



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2017 Volume II: Literature, Life-Writing, and Identity

Whose America? Americans in the Americas and Inequality

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by Eduardo Valladares

To what extent does access to being “American” in the Americas impact people's state of equality, identity, and interactions with one another? For marginalized groups in the Americas, gaining full social, political, and economic equality continues to be an overbearing problem that affects many aspects of their lives including their identity. Through this unit students connect the history of Western colonization and imperialism that supported structures of disparity in postcolonial nations in the Americas to the social inequality in these nations’ populations by analyzing selected forms of mediums. Students will also develop agency through creative writing and rewriting historical narratives. Students delve into the themes of equality and “American” identity in the Americas by analyzing selected poems, plays, life writings, and songs that exercise agency to gain equal rights. Through this study of the struggle for equality in the Americas, this unit will help student build intrinsic motivation to write with purpose and to exercise this form of agency.

(Developed for IB History of the Americas HL 1-2, grade 11; recommended or United States History, grade 11)

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