

Why Isn't Puerto Rico a State Yet?

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Overview

In a seminar on American Empire, it is necessary to address both the European and the American definitions of the term “empire.” There are differences that separate monarchical thirst from the magnanimous spread of democracy; and there are similarities that question the inclusion of “alien races” into the sanctum of the rights and privileges of citizenship. In these differences, we see that the addition of sovereign states into the Union – on equal footing with the original thirteen – has allowed the American Empire to grow and flourish. In the similarities, we see America’s definition of empire as an opportunity to exclude peoples almost as often as it includes them.

This unit will delve into the 51st state question and highlight Puerto Rico’s dubious current status as it relates to citizenship, rights, and desire for statehood. There will be a focus on the historical treatment of peoples - and their territories - marginalized beginning at the turn of the 20th century: Latinos, African Americans, and Polynesians. Court cases, public debate, war treaties, and Congressional documents will frame the debate from the varied sides for, against, or uncertain. The culmination of the unit will be a scenario where learners will make the decision on what America should have done and should do currently and in the future vis-à-vis its supranational territories. The material is suitable for secondary learners in either an American History or Civics/Social Science class.

Rationale

America is an idea that was born out of the European thirst for new markets and raw materials. The practice of mercantilism, the concept of the colony, and the disfranchisement of second sons in 16th century superpower nations all contributed to

what was to become a national identity. That America was born from empire, raised on it, and practiced in it by the time of its own rebirth as the United States of America rationalizes our country's duality when confronted with imperial opportunity. The U.S. does not wish to shackle other peoples as it was once shackled; but the U.S. also does not want to miss out on the rewards of the imperialist game. This complex narrates the growth of our physical empire as well as our continuing struggles with inclusion, democracy, and citizenship rights. Girding the entire conversation is the strength of America's economy and its incessant struggle to become and remain an essential player in the world's marketplace.

Puerto Rico makes a relatively late entrance into the history of American empire, not as attractive as some of its neighbors, but also not as politically volatile. The "conquest" and "liberation" of Puerto Rico takes place during the Caribbean stage of the Spanish-American War in the late 19th century and it is quiet and uneventful. The beauty of Puerto Rico as a possession – later a territory, later still a commonwealth – lies in its strategic location, its economic market, and its surprising lack of troublesomeness. That it has lasted this long in an American limbo is neither startling nor unexpected to many Americans; most do not think regularly, if at all, on its status in our country. However, Puerto Rico is a long-standing example of how the United States has struggled and continues to struggle with its role in a democratic, imperial, and capitalist society.

At the birth of our nation, learned colonial men created a document that would guide the principles and actions of learned men and women today. The Constitution was crafted by minds like those of James Madison who sought to unify the mistreated colonies of Great Britain and to give those same colonies new life and chance for alliances – political and economic – as states. He and the Federalists were greatly in favor of fortifying the new nation under the banner of a central government that would respect the sovereignty of individual states, but also provide a framework of economic and diplomatic responsibility that would bind the whole against the tyranny of a few – be they foreign or domestic. This sentiment was not as popular as John Trumbull would have it painted, as evidenced by the presence and pushback of Anti-Federalists during the Constitutional drafting and ratification. In his *Agrippa No. 4*, James Winthrop states plainly, "That no extensive empire can be governed upon republican principles." The belief that one central administration, removed from the passions and pressures of the individual states, could guide and govern what was to become a massive American empire was questioned from the very beginning. Some historians would like to point to 50 examples that prove Winthrop wrong; Puerto Rico happens to be one of many examples that unequivocally proves him right.

A Pre-War Context for Territorial and Market Expansion

The United States in 2015 is vastly different from that of the 19th century. The simple fact that our nation is referenced in the singular when it is undoubtedly a statement of

plurality (“the United States is” versus “the United States are”) exhibits the strength of the federal government over the individual states in this day and age. As America has grown culturally, so too has it grown physically and economically. The 19th century saw two eras of rapid growth in America’s history as bookends to a staggering war that threw the nation’s racial and economic tensions into stark relief.

