

America Reflected in the Arts

Council for American Studies Education Conference

Chicago History Museum

February 26, 2016 8 am - 2:30 pm



Just as a song, play, or painting shows the personality of the artist, so too do they show America's personality. The clean prairie style design of Frank Lloyd Wright came at the same time that Hemingway's prose showed a lean, uniquely American style. Why is that? What was going on in our country that moved architecture and literature in that direction? Likewise, Woody Guthrie's protest songs advocating worker's rights or equal treatment did not come from nothing. Turn on the TV or watch a movie. On these screens we see America's character, dreams, troubles, and growing pains. How might *Modern Family* tell us about ourselves--where we have been and where we are going?

This year's CASE conference will consider how our basic disciplines of U. S. History and American Literature are reflected in the fine, folk, and pop arts.

Conference Schedule

- 8:00 am** Registration & Continental Breakfast (Chicago Room, 2nd floor)
(Coat check and \$9 Parking validation available for lot north of museum)
- 8:45 am** Welcome from conference organizers (Chicago Room, 2nd floor)
- 9:00 am** Keynote Address and Music from Mark Dvorak (Chicago Room, 2nd floor)

Session I

10:10 - 11:00

The American Folk Song

Chicago Room South (2nd floor)

Mark Dvorak, Old Town School of Folk

Continue the discussion. Join Old Town School of Folk's Mark Dvorak for a deeper discussion and more music. Chill and enjoy a Coffeehouse thing.

Using Images to Kickstart Thinking, Reading, Writing, and Discussion

Mandel Room (3rd floor)

Nancy Steineke, Illinois Writing Project

Thanks to the Internet, a wealth of images is at our fingertips. Images can be used to introduce a topic, foster curiosity, build background knowledge, or act as prompts for writing and thinking. This interactive session will demonstrate a collection of images that serves all of these purposes. Participants will leave with easy to implement strategies for engaging students in visual literacy as they view, think, read, write, inquire, and discuss.



Session I (Continued)

10:10 - 11:00

There's Work and There's Life: The Mad Mis-Pursuit of Happiness and the Normalization of Alienation in AMC's *Mad Men*

Guild Room (1st floor)

Tim Libretti, Northeastern Illinois University

Let's analyze AMC's hit television series *Mad Men* in terms of the how it diagnoses the way class society is ideologically perpetuated through dominant cultural modes of thinking about work and the way we relate to it. Repeatedly, we see characters discuss work as a compartmentalized activity divorced from not just the most meaningful dimensions of their lives, but from life itself, thus invoking Marx's theory of the experience of alienation. In class society, Marx asserts, work becomes no longer our life activity itself but simply a means to existence. As the characters in *Mad Men* think of work this way, they fail to understand the abiding dissatisfactions and dysfunctions in their lives, never comprehending why they are feel creatively unfulfilled. As the show diagnoses the separation of work from the meaning of life and its disconnection from larger social purpose—and hence as alienating—the show also diagnoses in fascinating ways why throughout U.S. history we have had as a collective society such a difficult time addressing pressing social problems such as the struggle for civil rights, women's liberation, and class inequality. Thus, I look at How Class Works in terms of looking at how *Mad Men* represents class society as fostering the condition of alienation which thus disarms us by divorcing, in our minds at least, our daily work from larger social purpose, from the public good.

Chicago: Crossroads of America

Meet at the exhibit on the 2nd floor

Chicago History Museum staff

Meet at the entrance of the exhibit and discover the city's vast history in *Chicago: Crossroads of America*. Whether you are interested in Chicago's changing economy, challenging crises, diverse neighborhoods, groundbreaking innovations, or lively cultural scene, this exhibition is a must see!

Break and Snacks

11:00 - 11:20

- Visit the CHM Museum store today, February 26 and receive 10% off your purchase. Show your CASE program.
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Session II

11:25 - 12:15

Protest Music

Chicago Room South (2nd floor)

Chris Pietsch, Glenbard East High School

The United States is rooted in protest, beginning with the Protestant Reformation and the American Revolution. Protest music reflects this heritage, especially from the Civil War to the present. We will listen to and study different types of protest music, from Civil Rights to war, poverty, labor, conformity, and media criticism. In addition, we will focus on specific people, from folk singer-songwriters like Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Leadbelly, the SNCC/Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Freedom Singers, Bob Dylan, Tom Paxton, and Phil Ochs, to jazz artists such as Charles Mingus and Billie Holiday, as well as punk rockers like Jello Biafra of the Dead Kennedys and Ian MacKaye of Minor Threat as well as Fugazi.

Reading *Gatsby* through the Art of Thomas Hart Benson

Chicago Room North (2nd floor)

Lisa Richardson and Tom Kucharski, Glenbrook South High School

The presentation focuses on the use of art to improve students' close reading skills. By applying art reading strategies, the students will develop a deeper understanding of the 1920's as portrayed in the art of Thomas Hart Benton, and they will draw connections to *The Great Gatsby*. Presentation participants will learn art teaching strategies, participate in art analysis, and be provided with lessons and activities they can use in their classrooms.

Using Mind Pictures with Self "I" dentity to Connect History with Student Reality

Mandel Room (3rd floor)

Mitchell S. Lazarus, Illinois Writing Project

By creating a space between thoughts adults and students become aware of their own beliefs and the world's historical beliefs that may cloud how history is embedded in their daily thinking. By doing so, adults and students are able to make decisions with clarity and in the moment. This program will teach Self "I" dentity evidence-based techniques to achieve greater personal and academic success in all fields of life.

