

# LIBERATED ETHNIC STUDIES MODEL CURRICULUM



## OEDIPUS EL REY

Grade Level: 9th-12th

[Link to the Slides for this lesson Plan](#)

**Purpose (What will students learn from this lesson?):** Luis Alfaro’s play, *Oedipus El Rey*, set Sophocles’ classic story in the Pico Union neighborhood of Central Los Angeles and also in CDCR prison. Students will read and perform parts of the play, close read for themes and write a literary analysis.

### Unit Enduring Understandings Alignment:

- We understand and challenge all forms of oppression and their manifestations by conceptualizing and enacting transformative projects of agency and resistance.
- We understand that while studying forms of oppression, it is also critical to engage ourselves in developing critical consciousness, reclaiming hope and healing.

### Essential Questions:

- How do people deal with dark secrets that are revealed to them?
- Should people “assimilate” into the dominant culture or hold on to their own customs and beliefs?
- What are the causes of recidivism for inmates released from California’s prisons?
- Do we have control of our own fate or is our future a preordained destiny?

### Essential Skills:

- Speaking & Listening
- Making Inferences

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- Persuasive Writing
- Research Skills
- Social Emotional Health: Empathy and Understanding
- Collaboration/Group Work
- Critical Reading

## **Cultural Wealth (Yosso, p. 78):**

- **Navigational capital** refers to “skills of maneuvering through social institutions. Historically, this implies the ability to maneuver through institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind. For example, strategies to navigate through racially-hostile university campuses draw on the concept of academic invulnerability, or students’ ability to ‘sustain high levels of achievement, despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly at school and, ultimately, dropping out of school’ (Alva, 1991, p. 19)” (p. 80).
- **Social capital** can be understood as “networks of people and community resources. These peer and other social contacts can provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society’s institutions... Mutualistas or mutual aid societies are an example of how historically, immigrants to the US and indeed, African Americans even while enslaved, created and maintained social networks... This tradition of ‘lifting as we climb’ has remained the motto of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs since their organization in 1896” (p. 79-80). *Several characters of this play represent those who become resources for other members of the same immigrant community.*
- **Familial capital** refers to “those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition... This form of cultural wealth engages a commitment to community well-being and expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship. Acknowledging the racialized, classed and heterosexualized inferences that comprise traditional understandings of ‘family’, familial capital is nurtured by our ‘extended family’, which may include immediate family (living or long passed on) as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends who we might consider part of our *familia*. From these kinship ties, we learn the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to our community and its resources” (p. 79).

## **Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment:**

- 3. Center and place high value on pre-colonial, ancestral, indigenous, diasporic, familial, and marginalized knowledge;
- 5. Challenge imperialist/colonial hegemonic beliefs and practices on the ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized levels;

## **Standards Alignment:**

- English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

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CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

- English Language Arts Standards » History/Social Studies  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
  
- CA ELD Standards
  - A. Collaborative 1. Exchanging information and ideas with others through oral collaborative discussions on a range of social and academic topics.

### Modifications, Accommodations, Resources for Multilingual Students:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Translation of key vocabulary terms</li> <li>● Close readings of pivotal scenes in the play, specifically those with critical vocabulary, concepts, symbolism, etc. required to understand the overarching themes and enduring understandings.</li> <li>● Translation into home language of some of the close readings of pivotal scenes in the play, specifically those with critical vocabulary, concepts, symbolism, etc. required to understand the overarching themes and enduring understandings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use of movement, music and props to express universal concepts and enduring understandings.</li> <li>● Note-catcher documents for close readings and translated texts.</li> </ul>
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### Critical Vocabulary (also found on Critical Concepts slides 8-13):

CRITICAL VOCABULARY	Definition and Rationale for choosing this word, phrase, or concept	Idea for pre-teaching or front-loading the concept.
<b>Recidivism</b>	Recidivism is defined as the rate at which individuals return to prison after release from former incarceration.	Teach this using the slides before beginning the “Readers Theatre of the Play.”
		Teach this using

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<p><b>Coatlucue or the Coatlicue state</b></p>	<p>Coatlucue State, a time when you had to conceal your ideas, your body, your identity, or even your own family, either from shame, ridicule, guilt, oppression, self-fear, or fear of not feeling worthy enough.</p>	<p>the slides before beginning the “Readers Theatre of the Play.”</p>
<p><b>Glossary of words in Spanish</b></p>	<p><a href="#">LINK</a></p>	<p>Teach this using the slides before beginning the “Readers Theatre of the Play.”</p>
<p><b>The Coyolxauhqui Imperative</b></p>	<p>A theory named after the Aztec deity of the moon Coyolxauhqui to explain an ongoing and lifelong process of healing from events which fragment, dismember, or deeply wound the self spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically.</p>	<p>Teach this using the slides before beginning the “Readers Theatre of the Play.”</p>
<p><b>The Sphinx</b></p>	<p>The Sphinx used to sit outside Thebes and pose the same riddle to anyone who passed by. The riddle was as follows:</p> <p>"What walks on four legs at dawn, two legs at noon, and on three legs in the evening?"</p> <p>Would the traveler fail to solve the riddle, he was cursed to death.</p>	<p>Teach this using the slides before beginning the “Readers Theatre of the Play.”</p>

### C1: Cultural Ritual and/or Energizer Slides 1-7

**Description:**

How will you engage the students? This energizer contributes to setting the “culture” of the classroom while also connecting the main concepts of lesson plan to the students prior experiences/knowledge/interests.

We encourage Ethnic Studies lessons starting off with land and ancestor acknowledgement. Example provided in the slides. *The slides are to be used before beginning the close read via “Readers Theatre” Once you’ve cast the characters, you can have the students who were not*

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cast use the Worksheet for Guided Questions Throughout the Play linked above.