The United States before the Civil War were a set of states and quickly organizing territories that aimed to fulfill the nation’s Manifest Destiny. The intention of the federal government was to approve territorial growth that would cement the nation’s hold over land from the Atlantic to the Pacific and reinforce markets to the north (British Canada), south (newly independent Mexico), and west (Asia). The annexation of the Texas Republic, the absorption of California through the Mexican Cession, and the rallying cries around the northern border of the Oregon Country were all compromises that extended America’s reach into largely unpopulated lands with vast economic potential.

Democrats and Whigs both understood the value of growth during a manufacturing and agricultural boom time in the early 1800s; they also appreciated the need for temperance when incorporating new cultures and ethnicities into the electorate. During the Mexican War, the proposal to envelope the entire fledgling state of Mexico was rejected because it would require granting rights and privileges to a large population of non-whites very far from the densely populated centers of American governance. The question of Native Americans in the new territories was seemingly answered in the 1830s with the federal government’s Court-approved policies regarding treaties with foreign nations and eventual reservation politics. In fact, America was only comfortable incorporating territories where the original populations were so low as to entice rapid white settlement while also enforcing rapid cultural and economic assimilation. According to the process of creating new states as outlined by the Northwest Ordinance under the Articles of Confederation, population and self-governance standards had minimum thresholds – each of which the new west and southwest territories could not obtain without substantial resettlement of whites from the east.

Underpinning this westward growth were the racial tensions soon brought to a head by the Civil War. America’s treatment of slave and free African Americans spoke of a legacy of disenfranchisement and subordination. Dred Scott and his ilk were regarded as non-citizens in a nation where no formal citizenship existed. To complicate matters further, the economic strength of the cotton industry in the south – wishing to move forcefully into the newly acquired and as yet unorganized west – was built on the precept that those of the African race were socially inferior and yet essential to the profitability of that venture. Attacks on the sovereignty of free blacks in the north and south reinforced this idea of racial inferiority that required all Americans to consider what the nation would look like if people of color were embraced into the electorate; it was perhaps this fear that caused Lincoln and other figures of note before and during the War to state that

its purpose was preservation of the Union as opposed to freedom and rights for their black brethren.

As the Civil War closed one chapter of conflict for the United States, it opened up concerns over the status of citizenship rights and economic entitlement for millions of newly-minted Americans. Already living within the borders of established states and eager to move into quickly organizing territories, African-Americans could not be held to the “foreign nation” algorithm developed for interactions between the federal government and Native Americans (a people who were still legal outsiders even after the ratification of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution). Instead, they must be absorbed into the everyday working of government and the economy. This harsh reality was mitigated by the military efforts of Reconstruction in the south; but the vacuum created by the exit of martial law in 1877 was quickly filled with Jim Crow, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and the legacy of segregation and inequality that last almost another century.

While America struggled mightily to bounce back from economic panics and recessions after the Civil War, it focused even more energy on creating a cultural, political, and economic system of haves and have-nots that would color the nation’s greatest accomplishments entering the dawn of the 20th century. The Gilded Age shone brightly as America was poised to enter world markets as a major player with a burgeoning navy and a strong record of turning natural resources into veritable liquid gold. However a scratch on this shiny surface exposed the racism, paternalism, and militarism that would challenge the strength of the Constitution, the Court, and the spirit of the American people.

The Spanish-American War, the Foraker Act, and the Platt Amendment

While the nation’s moniker, “Policeman of the World,” seems to have waned with the rise of the BRIC nations in the 21st century, it was altogether unheard of in the world of 1898. The United States was only recently rebounding from its Civil War in the 1860s and, as such, invested public monies heavily in infrastructure and domestic ventures. Much international trade and concerns were private – although arguably funded through a government complicit in the success of capitalism – and were better managed by individuals and corporations with congressmen in their pockets as opposed to the other way around. It seems antithetical, then, to see the United States enter into a new imperial era where trade relationships were sealed with treaties, annexation, and the replacement of colonial and local regimes with a stripped down ghost of the United States Constitution.