Chicago Authored

Meet in the gallery on the 1st floor

Chicago History Museum staff

Experience *Chicago Authored*, which looks at how authors of fact and fiction, prose and poetry have shaped how we see the city. School Programs Manager, Heidi Moisan will introduce the project briefly and distribute some classroom resources. Then you will have the opportunity to use the museum's iPod Touch devices to access the rich multimedia experience. *Chicago Authored* includes 19 excerpts featuring the work of well-known and up and coming contemporary authors. Excerpts are divided into four themes (window, door, keyhole, mirror) that are introduced by short videos filmed in the city in 2015. Further context for the excerpts is provided with images from the Chicago History Museum's collection.

Session II (Continued)

11:25 - 12:15

Making the CASE in Higher Ed Guild Room (1st floor)

Katy Smith and Deborah Schmalholz, Northeastern Illinois University

Faculty from Northeastern Illinois University's Secondary Education Program--themselves veteran American Studies teachers and CASE members--will share three lessons designed to help English and history teachers tap into the power of interdisciplinary instruction and to consider ways to integrate the arts into their classroom practice. Although developed for use with English and History methods students, each lesson will be equally valuable for new and veteran American Studies teachers. Lesson one considers ways that visual texts such as political cartoons and artwork can be analyzed as primary source documents. Lesson two considers the power of film, exploring a documentary about John Lennon and Hollywood's historical drama, *All the President's Men*, as windows into the life and legacy of Richard Nixon. Lesson three considers American life in the early 20th century through the music of Bruce Springsteen along with the novel and stage adaptation of *Ragtime*. Participants will receive handouts describing two of the lessons and will engage in hands-on experience in the third.

Session III

12:20 - 1:10

I Hear America Singing: How Can a Spotify Playlist Reflect American Values and Identities? Chicago Room South (2nd floor)

Neil Rigler and Ken Kramer, Deerfield High School

At the start of the year we ask our students to bring in a song that reflects something about American values and identities. They write a journal response, using some of the lyrics of the song. On the second day of class they share the songs and an excerpt from their reflection as a way of introducing themselves. We compile a Spotify playlist of these songs and post it onto our class blog. For our presentation, we will ask participants to select a song and then share a brief thought about it.

Picturing America Guild Room (1st floor)

Natasha Egan, Executive Director, Museum of Contemporary Photography

This presentation will mine the Museum of Contemporary Photography's collection of 20th and 21st century work produced by artists turning their lenses directly on America. Photographs by Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans taken during the Great Depression will be discussed alongside works that address the contemporary American story made by such artists as Dawoud Bey and Nikki S. Lee.

More Session III presentations on the next page

**Reflections on the Silver Screen:
Gold Diggers of 1933, Hollywood Cinema, and the New Deal
Chicago Room North (2nd floor)**

Steven Hilsabeck and Dr. Burke P. Hilsabeck, Elgin Academy and Oberlin College

Motion pictures have always reflected the American experience; they have, in turn, shaped public attitudes and beliefs about a range of issues. From D.W. Griffith's early shorts like *A Corner in Wheat* (1909) to more recent films like *Selma* (2014), movies have reflected the underlying political and social realities of their eras. This workshop uses Mervyn LeRoy's Warner Brothers musical *Gold Diggers of 1933* to introduce the ideological contexts of the historical events that accompanied the nation's move from Hoover's conservatism to Roosevelt's New Deal. Participants will receive a one-day lesson plan, ways to access films or film clips for classroom use, a bibliography of sources useful for creating lessons around films, resources for student research projects, and a suggested list of films that reflect a range of American issues.

**Literacy and History in Action: Engaging Students Through Drama and Simulation
Mandel Room (3rd floor)**

Nancy Galas, Rebecca D'Angelo, and Mary Greska. Edison School, Elmhurst District 205

Join presenters as they engage participants in the American story. We will demonstrate using multiple modalities - language, art, music, drama, and even mathematics, to express and extend learning as students address the events that led to the American Revolution. With an emphasis on civic engagement and role playing we address the question, "Why do countries declare independence?" Our work offers a template for other issues in American History and addresses both the common core and the C3 Framework.

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Lunch, Raffle, and Closing Remarks 1:15-2:15

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 - Don't forget to complete and turn in your CASE Conference 2016 Evaluation. It will be the raffle ticket.
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CASE 2016 Survey

Take a moment to provide feedback. Take the survey, fill it out, and turn it in. We'll pull out one completed form and announce the CASE 2016 Raffle Winner during our fabulous lunch.

CASE 2016 Organizing Committee

Glenbard West High School American Studies Team Marisol Pulido and Steve Wiersum

- Thank you to the CASE committee for allowing us this opportunity.
 - Thank you to the presenters for your time, talent and energy.
 - Thank you, Mark Dvorak, for sharing your gifts with us.
 - Thank you to our GWHS colleagues for being here today and for supporting us with this endeavor.
 - Thank you Heidi, her staff and colleagues, and the Chicago History Museum for hosting us today.
 - Finally, thank you for coming today. We cannot tell you what an honor it was putting this program together for you—and for the students you teach. They are lucky to have you teaching them!
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