

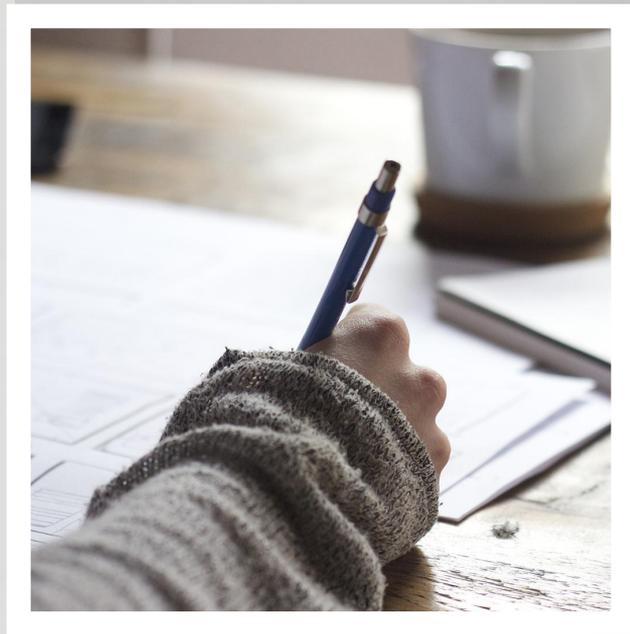
Teaching Secondary English Novels in an Islamic Based Curriculum

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Overview

- ◆ Relevant Curricula
 - ◆ Focus on Tarbiyya
- ◆ Components of Novel Based Curriculum
 - ◆ Standards
 - ◆ Essential Questions
 - ◆ Backwards Planning
 - ◆ Alternative Assessment Strategies
- ◆ Sample Unit Plans



1. Relevant Curriculum for our Students

How to choose novels that are relevant to the interests of your students and can be “Islamicized”

“ *Our goals as educators [is] to connect moral action to human excellence and leading a good life. A focus on virtue...provides the most coherent framework within which to understand the schooling of desire and how a person becomes virtuous, rather than to simply act virtuously.*

(Bohlin 2005)

1.

Create a curriculum or novel list unique to our students

2.

Align the list with standards and/or literary canon

3.

Islamicize by finding relevant Islamic content

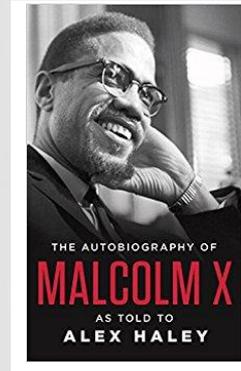
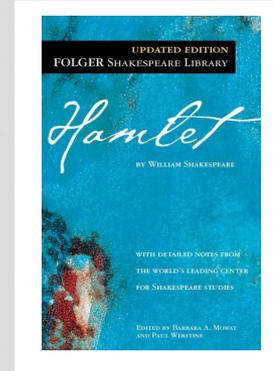
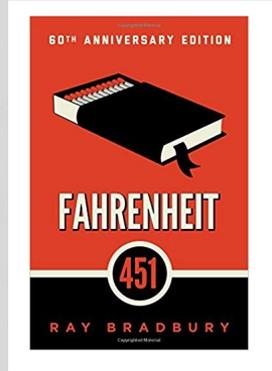
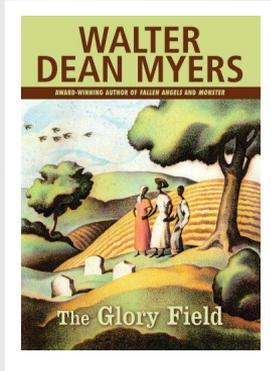
1) Curriculum or novel List unique to our students

Our students face special challenges not only because they are Muslim Americans, but because they are Muslim American teenagers. Therefore, it is wise to first start with creating a curriculum or novel list formed around a list of challenges that our students may likely face in today's world.

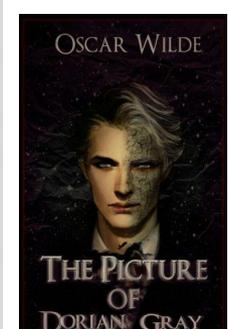
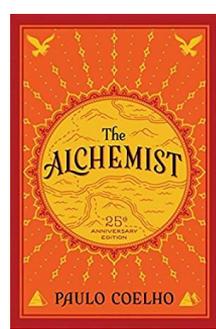
- Islamophobia
- Technology
- Social Media
- Self-Sufficiency
- Racism
- Responsibility
- Family
- Societal Pressures
- Peer Pressure
- Influence
- Moral/Ethical behavior
- Personal Identity
- Self Worth

2) Align with Standards and Canon

9th
Grade



10th
Grade



3) Islamicize

“ *...by examining the motivation of characters who pursue paths of willful self-deception or corruption, for example, we can also help students gain as much insight from bad examples as from good.*

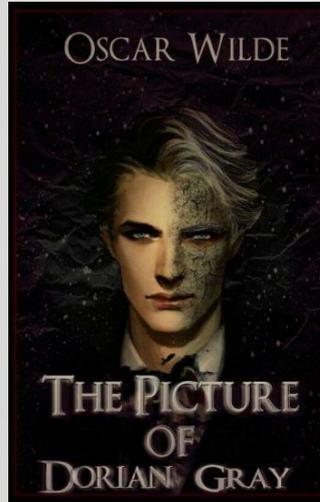
(Bohlin 2005)

Take for example the Victorian novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. The protagonist, Dorian Gray, sells his soul to the devil in exchange for eternal youth. He embarks on a narcissistic life of indulging in his desires, which eventually leads his own demise.

