



**Education and Change
Council for American Studies Education
Conference 2009
February 27, 8am - 2pm
Chicago History Museum**



**Sponsored by:
CASE Steering Committee and
Chicago History Museum
www.casechicago.org**

Change is in the air. With our new President Barack Obama, citizens of the United States – and the world – eagerly anticipate a new era. The question for educators is how not to get left behind. In many ways, of course, classes that deal with American literature and history are, almost by definition, stuck inside a set of elitist and out-of-date expectations. The haughty invocation of "literature" has produced a canon of acceptable "great books" and confined the concept of literacy to a very narrow set of traditional reading and writing skills. The sense of "history" as a fixed body of facts has produced a burdensome set of requirements for historical "coverage." And the very use of the word "American" has allowed most of these classes to remain provincial, treading a well-worn path through classic and comfortable domestic concerns. This year's CASE conference hopes to shake things up a bit, as it asks foundational questions about what we teach and who we are.

Conference Schedule

- Chicago Room/ Registration & Continental Breakfast** **8:00 am**
- Chicago Room/ Welcome from CASE Steering Committee** **8:45 am**
- Chicago Room/ Keynote Address: Education and Change** **William Ayers, Professor in the College of Education at University of Illinois at Chicago**

Session I **10:10 am - 11:00 am**

- Society Conference Room/ American Studies Across the Curriculum: Interdisciplinary Lenses and Educating Citizens** **Jim Miks, Chuck Venegoni, Paul Kelly, Kevin Poduska, Scott Hammerl, Bruce Janu, Chris Marks, and Dale Dassonville, John Hersey High School**

This presentation will showcase John Hersey High School's curriculum designed to promote civic engagement and critical thought, focusing on those aspects of the program that illustrate how students are engaged across the curriculum in the examination of issues relevant to American culture, past and present.

- Mandel Room/ Media Literacy: The "Chameleon" Curriculum** **Aisha Pervaiz, Media Studies expert from the test prep company Revolution Prep**

This presentation will identify and explain the importance of media literacy in the educational process, revealing how the critical and analytical skills learned in a media literacy curriculum will yield students with the knowledge and training needed to evoke change.

- Chicago Room/ Writing the Past into the Present through the 2008 Election** **Ann Cocks and Jennifer Lucchese, Highland Park High School**

From the convention speeches, through the debates, to the campaign trail, and right up to the election, these presenters framed an entire quarter of their American Studies curriculum around the most recent election. Combining the most current of events with a study of America's early history and founding documents and an analysis the techniques of argumentation and persuasion, they used an equitable classroom methodology to talk about democracy in a democratic way.

Chicago History Museum Exhibitions/

Chicago: Crossroads of America

Yasmin Dalal, School Programs Coordinator

Lincoln Treasures

Heidi Moisan, School Programs Manager

Members of the Education Department will answer your questions, provide orientations to the galleries and share resource materials

Break-Snacks

11:00 am - 11:20 am

Enjoy snacks and explore the Chicago History Museum

Session II

11:25 am - 12:15 pm

Society Conference Room/ Linking

Curriculum to Contemporary Politics: Dale Dasonville, John Hersey High School

An Election '08 Project

This presentation will highlight specific assignments from an "Election '08 Project," which endeavored to link an American Studies curriculum to issues in last fall's election. Candidates for local and national office were invited to speak to students, the faculty conducted forums on special topics relevant to the campaign, and classes throughout the building considered class content in the context of current events. The project culminated in a voter registration drive and mock election.

Mandel Room/ Teaching Globalization through New Fiction

Lauren Lee, Oak Park River Forest High School

The presentation will show how teachers can explore America's identity through the eyes of immigrant writers including (but not limited to) Babel Allende, Sandra Cisnesos, Edwidge Danticat, and Anchee Min. Using CRISS-style lessons and literature circles, teachers will learn practiced strategies for integrating contemporary fiction.

Chicago Room/ American Studies in a

Global Context: The Iranian Situation Seth MacLowry and Matt McClure, Maine West High School in a Role Play

News has been leaked to the global community that Iran is planning to detonate an underground nuclear device in 48 hours. How should the United States react to such a situation? This two-day simulation allows students to explore the complexities of modern day foreign policy issues from multiple viewpoints. Teachers will be asked to participate in a shortened role play, followed by a discussion about how well-constructed inquiry activities can help students develop critical thinking and argument skills.

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Session III

12:20 pm - 1:10 pm

Society Conference Room/ Know Your

Rights: Modern First Amendment

Dana Des Jardins, Niles West High School

Challenges

Using cases from the past decade, this presentation examines limits placed on First Amendment freedoms, most notably freedom of speech. Handouts of case law synopses, a Bill of Rights guide, and web videos will help us explore the new meanings of the First Amendment in today's world.

Mandel Room/ Shifting Understandings

in the Interdisciplinary Classroom: Kenneth Kramer and Neil Rigler, Deerfield High School
From Text to Self

One of the key goals in an interdisciplinary classroom is to have students see their voices and ideas as essential components of life in a democratic society. To do so allows students to become part of the American stories being told and ultimately find relevance between the material and their own lives. To approach this goal, we created a variety of writing techniques for our students, several of which participants will experience in this presentation: journaling; "Found Poetry" based on the words of Abraham Lincoln; Haiku based on documents and eyewitness accounts of Japanese internment during WWII; "Exploded Imagery" based on the Preamble to the Constitution and/or The Gettysburg Address.

Chicago Room/ Praxis in Social Justice Education: Cultivating Reflection and Dialogue

Shanti Elliot, Francis Parker High School
Avi Lessing, Oak Park River Forest High School

The cognitive processes of research, discussion, and action planning that lead into active citizenship are vital to many social justice and service learning projects, but they need to be complemented by attention to the relational dynamics at work when bringing people together from different cultures to learn from one another. This presentation will explore these dynamics, and provide space for experimenting with practices for generating the authentic reflection necessary to support all forms of experiential education.

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Chicago Room/ Lunch & Closing
Remarks

1:15 pm - 2:15 pm

CASE Steering Committee members: Bernie Heidkamp, Steve Hilsabeck, and Katy Newcomb