Unit 4: Community Involvement

Content Area: **Fine Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will explore photography as a tool for community engagement, storytelling, and social connection. Through researching documentary and community-based photographers, students will examine how images can represent people, places, cultures, and lived experiences with authenticity and respect. Students will plan and complete a photography project focused on their school, local community, or a chosen group, emphasizing observation, ethical practice, and meaningful visual storytelling. The unit culminates in a cohesive photographic series or body of work that highlights community identity and is presented to an audience through critique and exhibition.

Revised: August 2026

Standards

Information Literacy

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

ELD standards:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit

1.5.12adv.Cr1	Generating and conceptualizing ideas. Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed. Artists and designers shape artistic investigations, following or breaking with traditions in pursuit of creative art-making goals.

	Explore
1.5.12adv.Cr1a	Visualize and generate art and design that can affect social change.
1.5.12adv.Cr2	Organizing and developing ideas.
	Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and art-making approaches. Artists and designers balance experimentation and safety, freedom and responsibility, while developing and creating artworks. People create and interact with objects, places and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives.
1.5.12adv.Cr2a	Experiment, plan and make multiple works of art and design that explore a personally meaningful theme, idea, or concept.
1.5.12adv.Cr2b	Demonstrate understanding of the importance of balancing freedom and responsibility in the use of images, materials, tools and equipment in the creation and circulation of creative work.
1.5.12adv.Cr2c	Demonstrate in works of art or design how visual and material culture defines, shapes, enhances, inhibits, and/or empowers people's lives.
1.5.12adv.Cr3	Refining and completing products.
	Artists and designers develop excellence through practice and constructive critique, reflecting on, revising and refining work over time.
1.5.12adv.Cr3a	Reflect on, re-engage, revise and refine works of art or design considering relevant traditional and contemporary criteria as well as personal artistic vision.
1.5.12adv.Pr4	Selecting, analyzing, and interpreting work.
	Artists and other presenters consider various techniques, methods, venues, and criteria when analyzing, selecting and curating objects, artifacts and artworks for preservation and presentation.
1.5.12adv.Pr4a	Critique, justify and present choices in the process of analyzing, selecting, curating, and presenting artwork for a specific exhibit or event.
1.5.12adv.Pr5	Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.
	Artists, curators and others consider a variety of factors and methods including evolving technologies when preparing and refining artwork for display and or when deciding if and how to preserve and protect it.
1.5.12adv.Pr6	Conveying meaning through art.
	Objects, artifacts and artworks collected, preserved, or presented either by artists, museums, or other venues communicate meaning and a record of social, cultural and political experiences resulting in the cultivating of appreciation and understanding.
1.5.12adv.Re	Responding
1.5.12adv.Re7	Perceiving and analyzing products.

Essential Questions

- How can photography be used to represent and connect with a community?
- What responsibilities do photographers have when documenting people and places?
- How do images influence the way we see ourselves and others within a community?
- In what ways can photography create awareness, empathy, or social change?
- How does the photographer's own identity, biases, and background influence the way

they document a community?

Essential Understandings

- Photography can document, honor, and give voice to communities and lived experiences.
- Ethical decision making is essential when photographing people and environments.
- Artists use observation, relationship building, and intention to create meaningful documentary work.
- Visual storytelling can strengthen understanding, empathy, and connection within and beyond a community.

Students Will Know

- Principles of documentary and community-based photography.
- Ethical practices in photography including consent, representation, and respectful storytelling.
- How photographers use composition, timing, and subject matter to communicate real-world narratives.
- Strategies for planning, organizing, and executing a community-focused photographic project.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Fine Arts students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Evidence of progression may be demonstrated in divergent ways through the Artistic Process of Creating, Presenting/Producing, Connecting, and Responding.

Tasks will include:

- Preview/Answer essential questions
- Meaningfully and appropriately participate in class critique and discussions
- Complete class projects including weekly critique assignments
- Complete self-assessment rubrics
- Participate in assessment discussions with teacher
- Complete final exam

- Submit unedited contact sheets to demonstrate the process of image collection and selection
- Write a formal Artist Statement to accompany the final exhibition, explaining the student's connection to the community and their ethical choices

Learning Plan

- Essential Question Introduction & Journal Reflection:
  Engage in class discussions and sketchbook journal prompts exploring how photography can represent and connect communities while considering ethics and responsibility.
- Introduction to Community-Based Photography:
  Learn about documentary and community photography through mini lectures, slide presentations, and visual examples focusing on storytelling, representation, and social context.
- Artist Research & Visual Analysis:
  Research and analyze photographers who focus on community and documentary work, including Dorothea Lange (documentary and social history), Gordon Parks (social justice and storytelling), Sebastião Salgado (global documentary work), Mary Ellen Mark (portrait and documentary storytelling), and JR (public art and community engagement).
- Class Discussion & Ethical Practice Brainstorming:
  Discuss how photographers build trust, represent subjects ethically, and tell respectful stories. Brainstorm potential community groups, spaces, or themes within the school or local area for photographic exploration.
- Community Photo Planning & Proposal Development:
  Develop a project proposal identifying a community focus, goals, subject matter, and approach. Create shot lists, planning sketches, and reflection goals for documenting a selected community or group.
- Photography Fieldwork & Image Collection:
  Conduct photography sessions within the school or community, focusing on observation, interaction, and storytelling. Capture images that reflect daily life, identity, relationships, and environment.
- Composition & Documentary Skill Building:
  Practice photographic techniques including candid photography, portraiture, environmental portraits, composition, lighting, and capturing authentic moments.
- Peer Feedback & Check-Ins:
  Participate in regular critiques and conferences to evaluate progress, ethical considerations, composition, and narrative clarity. Revise approach based on feedback.
- Process Documentation & Reflection:
  Maintain sketchbook documentation including field notes, contact sheets, reflections, ethical considerations, and revisions throughout the project.
- Final Community Photography Series Development:
  Curate and refine a cohesive body of work that communicates a clear story or perspective about a

chosen community, demonstrating technical skill and thoughtful representation.

- Exhibition, Gallery Walk & Reflection:
  Present final work through a class exhibition or gallery walk. Participate in critique and reflection discussing storytelling, ethical choices, and the impact of photography on community understanding.

Materials

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of instructional, supplemental, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Handouts, writing samples, Digital Cameras, Sketchbook, Various Pencils, Sharpies, Markers, Various Papers, Various Erasers, Mirrors, Blending Sticks, Charcoal, Graphite, Sharpeners, Colored Pencils, Oil Pastel, Chalk Pastels, YouTube Videos, Value Scales, magazines, glue, scissors, Watercolor, Watercolor paper, paint brush, ink, printing materials, chromebooks, ipads, Paint, Color Wheels, Drawing Pen, Rulers

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

Suggested Strategies for Modifications:

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations:

Fine Arts Accommodations & Modifications