MODULE 2

Oral History Strategies: Finding and Telling the Story

Grade level: College
Possible Subjects: Ethnic Studies, Sociology, History, Humanities, English, Communications, Critical Thinking
Module 2 Learning Objectives: • Introduce the concept and practice of oral history • Familiarize students with best practices for conducting an oral history • Have students connect oral history as a practice with Ethnic Studies as a discipline • Introduce the "model minority" stereotype • Analyze examples of cultural representations of Asian Americans as the model minority • Introduce counter-narratives to the model minority stereotype

DAY 1 LESSON PLAN Topic: What is an oral history? Objectives: Students will be introduced to important principles and best practices for conducting oral histories. They will also engage with oral histories of Asian American Studies as examples for their own oral history projects.

Activity	Detailed description

Warm-up discussion
 	
(Slide 4)
	• Before class, students should watch at least one of the oral histories on ASAM's "Storytellers of Santa Clara Valley" website. The options are:
	    ○ Connie Young Yu
	    ○ Robert Ragsac
	    ○ Tom Izu and Susan Hayase
	• To start class, have them first discuss the following questions in pairs before sharing their responses with the whole class afterward:

	○ What surprising thing(s) did you learn about Asian American history? ○ What did you learn about conducting an oral history interview? Note: Instructor can tell them to consider these questions ahead of time, while watching the oral history for homework.
Introduction to oral history (Slides 5-7)	• Define oral history • Have students share why they chose their specific interviewee(s) for this project. ○ Invite them to connect it to their earlier discussion on the ASAM oral history examples • Review the Oral History Association's "Guiding Principles" and "Best Practices" from the respective web pages

Practice oral history
 	
 (Slide 8)
	• Students will pair up and practice interviewing skills. The should recount a story of something impactful that happened to them recently. They can decide what "impactful" means to them.
	 • While one person is speaking, the other person should show engagement through body language, asking follow-up questions, and reflecting what they heard.
	 • After both individuals have gone, have them reflect as a class on their different roles as a speaker and as a listener.
	 • Some things to consider:
	    ○ As a speaker, what did/didn't make you feel like their story was important?
	    ○ As a listener, how did you decide what kinds of follow-up questions to ask? What parts of the story do you still want to know about?

DAY 2 LESSON PLAN

Topic: The Model Minority Stereotypes

Objectives: Students will be introduced to the stereotype of Asians as the "model minority" and how this narrative has shaped race relations in the United States. They will look at how contemporary (2023) Asian Americans respond to the stereotype and how statistical survey data can be a resource for crafting narratives.

Activity	Detailed description
Introduce the model minority stereotype and discuss (Slide 10-13)	Students should read the 1987 *Time Magazine* article by David Brand and "Inventing the Model Minority" by Densho before class. • Introduce students to historical examples of news articles that construct Asians as "the model minority." • Highlight quote from Brand about Asian Americans as "superstudents" • Show the video "Can Stereotypes Be Good?" by Orfano and Densho • Have students discuss in small groups or as a whole class: How does the model minority stereotype differentiate Asian Americans from other communities of color in the US? Why is this problematic? Students should understand the ways that cultural representation can perpetuate stereotypes in harmful ways, even if those stereotypes seem "positive." Students should also understand the underlying roots of pitting minority groups against each other using methods such as the "model minority" stereotype.

Compare/contrast statistics and personal stories
 	
(Slides 14-16)
	• Review the Pew Research Center statistics in class, including the graphs and charts illustrating more contemporary experiences of Asian Americans with the model minority stereotype.
	  o Highlight graphs and charts as forms of visual storytelling
	  o Based on the statistics in the Pew report, have students construct at least one narrative or story about contemporary Asian Americans and the model minority stereotype

	○ The objective is to show how numbers and statistics can also tell a certain kind of story - Show the PBS clip "The Model Minority Myth" - Have students discuss the different methods for storytelling: statistics vs personal narratives and when one method might be more effective over the other Students should have a better grasp of different methods for collecting data about people's lived experiences. They should differentiate between and understand the value of diverse forms of storytelling, such as statistical data and personal narratives.

DAY 3 LESSON PLAN

Topic: Creating Counter-Narratives

Objectives: Using the case study of Southeast Asian refugees in the US, students will further deconstruct the narrative of Asians as the "model minority." Students will also be introduced to the basic elements of narrative as a genre in preparation for creating their oral history narratives.

Activity	Detailed description
Warm-up discussion (Slide 18)	Students should read Noy Thrupkaew's (2002) "The Myth of the Model Minority" and Anthoney Veasna So's (2018) "Superking Son Scores Again" before class. • To begin class, have students discuss: What are some narratives that counter the stereotype of Asian Americans as the "model minority"? • Their answers do not have to be taken directly from the readings. It would be better to encourage them to think of contemporary examples.
Connecting the two readings (Slide 19)	• Students should find 2-3 concrete examples from Thrupkaew's article that provide contextual evidence for some of the experiences and feelings depicted in So's short story. ○ The goal is for students to see how historical events inform fictional representations in addition to thinking of ways to make historical conditions more accessible for readers through narrative • Students can then discuss in small groups or as a whole class: How do both texts challenge the stereotype of Asian Americans as the model minority. Student should better grasp the problem of seeing Asian Americans as a monolith. They should also be able to see how the conditions under which a person or group of people migrate influence their experiences upon arriving in the US. Finally students should understand how the model minority stereotype can harm various groups of Asian immigrants because it can limit the resources to which they have access.

Analyzing fiction (Slides 20-23)	• Go over some basic elements of fiction so that students have a shared vocabulary for discussing So's short story.
	 • Focus on the role of **setting** within a story: the place and time in which the story's events unfold
	 • Look specifically at the two main settings: Superking Son's grocery store and the high school gym where badminton practice takes place.
	 • Things to consider:
	     ○ How does the narrator relate to each place?
	     ○ How does Superking Son relate to each place?
	     ○ How might other characters, like Justin or the Mas, relate to each place?
	     ○ Superking Son is older than the narrator. Based on the narrator's descriptions, how has Superking Son's relationship to each place changed over time as he gets older?
	 • To discuss in groups or as a whole class: How did Superking Son's character arc make you think differently about the grocery store and the HS gym over the course of the story?

Final thoughts and the Module 2 assessment (Slides 24-25)	• Connect the So's short story to the oral history project by showing how focusing on an individual character's development can infuse a space with more meaning. • Explain the required components students will submit for this portion of the project