America was born as a colony to a great and successful mother England, and had learned that there were positive and negative consequences to such a subjective relationship. One reason that states entering “on equal footing” into the Union was of great import to statesmen like Thomas Jefferson was to demonstrate that colonial politics

and economics are less preferable than those of democratic republics. The cost of maintenance of colonies and mercantile economies was great, and a young America of not-yet-fifty states and some mainland territories was perhaps ill-suited to assume such responsibility. The struggles of effectively leveraging federalism to govern across thousands of miles would be complicated by the addition of overseas acquisitions; Alaska, for example, was named Seward's folly at mid-century and not entered into the Union until after almost 100 years – and it was still accessible by train to the contiguous states.

One vast difference between European colonial ventures in the 16th and 17th centuries and American ventures in the 19th century was the density and ethnicity of the population in the colonized lands. Colonization in North America from 1492 until the late 1600s was characterized by populations of natives without the benefits of Jared Diamond's "guns, germs, and steel"; relatively small bands of Europeans found it simple to overpower and dehumanize them, resorting to intermarriage and biological warfare when prudent. In contrast, the lands cultivated and controlled by Spain until the Spanish-American War were rich in a history, culture, and people that were colored by the social and political baggage associated with the aforementioned colonization efforts hundreds of years prior. America would be inheriting Spain's colonial experiments – not forging a path through "virgin" lands.

Another stopping point was what the United States intended to do with the colonies it would eventually win from Spain. As far back as the Ostend Manifesto, Americans had pined for the opportunity to own Cuba's wealth of resources for their own. Now that Americans were essentially promising to help liberate Cubans from their Spanish oppressors, would they take the opportunity to claim the same rights of conquest as the evil Spanish? What would the United States do with the extra territories foisted upon it by the 1898 Treaty of Paris?

Up until the Spanish-American War, the United States had been deliberate – sometimes calculating – in the efforts of its politicians and private citizens to populate lands with the intention of creating territories and, eventually, states. The Constitution followed the flag, and the flag followed the people who saw potential markets and opportunity in the Louisiana Territory, Florida, Texas, Oregon, Alaska, and other subsequent states. America would need to cloak its new endeavors in the Caribbean and Pacific in democracy in order to convince itself and others that the nation's entrance onto the international stage was not hypocrisy.

Once the 1898 Treaty of Paris had been signed – ending the short and relatively bloodless war with Spain – the United States began the work of codifying the governments of the new, unincorporated territories. The Foraker Act of 1900 was an Organic Act that stipulated the supremacy of United States federal law over the Puerto Rican territory until such time as Puerto Rico became a state. All territories gaining

eventual statehood were once governed by Organic Acts – originating with the Northwest Ordinance in 1787. Right away, the United States was asserting its commitment to democratic principles under the Constitution, stating its intention to recognize Puerto Rico as a state should she so choose.

In contrast, Cuba was finally gifted that which it sought in its rebellion against Spain – a method wherein it could gain its independence from colonial powers. In the Platt Amendment to the 1901 Army Appropriations Bill, passed in response to the Treaty of Paris, the United States agreed to release Cuba from its political ties. The stipulations associated with the Platt Amendment required far-reaching and long-lasting concessions on the part of Cuba, such as the highly-contentious use of land for a military base at Guantanamo. This allowed America to retain a foothold on the coveted sugar island even today. While problematic in many ways (the United States reoccupied Cuba in the early 20th century due to an “unstable” government), the Platt Amendment opened the door in the Constitution for territories to dissociate – in effect, secede – from the United States.

The ramifications of this dissociation loophole would eventually color the United States’ relationship with each of its insular, unincorporated territories. As American interests rotated around the Caribbean and Pacific islands, the United States could pick and choose the level of involvement it took in the affairs of sovereign nations. On islands with distinct and dense populations of colored inhabitants, the United States had set a precedent of choice unheard of in previous conquests. From a Constitutional standpoint, the Platt Amendment and the set of Supreme Court decisions labelled the “Insular Cases” allowed the United States to remain disentangled in some arenas and deeply entrenched in others – establishing bases or sending in aid or troops when it was politically or economically advantageous for America, and pulling out of countries when scandal or co-dependence seemed imminent.

