

Politics in Art and Film

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INTRODUCTION

In today's world, students are bombarded with visual messages designed to influence their thinking and subsequent decision-making. These visual messages come in many packages – television, movies, music videos, newspapers, magazines, billboards, and so on. Messages convey suggestions to students about every aspect of their lives – how to dress, what products to use, what pills to ask the doctor for, whom to vote for, and what is “in” and what is not. The problem with students receiving all this information is that they do not know how to sift through and evaluate these messages. I want to teach students how to be aware of and to evaluate some of this information, specifically political information, otherwise known as propaganda.

Propaganda is used to promote a particular point of view. Right or wrong, propaganda has been and will continue to be used in all cultures and societies across time. All entities use some form of propaganda – schools, churches, corporations, special interest groups, politicians, you name it. Propaganda is not necessarily bad, but it does need to be recognized for what it is. Students tend to accept information at face value without question. I want to teach them to question and evaluate as much information as possible. This way they can at least be aware of the bias that exists in all the information they are exposed to, and hopefully they will develop a life-long habit of questioning everything and will become critical thinkers.

So, how do I begin this journey into teaching students to think independently? I want to start with politics, first in movies, and then move to visual arts. I chose to take the seminar *Great Films and How They Shaped American Politics* because I want to show students how closely politics, movies, and the visual arts relate to one another. Art in any form (visual, music, performance, literature) does not occur in a vacuum. Artists are influenced by their personal experiences, social issues, political values, and in general the world around them. Their perceptions create the visual message that entertains the rest of us. I am a visual arts teacher, and I want to show my students by means of the lessons in my unit how art can affect the world views engendered by given issues that I have chosen to spotlight: war, women's rights, Mexico and immigration, and political cartoons.

Visual art and politics have been intertwined since the beginning of art history. Before the Common Era (CE), individual cultures and societies dictated what the rules of art would be. Individual artists were not recognized because the art was the focus, not the artist. Later, as organized religion began playing a larger part in daily life, religions became the patrons of the arts in order to promote their agendas and to control the visual messages as propaganda. Governments over time have attempted to control the arts in the same way. Art is a very powerful medium among the general populace whether or not they are consciously aware of it. Otherwise, why would authorities try so hard to control it? I want to teach my students to be aware of the impact of art on politics – the power of art to change the world.

My curriculum unit is aimed at my upper-level art students. These students are in our IB Program at Lamar High School. The school has a broad mix of ethnicities – 26% African-American, 5% Asian, 31% Hispanic, and 38% white. At-risk students make up 44% of the

student population, while another 39% are honors students. The mix of students in my classroom generally correlates with the overall school profile. In addition to at-risk and honors students, I also have special education students and LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students. I am planning this curriculum for upper-level students (Pre-IB Art and above) in grades 10 through 12. These students have had Art 1, so they are familiar with the elements of art and the principles of design. The upper-level art program at Lamar is a three-year program, the first year of which is Pre-IB, and the remaining two years are devoted to preparing for the IB exam that will enable students to receive college credit. Students can take the IB Art courses either as a stand-alone class (IB Certificate) or as part of the IB Diploma Program. IB students do research on many different subjects and artists in the course of their journey. I want to include art and politics as part of that experience.

Focusing on my four categories, my IB students will investigate the past, integrate the present, and use their research along with a design process to create ideas for a final piece. This process will be described in detail in the lesson plans. Then they will visually communicate their individual message based on what is happening today as a final art piece.

TEKS OBJECTIVES

117.55 Art, Level IV (c)

- (1) Perception. Students create ideas from their perceptions of the world.
 - (A) Students use the design process – brainstorm ideas, create thumbnail sketches for ideas, choose the subject, then create thumbnail sketches to design final composition. (Use of the elements of art and the principles of design)
 - (B) Students use the language of art to analyze visual qualities.
- (2) Creative expression/performance. Students use creative expression using a variety of media with technical competence.
 - (A) Design process.
 - (B) Evaluate and reflect on the design process.
 - (C) Compose and then create the artwork selecting from a variety of media.
- (3) Historical/cultural Heritage. Students understand art history and art from other cultures.
 - (A) Study period, style, or movement in art.
- (4) Response/evaluation. Students make informed judgments about personal and peers' artworks.
 - (B) Analyze and critique artwork using 4-step critique process – description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. Analyze artwork in historical and cultural contexts.

