

## ***Lesson Plan: Performance Art: Wayang Golek & The Ramayana***

<b>Grade Level:</b>	Freshman – Senior (Drawing I is a multi-level course) adaptable for Jr. High.
<b>Subject:</b>	Art, Drawing I, (cross curricular with World Cultures)
<b>Topic:</b>	Art as an expression of culture, performance art, art as a collaborative endeavor.
<b>Timeframe:</b>	7 days. 5 contiguous days for lesson. 2 days for performances & evaluation discussion.

### **Objectives/Outcomes:**

Working in small collaborative teams students will author and perform a five to ten minute shadow play depicting an episode from the Ramayana using puppets they create modeled on the Wayang Golek of Southeast Asia. At the conclusion of the unit students will:

- Be exposed to two major artistic manifestations of Southeast Asian culture: Wayang performance art & the Ramayana religious/literary tradition.
- Interpret a section of literature into a short performance piece.
- Design and construct an expressive work within the constraints of a long cultural/artistic symbolic language: Wayang puppets.
- Work collaboratively to execute a short performance piece.

### **Materials:**

- A Wayang Golek “stage” constructed by stretching a thin white sheet over an appropriately sized wooden frame.
- The backlighting essential to shadow puppetry will be provided by one or two overhead projectors.
- Sketch & heavy stock construction paper, fold back pins, wooden doweling, tape, Xacto knives, scissors and colored markers for puppet construction.
- Video camera & tape for recording final performances.
- Net access for student research (1 day).
- VCR to show filmed example of Wayang to students. (1 day.)
- Teacher manufactured example(s) of puppet(s). Assuming indigenously produced examples are not available (which would clearly be ideal).
- CD of Southeast Asian music. (Ambient music during class periods devoted to creating performance materials.

### **Procedures:**

#### ***Introduction***

The assignment will be introduced via a period long lecture.

(1 Day) explanation of project, assignment of teams, setting deadlines for each group and individual element. Examples: video segment of Wayang, discussion of Ramayana story. Elements of the introductory lecture re-enforced by repetition during the course of the week as constituent parts unfold over the course of the week.

**Strategies:**

Teacher:

- Scheduling project to coincide with SEA unit in World Cultures.
- Direct instruction: introductory lecture, construction of puppets, and demonstration of shadow puppetry.

Students:

- Independent creative work: creation of Wayang puppet.
- Collaborative research & creative work: Ramayana

**Tentative Scheduling:**

**Day One:** Introductory lecture, explanation of project & subject, assignment of teams.

**Day Two:** Library or Computer Lab: Independent research on Wayang puppets and assigned section of the Ramayana. Research continued and completed as homework over the course of the remainder of the week. Each student is responsible for completing a research questionnaire. Completed questionnaires are due on Day Five.

**Day Three:** Begin Construction of puppets. Students working individually within their assigned groups. Construction continued as homework.

**Day Four:** Continue and complete puppets. Group work on play. Preliminary outline of play due by the end of class.

**Day Five:** Continue & complete puppets. Group rehearsal. Teacher examines and evaluates individual puppets in class. Research questionnaires due.

**Day Six:** (Ideally a Monday to give students a weekend to refine their work product.) Performances. All groups perform using the script they have written and puppets they have created. Written scripts, finished puppets and character explanation are collected for evaluation.

**Day Seven:** Class critique and discussion of project and work product. Teacher evaluation of "best work" and areas for improvement.

Generally homework each day consists of continuing work done in class & the library.

**Practice:** Wayang performance of a story from the Ramayana .

**Closure:** Day seven critique and analysis of the experience and its artistic merits.

**Evaluation:** 20% of each student's project grade is a "group grade" determined by how well the Wayang performance conveys the story assigned to the group. 10% of the grade is based on the student's completion of the research questionnaire. The remaining 70% of the project grade is based on the artistic merit and craftsmanship reflected in the Wayang puppet created by the student as well a short written explanation of how the student's creation is an accurate representation of the specific character they are assigned.

## **Annotated Bibliography**

**Buck, William; *Ramayana*. University of CA Press, 1976.**

A somewhat anglicized version of the Ramayana written for a modern, English-speaking audience. This certainly not the best telling of the story but still a good book to have on hand and available for students looking for a more detailed account of the stories they are assigned to perform.

**English, Paul Ward; *Geography People and Places in a Changing World*. West Publishing, 1990.**

This is the textbook used in our World Cultures program. Chapters 27 & 28 are devoted to Southeast Asia. My intent is to run this project in the Art Department concurrently with the World Cultures Team as they cover the region in their classes. Some sub-set of Freshmen in the Drawing class will be taking Cultures and they'll have something of a cross-curricular experience. A typical textbook (bland and difficult to read) it is nevertheless the most basic reference readily at hand for the majority of our student population.

**Herbert, Mimi & Rahardjo, Nur; *Voices of the Puppet Masters: The Wayang Golek Theater of Indonesia*. Univeristy of Hawaii Press, 2002.**

An excellent source for images of Wayang puppets. The book should be available in the class room as a reference for students as they create their own puppets. Images from the book can also be used as examples in the introductory lectures.

**Richman, Paula (editor); *Many Ramayanas The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*. University of CA Press, 1991.**

An excellent collection of articles to give the teacher insight into the literary and religious traditions of the Ramayana. Of particular use is A.K. Ramanujan's *Three Hundred Ramayanas*. Teachers may want to relate his retelling of the story of Rama's lost ring as a way of explaining how the Ramayana performed by the students can have real power and meaning within the literary tradition.

**Valmiki; *The Ramayana*. (Translated by Arshia Sattar) Viking Press, 1996.**

An excellent translation into English of Valmiki's text. Personally, I find this book more readable and interesting than Buck's version. Like the Buck book Valmiki should be on hand for student research.

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Students will be doing most of their research from the CSEAS website. It has sections devoted to Wayang, including imagery, and to the Ramayana. Students are assigned sections of the story based on the chapter outline provided in the web site's retelling. Access to the site is therefore and indispensable to the lesson. Images of the Wayang can be used in the introductory lectures.