The “Insular Cases” Set an Economic and Political Precedent

The set of cases decided by the United States Supreme Court in 1901 in reference to Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines are known today as the “Insular Cases”. Each of the cases dealt with economic trade issues between the United States mainland and the newly acquired, unincorporated, former Spanish territories. To oversimplify, the Court decided that full Constitutional rights were not guaranteed to residents of the unincorporated territories. This overly political response to what seems a basic economic question is due mostly to the desire of Americans to have protections against people of color in these unincorporated territories joining the electorate and draining the resources of the nation as a whole. In these decisions, the Court sentenced all territories acquired by the United States from 1898 onward (excluding Hawaii, which was an incorporated territory on the slow and steady track to statehood) to a tenuous relationship as regards citizenship and Constitutional rights.

Perhaps the most well-known of these obscure decisions, *Downes v. Bidwell* pitted the sugar interests in Puerto Rico against the anti-imperialists in America. Unrestricted trade between Puerto Rico, Spain, and the United States would jeopardize the solvency of the sugar market. As a result, Puerto Rico and the other insular territories with economic ties to Spain were reclassified as supranational entities. This new classification – in some conflict with the Foraker Act – allowed the United States to control the level of involvement the federal government would have in Puerto Rican affairs as well as keep the island in a state of perpetual limbo as regards legal status.

One obvious and troubling side effect of the Insular Cases is the right of citizenship in Puerto Rico. The United States created Puerto Rican citizenship to parallel state “citizenship” in the 50 United States; Puerto Ricans are also granted United States citizenship upon birth. However, United States Circuit Courts have upheld the right of Puerto Ricans to renounce their American citizenship while retaining the rights of a citizen of Puerto Rico. What’s more, citizens in Puerto Rico are denied congressional representation because the territories send no voting members to the House or Senate – the storied “taxation without representation”. In a bizarre twist, Puerto Ricans relocating to mainland America and establishing state “citizenship” in any of the 50 states automatically gain the right to vote in their new state. They lose it again when they reestablish residency in Puerto Rico. The precedent that the Constitution does not *ex proprio vigore* – of its own force – follow each and every one of its citizens regardless of their place of residence seems archaic, spiteful, and illegal; in actuality, it is only two of those three.

Puerto Rico’s Statehood, Independence, and Status Quo Movements

The complicated status of Puerto Rico and the other supranational territories controlled by the United States is currently static. While referenda have occurred and political parties align either for, against, or neutral to change, the reality is that the federal government holds all of the cards in these places. Owing to their unincorporated state, the United States is under no obligation to incorporate these territories or, frankly, to keep them tethered to the nation at all. America may de-annex any of the unincorporated territories at will, taking with it the social, political, and economic protections. Additionally, America can choose to begin the process of allowing these territories to obtain statehood, upsetting the fragile balances currently struck between foreign and domestic. More than likely, America will choose to maintain the status quo with these territories. Regardless, the people of Puerto Rico and the other insular territories will have little to no say in the matter.

The American military presence in these territories plays a large role in America’s affection for the status quo. Established military bases – like the coaling stations built in the early 20th century on these islands – are large investments in the infrastructure of the national security agencies. It is very unlikely that the United States will grant

independence to these places without requiring the maintenance of the current military bases – something to which these countries would be opposed. If the United States were to choose the statehood route, it is likely the full citizenship rights bestowed upon the residents of the island would empower them to vastly limit the usage of the military bases for war games and arms testing.