RATIONALE

I am concerned about students' lack of critical thinking. The reason I like teaching IB Art is that the IB organization encourages exploration, experimentation, and investigation. I try to teach students to be open-minded and to be critical thinkers. I begin the process with students who are used to being told what to do and what to think. I teach them to figure out what they think. This process is an uphill struggle, and students usually feel very uncomfortable at times during the process. However, the result makes the sometimes arduous process worthwhile.

I want students to apply critical thinking to the visual messages they experience in life. In particular, I want students to process the information they take in and to question and be aware of how they are being manipulated in both positive and negative ways. In order to accomplish these goals, I have to show students that they are being manipulated in the first place. Politics is an excellent forum to introduce the idea of bias and propaganda. I intend to show them movies in each of my four categories, followed by a group discussion of the movie: the messages conveyed by the films and how the films impact the audience. Then, we will look at particular political

artworks and determine the impact of these messages on the viewer. The final step will be for students to learn by creating their own messages from their own point-of-view. This allows the student to see firsthand how messages are created and targeted at a specific point of view.

Critical thinking is a huge factor in student academic success. Critical thinking is all about higher order thinking skills. Students are not just learning to regurgitate facts they have learned; they are learning to think for themselves. They are learning to process information that they are ingesting and to analyze that information appropriately. Critical thinking skills enable students to make sense out of the experiences they are exposed to and to scaffold their experiences into meaningful banks of knowledge to be used throughout their lives.

UNIT BACKGROUND

War

The United States has been involved in war or conflicts during much of its existence. In the 20th century, much propaganda was produced that showed the United States in a favorable light, even when we did not deserve it. Our current war has cost us \$2 to \$3 trillion so far. For a fraction of this amount, Social Security could have been funded for another 50 years. In addition, for each day of the war that has now gone on for 5 years, 58,000 people could be enrolled in Head Start for a year, 160,000 new Pell Grants could be added to help low-income students attend college, add 11,000 more border patrol agents, or hire an additional 14,000 police officers (Herbert). In essence, we are paying dearly for this war, with much more to come. My students need to be aware of the impact the war is having on our country because ultimately they will pay for it. I want them to think about what messages they are getting about the war from different media sources and how these messages have possibly swayed their thinking.

In order to get these points across, I will show them the 1943 movie *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. This is the story of a mercenary who goes to fight in the civil war in Spain against Franco in the 1930s. This would be a good opportunity to talk about the message of the movie, the possible underlying messages, and how the movie could be considered propaganda, and if so, by whom? At whom is the propaganda aimed? And, could we be seeing only the U.S. viewpoint? What might have been the pro-Franco point of view? Was Franco really all that bad?

Next we look at Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, the most haunting and disturbing artwork dealing with war. In 1937, Generalissimo Francisco Franco allowed the Hitler war machine to use a small Basque village in northern Spain for target practice. In all, 1,600 citizens were killed or wounded. Picasso was commissioned to paint the centerpiece for the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 World's Fair. He painted *Guernica* to express his outrage at the atrocities. Although the Spanish people owned the paintings, Picasso refused to permit it to go to Spain until the country became a democracy. Eight years after Picasso's death and three years after Franco's death, *Guernica* was returned to its native country on the 100th anniversary of Picasso's birth ("*Guernica: Testimony*").

I want students to research *Guernica* in order to compare the past with the present. I contend that in the contemporary United States, we do not see as many wartime images as Americans have in past conflicts. I want students to question this policy and to devise reasons for the relative lack of imagery. I want them to consider the possibilities of propaganda and censorship, and whether they think they are being affected by it. The outcome of this lesson will be a piece of art based on these reflections.

