

The renewed emphasis on conflict and polarization was fed by the civil rights struggle. Unrest over the draft and the war in Vietnam, impatience with the pace of civil rights, and examples of political assassinations combined to produce explosions of violence in the cities in the 1960s. The final ingredients convulsing American society was the emergence of first the women's, and then finally, the gay and lesbian movement. Women and minorities destroyed the homogenized image of "consensus" America. The new emphasis was on our pluralism, the existence of many different peoples, ethnic groups, and races.

2. Neo-Conservative Historiography (1980's-Present):

During the 1970's and '80's there were many reactions to the changes sought by New Left social movements. The resulting Neo-Conservative history movement is arguably a simple re-assertion of consensus historiography. Like Consensus historians, Neo-Conservatives stress traditional American values, viewing the U.S. as a uniquely moral, stable country. In general, our commonalities are emphasized over our differences. Thus, Neo-Conservatives downplay conflicts in history, and dismiss New Left historians as "politically correct". In distancing themselves from the expressly political style of the New Left, while celebrating American traditions, Neo-Conservatives may present themselves as non-ideological and objective.

However, there are differences between Consensus and Neo-Conservative historians. Today, neo-conservatives are somewhat divided over the proper role of the Federal government. While many neo-conservatives are deeply suspicious of the use of Federal power, especially after the Civil Rights movement, some neo-conservatives stress the historic use of the Federal government to shape American culture, and now want Federal power to support conservative goals.

11. How does politics play a role in historiography? What institutions in American society act as “gatekeepers” of historical memory and education?

12. Consider the values emphasized in each school of historiography described above. What are the benefits and the drawbacks of these differing approaches to national history when it comes to learning about difficult topics such as genocide and human rights violations? **Cite specific values in each approach of perspectives that make addressing human rights issues easier or more difficult.*

“New Left”	“Neo-Conservative”
Benefits:	Benefits:
Drawbacks:	Drawbacks:

13. What does Brown believe is one way in which national memory is shaped?

14. How does this source compare to or contradict the first two sources you read about education from German citizens?

15. What other types of sources and information could be used to corroborate or challenge the perspectives, claims and arguments made in all four accounts? Where and how could you find and access such sources?

National Memory and Human Rights Project

In the past several days, you have explored and deconstructed nationalism in historical interpretation and considered how politics, power and identity influence the recognition of human rights violations and issues in contemporary society as well as in the context of national history. Based on what you have learned, your group will explore two ways in which this influence can be used to protect and promote human rights rather than ignore it. You group will choose to either design a memorial, a special exhibit in an existing museum, or a field trip and activity/project for students.

Part I (40 pts.)

Your group will prepare a formal proposal that does the following:

1. Research ONE historical event and gather information about:
 - **Context (who, what, where, when, developments/conditions, or decisions that caused this event)**
 - **Short-term effects including the people/groups impacted**
 - **Long-term consequences**
 - **Relevance to a CURRENT human rights issue**

The event must have taken place between 1865 and 2016.

The human rights issue must be addressed in the [30 articles of the UDHR](#).

2. **Locate a site** in the United States or US territories relevant to this event upon which to create a memorial, a museum exhibit or to which to take students on a field trip.
3. **Offer a rationale** for the proposal:
 - explaining the necessity or value for American students to learn about this particular event and visit the site
 - Showing your research connecting the historical event to a current human rights issue and justifying why the group believes this issue must be prioritized
 - suggesting ways in which students and schools can share their learning with their families or their communities.
4. **Identify** an organization, representative, NGO, or museum that might **support** this proposal.
5. **Anticipate resistance** and opposition to the proposal; identify two arguments that would be made from that perspective and have a rebuttal/counterargument prepared.

The proposal must be written in paragraph format and submitted in a Google Doc in classroom. (2 pages single-spaced)

Research Resources/Readings:

- <https://www.nps.gov/americanindian/>
- <https://www.nationalparks.org/connect/blog/labor-day-weekend-honor-legacy-pullman-strike>
- <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/04/women-equality-national-monument/477828/>
- <http://www.npr.org/2016/06/24/483385747/obama-names-lgbt-landmark-as-national-monument>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/28/education/28civil.html?mcubz=1>
- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/germans/germans/education.html>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/06/09/world/teaching-nazi-past-to-german-youth.html?mcubz=1&pagewanted=print>
- <http://www.blackpast.org/national-african-american-historic-landmarks-state>
- <https://ejl.org/national-lynching-memorial>
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/18-major-moments-hispanic-history_us_55f70275e4b042295e370d3c

