TITLE OF LESSON PLAN: American Independence (HIST 171 – World History to Present)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND GOALS:

• Understand the global causes and effects of the American Revolution
• Practice identifying effects of a historical event (ie, “contingency”)
• Discuss why American history is included in a world history class

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES: 75-minute lecture, group discussion, short writing activity

I. Introduction to lesson plan (5-7 minutes)
   a. Quick open – solicit contributions about what students already know. Encourage them to throw out names, places, etc. about the American Revolution in order to activate prior knowledge on the topic.
   b. Thesis/Main idea of lecture: The American Revolution was influenced by global events, and in turn influenced the rest of the world.
      i. Goal for this class is to give you a bigger perspective of the American Revolution, & not so much to cover the Revolution itself – we’re all at least passingly familiar with the Revolution itself

II. Lecture – Causes of the War and the War Itself (40 minutes)
   a. Causes
      i. Material
         1. Summary: Large-scale imperial events influenced the material conditions of the colonists
         2. France/Britain Rivalry
            a. Great War
            b. Seven Years’ War
         3. Britain’s attempts to gain more money from colonists
            a. Very briefly discuss the taxes (Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Quartering Act, Declaratory Act, Townshend Duties, Tea Act, Coercive Acts)
      ii. Intellectual
         1. Summary: European ideas about human rights (natural rights) influenced the leaders of the Revolution to rebel
   b. The war itself
      i. Battles of Lexington & Concord (Massachusetts) started the war in April 1775 → “shot heard ‘round the world”
      ii. Second Continental Congress adopts the Declaration of Independence on Jul 4, 1776
      iii. US signs an alliance with France in early 1778
      iv. Spain allies with France (but not the US) and declares war on Britain in 1779
      v. British General Cornwallis surrenders in Oct 1781, effectively ending the fighting
      vi. Treaty of Paris signed in 1783
III. Think-Pair-Share (8 minutes)
   a. Discussion question: Did anything change on a global scale as a result of the American Revolution?
      i. Ask students to jot down preliminary thoughts on the question in their notes (2-3 minutes)
      ii. Then ask them to pair with a partner to discuss their thoughts (2-3 minutes)
      iii. Finally, ask students to report out their findings by raising their hands – do they agree or disagree? Is there a consensus among the students? (Note: are students responding mostly from the perspective of how things changed from an American history perspective, or are they considering it from the perspective of other countries?) (2-4 minutes)

IV. Lecture – Consequences of the Revolution (15 minutes)
   a. What changed as a result of the Revolution?
      i. Material changes – not really
         1. Summary: the American Revolution didn’t immediately change a whole lot for the new Americans, but it did influence the course of global events
         2. Why historians tend to call the American Revolution a “conservative” revolution – compared to the French Revolution, there wasn’t a lot that changed immediately
         3. It did mark the end of the First British Empire – after Britain lost the 13 colonies, it shifted most of its attention to Asia, the Pacific, and Africa.
      ii. Intellectual – a lot changed
         1. Summary: The American Revolution articulated an important set of ideals that inevitably snowballed over time to change the course of global history.
         2. New type of government
         3. First widely articulated this idea of universal human rights – that idea had a life of its own, and once it was out in the world it had a snowball effect

V. Quick-write summary (5 minutes)
   a. On a half sheet of paper, students should spend the last few minutes of class writing a short response to hand in before they leave. Students should respond to the prompt: Do you agree with Thomas Bender’s argument in A Nation Among Nations (2006) that we should discuss American history in world history classes? Why or why not?

RATIONALE FOR SEQUENCING AND PACING ACTIVITIES

This lesson is the first time students discuss American history topics in our world history class, and so this will be the first time students will be able to substantively engage with the assigned monograph A Nation Among Nations by Thomas Bender. Because most students are familiar with the course of the American Revolution, this lecture will instead reframe the subject by focusing on the international causes and effects of the event. Visual learners’ needs will be addressed through Powerpoint slides that reinforce the lecture. The short discussion will allow
students to talk about their ideas before committing them into writing and receive feedback from their peers to refine their thinking. The short, low-stakes writing assignment at the end of the class allows students the opportunity to practice their writing skills and engage with the content more substantially and the chance for the teacher to check-in with students’ understanding of the day’s lecture before assigning grades on a major essay or test.

**ASSESSMENT**

- The teacher will ask for verbal feedback from students during the think-pair-share portion of the lesson.
  - Students with a superior understanding of the material will use lecture and reading material as evidence in their response to the think-pair-share prompt. If students believe the Revolution was an important pivotal event in global history, there should be evidence of critical thinking and reasoning and not simply because it was an important event in American history.
  - Students whose ideas are still developing will be unable to support their opinions with more in-depth analysis and evidence from lecture or reading material. They will likely argue that the Revolution was an important event because it changed the course of American history, but be unable to evaluate the event’s importance from the perspective of other nations.

- The teacher will evaluate student understanding of lecture material and Bender’s argument in the short in-class writing assignment.
  - Students with a superior understanding of the material will use lecture and reading material as evidence in their response. They will directly reference Bender’s argument and specific historical examples to support their opinion, regardless of whether they agree or disagree with Bender’s argument.
  - Students with an undeveloped understanding of the material will not reference Bender’s argument and be unable to support their ideas with specific historical examples. Their responses may use non-historical arguments to support their response, or refuse to take a position.

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS**

- Lecture notes (not for distribution for class)
- Powerpoint slides (see attached)
United States Independence

1) Introduction
2) Causes
3) The War
4) Consequences
5) Turn in papers

Introduction

Causes – the “Great War” (1689-1815)
Seven Years’ War (1756-1763)

Tea Act and Boston Tea Party (1773)
Natural Rights Philosophy

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)
John Locke (1632-1704)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

The War – The American Revolution (1775-1783)
“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government...”

Declaration of Independence

Did anything change as a result of the Revolution?
Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) and Toussaint L'Ouverture