Women's Rights

Women historically have been considered little more than chattel and typically have had very few legal rights in any culture or society until relatively recent times. In the United States, the

Women's Rights Movement began at a tea party on July 13, 1848. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was venting her frustrations about the plight of women: the American Revolution set the country free, and women took some pretty serious risks along with the men, but women were still in the same boat – little or no freedom, and no right to vote. Two days after this tea party, this group of women chose a date for their convention that would take place on July 19 and 20, 1848 at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, New York (Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter).

At the convention, Ms. Stanton presented a “Declaration of Sentiment” based on the framework of the Declaration of Independence. The grievances listed in the “Declaration of Sentiment” about women being unjustly treated included the fact that women were not allowed to vote, own property (if married), to enter legal or medical professions, or to go to college or university, but still had to pay property taxes (taxation without representation). In addition, women were not paid comparable salaries for the same work, divorce and child custody laws favored men, and men could legally beat and imprison their wives. All in attendance signed the “Declaration of Sentiment” (Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter).

The backlash began immediately and was so strong that some of the signers withdrew their signatures. Most of the signers maintained their resolve. The backlash was so virulent that it had a totally unintended effect – the movement diffused throughout the country in a very short time, and women increasingly joined the effort (Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter).

It took until 1920 for women to win the right to vote. The pioneers of the early movement were Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Goslyn Gage, and Lucy Stone. Then a second wave of the movement was set in motion by Margaret Sanger. She was a public health nurse who promoted educating women about existing birth control methods, thus giving women control over their own reproduction and sexuality. Obviously, this goal did not go over well in the early 20th century and met many obstacles. Indeed, it is still being bitterly fought today; nevertheless, a woman's right to control her reproduction is still in her hands (Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter).

Then in the 1960s, the Women's Rights Movement re-emerged. Esther Peterson (director of the Women's Bureau of the Dept. of Labor) advocated the fact that women were still being discriminated against, and the government needed to address that. A few years later, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* exhorting women to look beyond the home for fulfillment. Then in 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed with the category “sex” included as an attempt to kill the bill. Instead, the bill passed and prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, and national origin. This was the beginning of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). However, discrimination on the basis of sex was not a primary focus for the EEOC (Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter).

The Women's Rights Movement marched on to get the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) pushed through Congress so the states could vote on it as a constitutional amendment. Unfortunately, it did not get the necessary 38 states to approve it, falling short by three states (Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter).

Overall, the plight of women is much improved in the United States since 1948. Yet, even though women represent over half the population in the United States, they hold only 11% of the seats in Congress and 21% of the seats in state legislatures. Women work in every conceivable occupation now but are still not paid the same as their male counterparts. Top management is still predominantly male (Eisenberg and Ruthsdotter). Women are truly the “majority minority.”

Students are not very aware of the struggle that women have gone through, which in one way is good. The unawareness of discrimination means the Women's Rights Movement has succeeded to a large degree. They may not be aware that women still face a “glass ceiling,” which is why males dominate the upper echelons of the work force. The film I want to show for

the Women's Rights Movement unit is *Nine To Five*, the story of three women who unite to hold their boss prisoner in his house while they proceed to run the company and do a much better job than he ever did. The boss is the quintessential male chauvinist pig. In discussion, I would raise the question of whether this kind of work situation can and/or does exist in the real world, and if so, how common is this situation? Do women get a fair shake in the workplace? Why or why not? What limits the advancement of women in our society?

The next step would be to look at an artwork related to the Women's Rights Movement. I chose Currier and Ives' humorous illustration, *The Age of Brass* (subtitled *or the triumph of women's rights*), to epitomize this lesson. This satire is a male illustrator's nightmare of women having power. Women with names like "Miss Hangman" and "Susan Sharptongue" smoke cigars, vote in elections, run for public office, abandon child-care, and generally take over society from men. Students will do research and investigate the women's rights movements in the United States and then will reflect on (1) whether American women have achieved equal rights, (2) the rights of women living in other countries, and/or (3) why rights of women are being currently expropriated in certain countries right now. The conclusion of this lesson will be artworks that clearly communicate the students' views on this subject