	DESCRIPTION	TIME
	<p><b>Building Background - You can use any of these related documents to build background before reading the play.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research the playwright  <a href="#">How playwright Luis Alfaro aims to make L.A. the center of the theatrical universe</a></li> <li>• Why Tragedies are Alluring by David E. Rivas  <a href="#">Why tragedies are alluring - David E. Rivas   TED-Ed</a></li> <li>• Oedipus Rex, Overview  <a href="#">Oedipus Rex, Overview</a></li> <li>• The Sophocles version of Oedipus Rex  <a href="#">Sophocles-Oedipus-Rex</a></li> </ul>	Varies
	<p><b>You can use this worksheet with guiding questions to guide students reading from building background to completion of reading the play.</b></p> <p><a href="#">Worksheet for Guided Questions Throughout the Pl...</a></p>	30 min
Slide 1-3	<b>Introduction Slides</b>	2 min
Slide 4	<b>Land Acknowledgement</b>	2 min
Slide 5	<b>Ancestor Acknowledgement</b>	4 min
Slides 6-7	<p><b>Cultural Energizer - QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>Think-Pair-Share (STUDENTS CAN RECORD RESPONSES IN THE DOCUMENT LINKED BELOW)</p>	10 min
Slide 8	<p><b>Watch the video of Luis Alfaro as second part of the Cultural Energizer</b></p> <p>Use the worksheet linked here. Students will revisit these questions as part of the conclusive dialogue.</p> <p><a href="#">Worksheet for Cultural Energizer Play: Oedipus</a></p>	15 min

## C2: Critical Concepts

	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Slide 9		5 min

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<b>Slide 10</b>	<p><b>Critical Concepts - Recidivism</b> Use the document below to keep track of the critical concepts provided in this slide document, feel free to add boxes for any additional concepts you'd like students to record.</p> <p><a href="#">Worksheet for Critical Concepts</a></p>	
	<p><b>Critical Concepts - Assimilation/Acculturation:</b></p>	<b>5 min</b>
<b>Slide 11</b>	<p><b>Critical Concepts - Coatlicue or the Coatlicue state</b> This concept has its own activity linked here.</p> <p><a href="#">TheCoatlicueWritingExercise.docx</a></p>	<b>45 min</b>
<b>Slide 12</b>	<p><b>Critical Concepts - Glossary of Spanish words and phrases</b></p>	<b>5 min</b>
<b>Slide 13-14</b>	<p><b>Critical Concepts - The Coyolxauhqui Imperative</b> Use this article to learn about the Coyolxauhqui Imperative more closely. You can print and have students annotate/popcorn read or jigsaw.</p> <p><a href="#">A Coyolxauhqui Imperative ARTICLE</a></p>	<b>45 min</b>
<b>Slide 15</b>	<p><b>Critical Concepts - The Greek Sphinx</b></p>	<b>10 min</b>
<b>Slide 16</b>	<p><b>Critical Concepts - Character adaptations from oedipus rex</b></p>	<b>5 min</b>

### C3: Community Collaboration and/or Critical Cultural Production

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Slide 17</b>	<p><b>Cast the play with students for each character. You can re-cast for each scene or after several scenes. Slide 14 has pictures of students reading the play in a Los Angeles classroom using a Readers Theatre format.</b></p> <p>-</p> <p><b>Guided questions can be used to facilitate a close reading.</b></p>	<b>2-3 class periods.</b>
<b>Slide</b>	<p><b>Slides 18-22 are the songs referred to in the play. You can</b></p>	

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<b>18-22</b>	<b>play them while reading as a class. You can elaborate if desired. Slide 22 has the official music video and you can decide if you want to watch and analyze.</b> The song is "It's a man's, man's world."	
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## C4: Conclusive Dialogue/Critical Circular Exchange

<p><b>Connection:</b> How is this relevant to students? How is it relevant to the unit? How do you bring back to the PURPOSE of the unit?</p>	<p>Use the document from the Cultural Energizer to revisit the original questions plus any others that arose during the reading of the play. Here is the link to the same document.</p> <p><a href="#">Worksheet for Cultural Energizer Play: Oedipus</a></p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> How will the students be assessed?</p>	<p>Students will be assessed by their meaningful participation in the culminating community circles. A rubric is not provided but is suggested.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation:</b> How will the effectiveness of this lesson plan be evaluated?</p>	<p>How well students are able to explain the connection between concepts like recidivism and destiny. How well students are able to discern multiple meanings from the text, including perspectives. How well students can explain the ancient Greek tragedy and the applicability to the modern stories of incarceration and recidivism.</p> <p><i>The students should write or record a culminating reflection based on their responses and the responses of their peers in the community circle.</i></p>

### RESOURCES AND NOTES

**Materials:**

<p><b>THE PLAY:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Oedipus-El-Rey-Luis-Alfaro</a></p> <p>This play cannot be used for a public performance/production without the permission of the playwright or the legal representative for the playwright.</p>	<p><b>BUILDING BACKGROUND RESOURCES</b></p> <p><b>Building Background - You can use any of these related documents to build background before reading the play.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research the playwright</li> </ul>
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	<p><a href="#">How playwright Luis Alfaro aims to make L.A. the center of the theatrical universe</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Why Tragedies are Alluring by David E. Rivas <a href="#">Why tragedies are alluring - David E. Rivas   TED-Ed</a></li><li>● Oedipus Rex, Overview <a href="#">Oedipus Rex, Overview</a></li><li>● The Sophocles version of Oedipus Rex <a href="#">Sophocles-Oedipus-Rex</a></li></ul>
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