As it stands today, Puerto Rico has voted to maintain the status quo of its limited citizenship rights. To many Puertorriqueños, this “best of both worlds” scenario is hardly appealing; however it is difficult to see a path to independence (and the responsibilities inherent in such a course) or statehood (and the loss of cultural autonomy). Historically, political entities in Puerto Rico such as the *Ciudadanos Pro-Estado 51* (Citizens for the 51st State), *Movimiento Pro-Independencia/Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño* (Pro-Independence Movement/Puerto Rican Socialist Party), *Partido Estadista Republicano* (Republican Statehood Party), and *Partido Nuevo Progresista* (New Progressive Party) each represent unique perspectives of the Puerto Rican electorate on the question of status. That no one group has reached a majority is neither surprising nor telling; the United States federal government would have the final say in any case.

On the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 2015, the non-voting members of Congress from the unincorporated territories spoke before those assembled to petition America for the full realization of its commitment to democracy. The American electorate of 2015 is more deeply hued than that of 1898 and so the call for the Constitution to follow the flag has been renewed without the baggage of blatant racism. In racism’s place is the worry of economic and political hardship for accepting these territories as states – much like the trepidation in the European Economic Community for considering the entry of poor Eastern European nations and their masses of unemployed workers, or the refusal of Great Britain to give up its pound sterling. No resolutions were passed and little was made of the speeches except in late-night monologues.

Whatever the arguments for or against a final resolution to the question of Puerto Rico, the simple fact remains that this is not simple. The imperial legacy of the nation, along with the perennially renewed commitment to democratic principles, have left the United States with much to consider and little to sway. As John Adams said, “the happiness of society is the end of government.” This is not to say that governments will end when all parties are happy – in essence, guaranteeing perpetual government – but instead that the purpose of government is to create happiness within society. In the form of republican democracy so carefully crafted in so few words by the founding fathers, it seems bittersweet that little happiness is to be found in any recourse the United States may take on the question of Puerto Rico and its other supranational territories. Over one hundred years of social, political, and economic contexts drive the conversation so much that a 21st century resolution is necessarily governed by 19th century logic.

Objectives

In an urban public school where 98% of the population is of a minority race, social justice seems as if it should be at the fore of many lessons. Because the Social Studies are not emphasized in high-stakes testing in Pennsylvania, many learners wonder what use these classes have as they struggle to graduate and be successful. For a lover of history, the richness of the tapestry woven by the past serves to inform future decisions and goals. However, in a society where disfranchisement and poverty almost inevitably lead to apathy and distrust, the Social Studies tends to be viewed as a method for keeping minorities in their place – or arguably worse – providing misplaced hope.

While learners who engage in this lesson will not be going to Congress to resolve the status of Puerto Rico, the topics that arise in the discussion and the methods employed by both the Spanish and the Americans at every point in Puerto Rico's territorial evolution are essential to understanding how governments work. Furthermore, this case study illuminates the role of favored individuals and grassroots organizations in the struggle for autonomy. Perhaps most important, it highlights the role of economics in clouding and controlling what appear to be cultural or political issues. Each of these provides an avenue for the introduction of social justice into the Social Studies curriculum.

The overarching goal of the unit is to inform learners that many issues Americans regard as “history” – or having happened in the past – are still unresolved to this day. Learners tend to think of government and territory as static, never having lived in a time where the lines or names on a globe changed or where the idea of citizenship was in question. Because learners take these things for granted – and because these issues could evolve to a proverbial head during their lifetimes – it would be remiss for a Social Studies class to teach history in the vacuum of the past. In a United States History class, this unit could open with the Spanish-American War as a genesis for America's continued involvement in overseas affairs and the maintenance of military bases in nations where we have had past conflict. In a Civics class, this unit could throw in stark relief the Constitution in practice and the evolution of citizenship and citizen rights as the nation has grown to include non-white, non-male people of little means.

Learners will be able to engage with various and evolving definitions of terms like “empire” that seem to have accepted and banal meanings. They will look at primary sources and secondary sources to find evidence for America's policies toward Puerto Rico. They will evaluate various explanations for Puerto Rico's current status as a non-represented commonwealth territory. Finally, linked to the social justice piece and perhaps most important, learners will integrate their knowledge of the case study to attempt to resolve the issue of Puerto Rico's status.