The Mexican Muralists and Immigration

Immigration is a salient issue in the United States today. The primary emphasis is on unauthorized immigration from Mexico. Concerns about illegal immigration include fears of illegal immigrants taking American jobs, the consequent wage-lowering effect, and illegal immigrants receiving government services without paying for them. The flip side is that illegal immigrants contribute to the economy by buying goods and services, prices are actually lower because of lower wages, and company owners need immigrant labor for seasonal jobs that are not desirable to Americans because these are migrant jobs that typically do not pay very well. Americans are evenly split on whether illegal immigration helps or hurts the country. Ideas about how to deal with illegal immigration are mixed as well. The top three proposals urge: a guest worker program; criminalizing illegal immigration; and building a 2000-mile barrier or fence along the United States-Mexico border ("Immigration: Overview").

Illegal immigration and what to do about it is a topic about which students have very decided opinions. I want students to be able to argue both sides of this issue. They are familiar with the American arguments noted above. Now I want to expose them to Mexican history and culture by introducing them to the Mexican Muralists – Diego Rivera, José Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. The Mexican Muralist movement occurred between the 1920s and the 1940s. The movement (also known as social realism) depicted peasants, workers, and ordinary people as the subjects doing everyday activities. Mexican history was portrayed in large publicly displayed murals for the benefit of the people.

Led by the charismatic Roman Catholic priest Father Hidalgo, Mexico won her independence from Spain in 1821. The shift from one government to another, however, had little effect on the lives of the Mexican people. With the exception of the administration of President Benito Juárez (1858-1872), Mexico was governed by tyrants, and over time under Mexican leadership, the economic gap between rich and poor grew wider. Conditions became so intolerable that Francisco 'Pancho' Villa and Emiliano Zapata, two colorful populist characters, sparked a civil war in the early 1900s that lasted between 1910 and 1920. Then, a new, socialist-inspired government was created – Partido Revolucionario Nacional (PRN), with Alvaro Obregón as its president. The government decided to commission large murals as public works of art to make the country feel more united after all the years of civil war. In 1922, Diego Rivera created a new art form that rejected aristocracy and embraced the common man. Instead of the formal art of Europe confined to a canvas, this new art form was colorful, vibrant, and full of human activity

on a very large scale. Rivera also revived the fresco technique – mixing pigment with damp plaster. Orozco and Siqueiros worked with Rivera on this first set of murals. All three artists were committed to socialism and making their art for the common people (Cummings; “Mexican Muralism”).

Diego Rivera was the most prominent of the Mexican Muralists. However, his biggest claim to fame occurred when he married Frida Kahlo in 1929. They became a celebrated couple in Mexico, the United States and in Europe. The pair epitomized the 20th century Mexican art movement, which was enhanced by their tempestuous relationship as well as Diego’s notorious infidelity.

Frida Kahlo would have been a muralist had it not been for the massive injuries she sustained in a streetcar accident at age 18. After recovering from numerous operations, Kahlo led a fairly normal life, but lived with chronic pain. As a result, her painting was confined to canvas. Her subject matter was portraiture rather than the common man, but she is considered part of the Mexican Renaissance because of the strong use of native Mexican elements and the influence of the traditional Mexican folk culture (Cummings).

After studying the Mexican Muralists and Frida Kahlo, students will watch the movie *Frida*, after which we will discuss the issues facing Mexico then and now, look at the role of the Mexican Muralists as agents of propaganda art for the new PRN, and discuss how the plight of the Mexican people translates into the immigration issues facing the United States today. Students will do research and investigate the movement and the politics underlying it. They will then produce a finished artwork communicating their visual message about their views of modern U.S. immigration issues. Students can take a stand on the issue, show the conflict, show the social implications, or come up with their own unique idea of how to visually portray their feelings about immigration.

Political Cartoons

Political cartoons have been around for a very long time. They are an excellent example of clear, concise visual communication. However, in order to create the finished product that strikes its target (the viewer), political cartoons have to keep their messages simple and direct, both visually and in the written word.