Memorial Design	Museum Exhibit	Field Trip
<p>1. What are the key messages communicated by each memorial?</p> <p>2. What does the place (location) of each memorial say about its message and significance?</p> <p>3. How are symbols used in the memorial's design important in the development of ideas about heritage and its preservation?</p>	<p>1. What are the key messages communicated by the exhibit?</p> <p>2. How are the artifacts used in the exhibit important in the development of ideas about heritage and its preservation?</p> <p>Tips: http://www.teamdesignshop.com/blog/2014-01-23-10-tips-museum-exhibit-design-success</p>	<p>Research and Consider</p> <p>Cost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Entrance fees • Food <p>Design Student Activities during and after field trip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection • Portfolio • Photography • Social Action Project

Part II (20 pts.)

Each group will present their proposal to the class. Prepare a summary (bulleted) of the above points in 3 – 4 Google slides with supplementing primary source images, and a works cited slide for all research.

Listeners will ask questions and note/share feedback and reactions.

Criteria	Expectations
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Title and Slogan that depicts the mood, purpose and content of the plan • Accurate background information on a American human rights issues that is properly cited • Incorporates relevant UDHR Articles into the educational purpose of the plan Goals of the social action plan are creative and attainable • Predicts potential barriers to success for the social action plan
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format chosen is an appropriate format for the human rights issue • Format is captivating and engaging • Format utilizes appropriate and engaging language and visuals • Written final proposal is thoughtfully completed and considers interactions with multiple organizations
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming work and draft proposal shows thoughtful development and clear evidence of peer review and editing • Rough work shows clear evidence of how independent and cooperative thinking developed over time • Accurate and thoughtful goal setting and reflection throughout inquiry project • Detailed, thoughtful and critical reflections on each step of the research and creative process, considering both successes and challenges • Reflection sets specific/detailed goals for future learning

Discussion Rubric

	10	9-8	7-6	5-4	3-1
Quality of Comments	Timely and appropriate comments that reflect the questions at hand, thoughtful and reflective, responds respectfully to other student's remarks, provokes questions and comments from the group	Volunteers comments, most are appropriate and reflect some thoughtfulness, leads to other questions or remarks from student and/or others	Volunteers comments but lacks depth, may or may not lead to other questions from students	Struggles but participates, occasionally offers a comment when directly questioned, may simply restate questions or points previously raised, may add nothing new to the discussion or provoke no responses or question	Does not participate and/or only makes negative or disruptive remarks, comments are inappropriate or off topic
Resource/ Document Reference	Clear reference to text being discussed and connects it by making references from previous readings and discussions	Has done the reading with some thoroughness, may lack some detail or critical insight	Has done the reading; lacks thoroughness of understanding or insight	Has not read the entire text and cannot sustain any reference to it in the course of discussion	Unable to refer to text for evidence or support of remarks
Active Listening	Posture, demeanor and behavior clearly demonstrate respect and attentiveness to others	Listens to others most of the time, does not stay focused on other's comments (too busy formulating own) or loses continuity of discussion. Shows consistency in responding to the comments of others	Listens to others some of the time, does not stay focused on other's comments (too busy formulating own) or loses continuity of discussion. Shows some consistency in responding to the comments of others	Drifts in and out of discussion, listening to some remarks while clearly missing or ignoring others	Disrespectful of others when they are speaking; behavior indicates total non-involvement with group or discussion

Social Action Plan Rubric

Criteria	Expectations	Comments/Notes
Content 1 2 3 4 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Title and Slogan that depicts the mood, purpose and content of the plan • Accurate background information on a American human rights issues that is properly cited • Incorporates relevant UDHR Articles into the educational purpose of the plan • Goals of the social action plan are creative and attainable • Predicts potential barriers to success for the social action plan 	
Format 1 2 3 4 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format chosen is an appropriate format for the human rights issue • Format is captivating and engaging • Format utilizes appropriate and engaging language and visuals • Written final proposal is thoughtfully completed and considers interactions with multiple organizations 	
Process 1 2 3 4 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming work and draft proposal shows thoughtful development and clear evidence of peer review and editing • Rough work shows clear evidence of how independent and cooperative thinking developed over time • Accurate and thoughtful goal setting and reflection throughout inquiry project • Detailed, thoughtful and critical reflections on each step of the research and creative process, considering both successes and challenges • Reflection sets specific/detailed goals for future learning 	