Strategies

Vocabulary (Frayer Model Map)

The Frayer Model Map is a graphic way to organize thoughts about a concept or vocabulary word. There are five parts to the map: 1) a center box that displays the concept or vocabulary word; 2) a box (upper left) with an accepted “definition” of the word/phrase; 3) a box (upper right) with “characteristics” that describe the word/phrase; 4) a box (lower left) with “examples” demonstrating an application of the word/phrase; and 5) a box (lower right) with “non-examples” where the word/phrase would not be evidenced. The purpose of the Frayer Model Map is to give a comprehensive understanding of something that may be taken for granted or that has many conflicting definitions and/or applications in English.

In this unit, the Map will be employed in a few ways. First, there is the task of defining the word “empire” for the introduction to the unit. Next, the Map will be used to collect different examples and non-examples of “empire” during classroom discussion and exploration of the Spanish-American War and America’s evolving relationship with Puerto Rico. Last, the Map will serve as a reference tool posted in the room during the unit so that learners can feel grounded in the discussion of empire while exploring other topics.

Case Study (Analysis of Primary and Secondary Sources)

The culmination of the unit will be a case study where learners will be presented with questions/problems, background information, and opinions from several sources. As opposed to a test or essay or research endeavor, case studies engage learners in a real-life scenario that challenges their conceptions of how questions are answered and problems are addressed. While case studies vary across disciplines, the case studies employed in this unit will begin by asking learners to make a series of decisions. There will be an introduction with background on the specific set of outcomes required (a refresher of information presented from the unit). Most importantly, there will be documents with quotes/charts/polls/etc. helping learners to inform the decisions they will ultimately make. By the end, learners will not only come to conclusions on the series of decisions originally presented, they will also have to justify the reasoning behind their answers, and the parties advantaged and disadvantaged by their decisions.

It is easy for learners to believe that problem solving is a job for a grown-up and that with age comes knowledge and impartiality. However many grown-ups can admit that time and age and even experience do not make solving the problems of the world easier. Case studies allow learners to use many different sources to compile a knowledge base for solving a problem. Additionally, case studies force learners to consider many points of view on a given topic and asks them to weigh the benefits to small and large groups

within the population when they create policy. For many learners, case studies will be the first time they produce work that has significant meaning to them and others. It may also be the first time they question whether a variety of solutions can exist for one problem.

Overall, case studies provide a real-world experience for learners who – until they reach the age of majority and voting rights – are merely play-acting at being good citizens. Case studies allow educators to open problems of great significance to the community to the minds of learners and give learners great agency in their attempts to solve these problems.

Classroom Activities

The overview of this unit outlines the application of these lessons in both an American History and a Civics/Social Science class. The lessons that follow are more aligned with a Social Science curriculum.

Introductory Lesson: Defining Empire

The objective of this lesson is to create a Frayer Model Map of the word “empire” in order to inform further classroom discussions on the topic and events that are associated with Puerto Rico’s place in the United States of America. The lesson should take one class period, however the Frayer Map will be employed throughout the unit for the addition of more examples/non-examples as discussion dictates as well as for reference.

First, learners will be asked to look up a dictionary definition of “empire” to fill in the “definition” box in the Map. Each learner may use their own source, but they must cite it so that we can judge the validity of the definition. Once the class presents their definitions, we will choose which source (or amalgamation of sources) provides a definition with which we feel comfortable. This will become our class definition and goes into the Map.

Next, learners will be tasked with describing the characteristics of empire. For this process, learners must not only identify a characteristic (i.e. – large/lots of land), but must also provide a context for that characteristic (i.e. – the British Empire). In this way, learners will begin to see that “empire” is not a static word with only one characteristic, but instead means many things to many civilizations. If the conversation drags or if there is not enough variety, the educator should be prepared with characteristics from a variety of theocratic, democratic, and monarchical empires (Byzantine, Mongol, Holy Roman, Russian, etc.).

Once the top of the Map has been fleshed out nicely, it will be time to address examples and non-examples of empire. This part is more difficult in that it relies heavily on learners’ understanding of the world in which they live and also in their memory of

prior history classes. It may be helpful to limit the number of examples and non-examples to two or three each so that learners are not stressed and also to provide room for growth.