From a superficial standpoint, this novel sounds like one we should steer clear of--however, one can easily derive multiple lessons from the events and characters.

"A person is upon the religion of his close friends, so beware of whom you befriend." -Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi

What makes somebody a positive or negative influence in your life? What is the importance of surrounding oneself with people who influence you to do good, forbid evil, improve your iman, or your relationship with Allah? What should we do if the people around us do not do this?

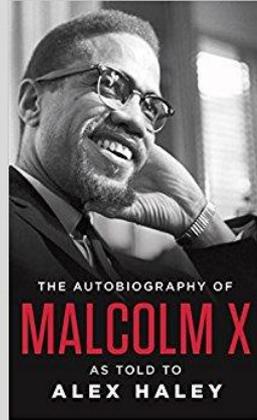


What is hedonism? Why is hedonism incompatible with Islam? What is the importance of leading a moral, righteous life?

What is "selfie culture"? How does this perpetuate the idea of self-obsession and vanity? How can we protect ourselves from falling into this while engaging in social media?

How are issues of classism, racism, discrimination, civil rights, and segregation addressed in Islam through the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet (S)?

Discuss and analyze the role and perceptions of Islam in America during the Civil Rights Movement (through the Nation of Islam) and the role/perceptions of Islam today.

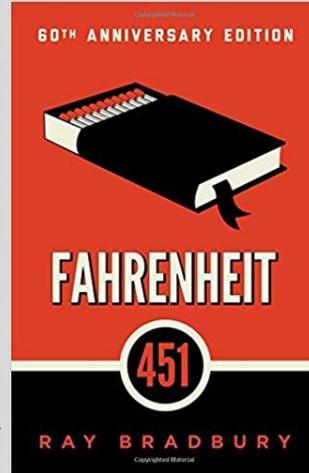


What is your current role as Muslims in America? Should Muslims take a more active role in their communities? Politics? Policies? Schools? What can you do to be leaders of the community and country?

How is Malcolm X a prominent figure of Islam in America?

This is a novel about burning books and censorship. When have people tried to censor Muslims, or when have Muslims tried to censor things? Is censorship always a negative thing?

What does Islam tell us about obtaining information and learning?



What is it that makes people happy and that makes happiness last? What is the difference between "fun" or pleasure and "happiness"? What makes you happy? What is the answer to happiness and loneliness according to the Quran and Hadith?

How and why does our Iman (faith) waver? What are solutions to lack of faith or wavering faith?

How might racism cloud a person's judgement? There are many people who believe the jury was Islamophobic, and this is why Adnan was sentenced. To what extent do you believe this may be true?

How can what happened with Adnan serve as a warning for us as Muslim-American high schoolers?



Can children from "good Muslim families" go astray? What causes a morally righteous young teenager to "go astray"? What should you, as onlookers, do when you see this happen?

How can preconceived bias cloud your judgement of reality?

2.

Components of a Novel Based Curriculum

*How to correlate state standards with Islamic
Standards.*

From Standards To Objectives

(2) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:

- (A) analyze how the genre of texts with similar themes shapes meaning;
- (B) analyze the influence of mythic, classical and traditional literature on 20th and 21st century literature; and
- (C) relate the figurative language of a literary work to its historical and cultural setting.

Or...

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2
Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Objective

SWBAT complete a close reading of the famous “To be or not to be” soliloquy in Act 3 of *Hamlet* by paraphrasing the speech, interpreting the meaning, and discussing the Islamic perspective of suicide and dealing with hardships in life in a response paragraph.

Backwards Planning

The most effective method of planning any learning unit is to begin with the end goal:

- What should students be able to know or do by the end of this unit?
- What should they be able to accomplish?
- What lessons should they learn?

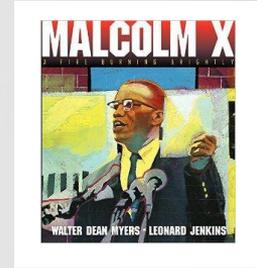
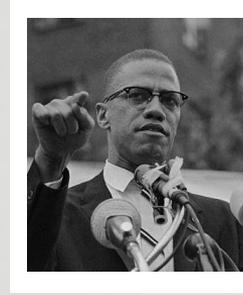
Decide which project/summative task best aligns with the standards your school follows and design a task that will keep your students motivated by making it relevant to their lives and that aligns to your essential questions.

“ *...the teacher's primary role...is to structure activities to stimulate motivation and encourage reflection, and to facilitate learning through scaffolding, feedback, guidance, and prompts for thinking...students should take responsibility for their learning and making meaning of the knowledge and concepts they encounter.*

(English And Kitantas 2010) 18

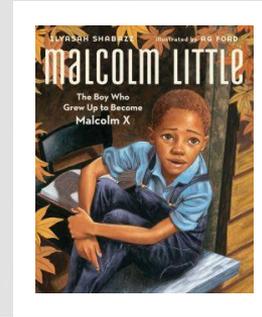
Malcolm X Final Assessment

1) Children's Book



2) Spoken Word Poem

3) Influential Speech



Alternative Assessment Strategies

- Give a menu of various project ideas: with a breadth of expression methods. A skit, short film based around the characters or a key scene from the play, spoken word poem, book cover, etc
- Give guidance and parameters
- Encourage students to express their personal creative voices by relating the characters' dilemma to their own lives
- Write an alternate ending

Even if you have one project or task, allow for students to be creative in their contributions or roles to the project.

Sample Unit Plans

Questions?

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