

RETHINKING THE REGION:

New Approaches to 9-12 U.S. Curriculum on the Middle East and North Africa

UNIT: EMPIRE AND NATION

TOPIC Innovations in Empire

LESSON OVERVIEW	In this lesson, students will learn about empires and expansion, specifically in regards to the Ottoman Empire. Initially, the students will identify the meanings of the following word pairings: assimilation/conformity vs. integration/accommodation, tolerance vs. freedom, and nationalism vs. unity. Using these ideas, students will either agree or disagree with a series of statements and they will defend their choice using prior knowledge. The class will make connections to these discussion terms and the ways in which empires expand and organize. Then, in small groups, students will create a vision of a modern society (using pre-determined demographics or ones made by the teacher) and will discuss the power relations, decision-making processes, and values of their society. Finally, students will compare their society to the millet system in the Ottoman Empire.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are ways in which empires expanded and absorbed new populations? • Should assimilation be a goal for society?
LESSON OBJECTIVES	<p><u>Learners will be able to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the pros and cons of assimilation versus autonomy within an Empire. • Understand how minority groups were organized and treated during Ottoman rule. • Understand the ways in which the millet system was innovative for its time.
STANDARDS	<u>Common Core Standards</u>

	<p><i>Common Core Grade 11-12:</i></p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.</p> <p><u>New York State Standards</u></p> <p>Performance Indicators Students will:</p> <p><u>Standard 2, Key Idea 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the broad patterns, relationships, and interactions of cultures and civilizations during particular eras and across eras <p><u>Standard 2, Key Idea 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate key events and developments and major turning points in world history to identify the factors that brought about change and the long-term effects of these changes <p><u>Standard 2, Key Idea 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the dynamics of cultural change and how interactions between and among cultures has affected various cultural groups throughout the world <p><u>Standard 3, Key Idea 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the development and interactions of social/cultural, political, economic, and religious systems in different regions of the world • Analyze how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of the Earth’s surface (Taken from National Geography Standards, 1994)
<p>MATERIALS</p>	<p><u>Day 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree/disagree cards to tape on either side of the room • Tape • Demographic cards • Landscape (piece of blank paper)

	<p><u>Day 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Millet System handout • Teacher Resource: Summary of the Millet System Using Glossary Words • Millet system graphic organizer • “Our Shared Past” handout
<p>PROCEDURE</p> <p>DAY 1</p>	<p>1. <u>Activate Background Knowledge (15 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher writes the following pair of words on the board and asks students to reflect what these words mean in the context of their lives through a free write. (10 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. assimilation/conformity vs. integration/accommodation b. tolerance vs. freedom c. nationalism vs. unity • Teachers should ask a few students to share their thoughts before moving into the human barometer activity. (5 minutes) <p>2. <u>Human Barometer (30 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher should post agree/disagree signs on either side of the room. • Teacher will then read the following statements (based on the above terms) and ask students whether they agree or disagree with statements. Students will move to either side of the room depending on whether they agree or disagree. Teacher will then ask each side to defend their perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Speaking English fluently ought to be a requirement for U.S. citizenship. [Assimilation] b. Immigration of low-skilled workers should be allowed, as they take jobs Americans do not want. [Tolerance] c. Journalists should be able to criticize the government without consequence. [Freedom] d. All students should be required to say the Pledge of Allegiance. [Nationalism]