For examples and non-examples, it may seem easy to only use the names of regimes and be done with it. However, this is an opportunity to talk about how attitudes and actions can very quickly lead to much larger outcomes within a nation. For example, in a discussion on “empire”, it is easy to identify the Britain of the 18th and 19th centuries as an empire; what is more difficult is to identify that the economic practice of the slave trade between Britain, Africa, and Britain’s colonies is also an example of “empire”. Cultural, social, political, religious, and economic systems are all responsible for cementing the power of empires, and so any Frayer Map would be remiss if it excluded these real and significant pieces of the puzzle. Additionally, America’s original devotion to the protection of states’ rights could be included as a non-example because of the division of key powers between many states as opposed to centralized power within a strong, national government. Once these other types of examples/non-examples are introduced, learners should be encouraged to share things discussed previously in the Social Science class that stand out as either helping or hindering the emergence of an American Empire.

The lesson should end with the Frayer Map being placed with prominence within the classroom. It should be said that further class discussions will allow learners to add more examples and non-examples to the Map as the unit progresses. It may also be useful to provide a stack of post-it notes next to the Map and explain that learners may add examples and non-examples at any time and the class will decide if a post-it should be converted to a permanent entry on to the Map.

Culminating Lesson: The Question of Puerto Rico

The objective of this lesson is to have learners integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information in order to make decisions on the status of Puerto Rico vis-à-vis its relationship to the United States. This lesson could last two to three days depending on whether all of the viewpoints for the decision-making are provided or if learners must compile some of these viewpoints on their own.

The lesson begins with learners being grouped. One aspect of problem-solving in modern democratic societies is the necessity for consensus among voting members. While many educators are leery of allowing groups for performances of understanding (tests, projects, papers), in this case the grouping is justified to simulate a real-world situation; there is also a built-in measure to the case study that requires the logging of a vote for all decisions and an individual rationale (evidence-based) for each voting member in the group. Cynically, this process may be more transparent and accountable than the standards to which many legislators are held.

Once grouping has occurred, different case studies are distributed to the groups. The case studies are:

- 1) Should the United States acquire Puerto Rico in the Treaty of Paris (1898)?
- 2) Should Puerto Rico have the same economic status as states?
- 3) Is Puerto Rico its own country?
- 4) Should Puerto Ricans be granted United States citizenship?
- 5) Should Puerto Rico have representatives and senators in Congress with a right to vote?
- 6) Should Puerto Ricans be able to enlist and serve in the armed forces?
- 7) Should United States military bases exist on Puerto Rico?
- 8) Should Puerto Rico become a state?

Each case will have an introduction with background information about the topic. Some of the topics are purely historical (decisions have already been made), some are hypothetical (decisions have been made but can be changed based on new information), and some are pressing (decisions can and should be made in the future). Accompanying the introduction is a list of decisions the group must make, as well as the voting outline, and a request for rationales. Then, there will either be a list of viewpoints and accompanying documents (shorter version of the lesson), or a list of viewpoints and recommended places for learners to find more information (longer version of the lesson).

Because these learners are older and have more experience with group work and research, the rest of the lesson requires the educator to appropriately guide and check in with learners as they make their decisions within the groups. No decisions within a group should be made dependent upon another group's outcomes; this creates more autonomy within groups to deal with their smaller slice of the "question of Puerto Rico". Educators may have to model or facilitate the voting and rationale process either for the class as a whole or in each group. If the longer version of the lesson is employed, the educator may need to model what an appropriate document is and how to cite that source.

Once each group has made successful decisions, accompanied by votes and rationales, they should prepare to present their decisions and rationales to the class. The educator will have visited each group to determine if everything was done appropriately; the decisions are somewhat less important than the rationales, and the presentation should highlight the source cited in the rationale. Each presentation should be brief and outline the problem, the introduction, and the ultimate decisions. All groups listening should have a score sheet that lists the other decisions being made by the class and learners should score each presented decision as to how it either supports, weakens, or conflicts with their group's decision, also providing a rationale for that rating.

At the end of the lesson, there should be an overview of what decisions have historically been made and what decisions have yet to be made by the United States government. Lastly, each group's decision should be added to the Frayer Map of "empire" as either an example or non-example accordingly.

Annotated Bibliography/Resources

Teacher Bibliography

Baralt, Jose Lopez. *The Policy of the United States Towards Its Territories with Special Reference to Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1999. Print.

The chapter Civil Government in the Island outlines the varied legislation allowing Puerto Rico to run its affairs with the oversight (minimal as it sometimes is) of the United States Congress.

Burnett, Christina Duffy, and Burke Marshall, Eds. *Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico, American Expansion, and the Constitution*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. Print.

The essay "U.S. Territorial Expansion: Extended Republicanism versus Hyperextended Expansionism" by E. Robert Statham, Jr. describes Puerto Rico's current status as unconstitutional. The essay "The Bitter Roots of Puerto Rican Citizenship" by Rogers M. Smith brings up the stickiness of the legal relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States as relates to the terms "citizen" and "national". Finally, the essay "One Hundred Years of Solitude: Puerto Rico's American Century" by Juan R. Torruella provides a basis for negating the commonwealth status of Puerto Rico and suggests other, more permanent, possibilities for resolving its status.

Hahn, Steven. "The Spanish-American War." American Empire. University of Pennsylvania, Teacher's Institute of Philadelphia. Claudia Cohen Hall, Philadelphia. 5 May 2015. Lecture.

Lecture provided context for the discussion of the Spanish-American War in cultural, political, and economic terms. Highlighted the Spanish and colonial mindset and the initial reactions of businessmen in Puerto Rico and Cuba directly after the War.

Melendez, Edgardo. *Puerto Rico's Statehood Movement*. Westport: Greenwood, 1988. Print.

The book outlines the political movements within Puerto Rico up to the late 1980s and describes the historical motivations of each group and their purchase within the commonwealth's political arena.

Nugent, Walter. *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008. Print.

The chapters Around the Caribbean and the Global Empire inform on the legacy of the Spanish-American War in relation to Cuba and Puerto Rico. Makes reference to Puerto Rico as non-military and as a bystander in its absorption into the American Empire.

Onuf, Peter S. *Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood*.

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The chapter on Republican Empire informed the discussion on the use of the term "empire" and its evolution across the Atlantic Ocean and through the opening century of the United States of America.

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Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2006. Print.

The entire book gives context to the processes by which the United States keeps certain territories dependent upon (as opposed to independent within) the United States. It uses the 1901 Insular Cases before the Supreme Court as a lens through which to view the historical treatment of these supranational territories.

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"Island of Warriors." Tuttle, Ross. *America by the Numbers with Maria Hinojosa*. Maria Hinojosa. PBS. 11 Oct. 2014. Television.

Episode that chronicles the military service and lack of veterans benefits of American nationals living on American Samoa, an unincorporated insular territory in the South Pacific.

"March 8, 2015." Stanton, Liz. *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*. John Oliver. HBO. 8 Mar. 2015. Television.

Episode that addresses the inequity of citizenship/national status rights of Americans living in supranational territories versus the United States of America.

Murillo, Mario. *Islands of Resistance: Puerto Rico, Vieques, and U.S. Policy*. New York: Seven Stories, 2001. Print.

Essay chronicling the varied movements in Puerto Rico against US occupation, economic control, and military bases. Viewpoint of a Puerto Rican journalist with somewhat anti-American sentiment.

Winthrop, James. "Anti-Federalist Papers: Letters of Agrippa, I-XI." *Anti-Federalist Papers: Letters of Agrippa, I-XI*. Constitution Society, 1 Jan. 2013. Web. 24 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.constitution.org/afp/agrippa.htm>>.

Specific reference to the ability of the newly-formed United States to handle the democratic process considering the limits it faces due to size.

Appendix/Content Standards

State Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.