	<p>e. Effective decision-making is rooted in unity rather than conflict or debate. [Unity]</p> <p>f. Students should not be allowed to wear religious clothing or symbols in schools. [Conformity]</p> <p>g. Muslim students should be allowed to say their Friday prayers on school grounds as long as it does not interfere with class. [Integration/Accommodation]</p> <p>3. <u>Debrief (20 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher should try to make connections with what the students shared in their free-writes with their reactions to the statements. Teacher can start by asking students what they know about how societies are organized, for example: by wealth, ethnicity, race, age, gender, or ability. Students might note that societies are organized through a division of labor and decision-making that is rarely, if ever, equal. Teachers may locate visual displays (see example resources in resources section) to illustrate the numerous and complex ways in which communities, societies, and even the world can be organized. • The teacher should then debrief and connect how the statements relate to the words on the board and to the central theme of Empire by focusing on social organization and how expanding the empire meant incorporating people from different ethnic/racial/linguistic/religious backgrounds. <p>Teachers may refer to millet system teacher resource handout for ideas for this discussion.</p>
<p>PROCEDURE</p> <p>DAY 2</p>	<p>1. <u>Refresher (5 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind students of the discussion from their last class. Re-write words on the board from the discussion in the last class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. assimilation/conformity vs. integration/accommodation b. tolerance vs. freedom c. nationalism vs. unity <p>2. <u>Small group activity (35 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to students that they will now be engaging in small group work as a

continuation of the previous class.

- Break students into groups of four. Remind students to assign a group spokesperson, a note-taker, a timekeeper, and a person to keep them on task. Each group will be presenting their work to the class after the activity is over.
- Assign each student within the group a demographic card (see suggested demographic cards handout. Teachers are also encouraged to create their own.)
- Prompt students to review their card and think of ways to represent that demographic in their small groups. Instruct students to create their vision of a modern society, negotiating with each other and creating a visual representation of what that society should look like and how that society should be organized.
- Ask students to answer the following questions:
 - a. Who has the power in your society? Who is powerless?
 - b. How are decisions made in your society?
 - c. Using the provided landscape, visually draw your society: where do people live, and how much land do they own in relation to others?
 - d. Decide the majority religion and language of your society (keeping in mind daily interactions, official business interactions, etc.).
 - e. If a conflict were to break out in the region (example: an invasion or controversial policy), what type of system is set up to negotiate disputes and/or find solutions?
 - f. What kind of values does the society espouse (relate to the words on the board)?

3. Mini presentations (20 minutes)

- Each group will present their society or school and highlight the decisions their groups made in regards to the aforementioned questions.

4. Homework

- Instruct students to read the description of the millet system and to fill out the millet system graphic organizer. Advise students to take notes on any

	changes they would make to their society (from the activity) based on the reading.
<p>PROCEDURE</p> <p>DAY 3</p>	<p>1. <u>Review (10 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to review the millet system handout. Highlight important aspects of the millet system to inform later discussion (see further references). <p>2. <u>Small group work (10 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct students to return to their groups and review their society from the last class. The group can agree to make any changes to their society based on what they now know about the millet system. <p>3. <u>Open discussion (20 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the class to a discussion, addressing the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What was your overall vision of your society? For example, what does your society (school) actually look like? b. How did organization of groups play a role in your modern society (school)? c. How was it similar to or different from the millet system of the Ottoman Empire? d. What were some of the group similarities and differences when this system was put in place during the Ottoman Empire? e. What made the millet system so innovative for its time? <p>4. <u>Questions for Further Reflections/Connection to Today (10 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reflecting on the group activity, what was the process like? b. What did it feel like to represent your demographic? Connect this to contemporary issues in the U.S., e.g., immigration. c. Reflecting on your role, how were you viewed in the group? Were there challenges? For example, did you have to compromise on your personal vision of society? How so?

	<p>d. Did you make any changes to your society? Why or why not?</p> <p>e. What are the remnants of the millet system in the MENA region?</p> <p>f. How possible or desirable is the idea of different governance for different minority groups? Could this model of government work today?</p>
<p>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browse: http://depts.washington.edu/wcpc/maps_interactives This website provides interactive tools to illustrate the relationship between socioeconomic status and geography. • Browse: http://www.theglobaleducationproject.org/mideast/info/maps.html This website includes contemporary and historical maps of MENA, including ethnic regions of Iraq. The website also includes country profiles and other applicable online resources.

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