One political cartoon that has done just that over the past forty years is *Doonesbury* by Garry Trudeau. *Doonesbury* made its debut in 1970 after Trudeau graduated from Yale. The series is pointed, direct, audacious, no holds barred, and above all, funny. It also has been dropped from newspapers, added back, and is frequently found on the editorial page rather than the comic page. Fortunately, Garry Trudeau doesn’t care where the newspapers put *Doonesbury*. In 1975, Trudeau became the first comic strip artist to win the Pulitzer Prize (“Garry Trudeau”).

Trudeau uses real politicians’ names in his cartoons. He takes lethal aim with humor and hits his targets dead on. To his credit and cleverness, he never shows the politicians. Instead he has symbols that represent them that sometimes change over time. Ronald Reagan was shown as the computer-generated, artificial-intelligence character Max Headroom. The first President Bush was first depicted as invisible, and then became a little “spark.” President George W. Bush started out as a Stetson hat on top of an asterisk (all hat and no cattle) then changed to a Roman military helmet on top of an asterisk. Over time, the Roman helmet has become battered and frayed and almost unrecognizable. Bill Clinton was a waffle (indecisive), Dan Quayle was a feather (lightweight), and Arnold Schwarzenegger was a giant groping hand (sexual harassment) (Gianoulis).

After studying *Doonesbury*, students will watch *A Doonesbury Special*, an animated cartoon showing the main characters Michael Doonesbury and Zonker and others examining their lives in

1977 compared to the 1960s. The discussion will cover an overview of the time periods involved, a critique of the comic strip and the movie, and the impact of *Doonesbury* in our culture. Can a comic strip actually influence our thinking?

Following the discussions, students will do research on *Doonesbury* – in other words, they will go read some of the comics. Then they will develop their own political cartoon that has to do with a current issue in the United States. They will have to do a political cartoon for each side of whatever issue they choose.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plan 1: War

Objectives: Students will be able to understand different views about war and will demonstrate this by creating a unique artwork about war.

TEKS: 117.55. (1) Perception. (A) Design process. (B) Language of Art. (2) Creative expression/performance. (A) Design process. (B) Evaluation and Reflection. (C) Composing and creating artwork. (3) Historical/cultural Heritage. (A) Period in Art. (4) Response/evaluation. (B) Analyze and critique artwork.

Materials: *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, DVD player, selected research on *Guernica*, and choice of media and support selected.

Procedures: Students will watch the film *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a movie about a mercenary who goes to fight against Franco in the 1930s' Spanish Civil War. An oral exchange will follow, in which we will discuss the message being communicated and how it was communicated. Questions should be encouraged. Was Franco really such a bad guy? Or, did the United States just want to convince us that he was? Basically the discussion will include propaganda, the stated causes for war, the real, underlying causes for war, and how the past relates to the present; namely, the war in Iraq. In addition, I want to address possible reasons for the media coverage about Iraq and censorship.

The next step will be for students to do research on Pablo Picasso's painting, *Guernica*. A discussion will ensue on the historical background and Picasso's interpretation of the event, including possible reasons for bias and propaganda.

Students will begin the design process to create an artwork reflecting their individual views on war. They will draw thumbnail sketches of ideas, choose the subject from the thumbnails, draw more sketches to design the composition, select the idea they want to use, and then create the artwork in the medium (or media) of their choice.

Assessment: Students will be assessed using a rubric based on Craftsmanship, Design, Inventive and Imaginative Expression, Technical Competency, and Visual Communication. In addition, students will do an Art Criticism based on the 4-step process (Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment) on their finished piece.

Lesson Plan 2: Women's Rights

Objectives: Students will be able to understand the struggle for women to attain the same rights as men and will demonstrate this by creating a unique artwork about women's rights.

TEKS: 117.55. (1) Perception. (A) Design process. (B) Language of Art. (2) Creative expression/performance. (A) Design process. (B) Evaluation and Reflection. (C) Composing and creating artwork. (3) Historical/cultural Heritage. (A) Period in Art. (4) Response/evaluation. (B) Analyze and critique artwork.

Materials: *Nine To Five*, DVD player, selected research on Women’s Rights, and choice of media and support selected.

Procedures: Students will watch the movie *Nine to Five*, about three women who keep their boss prisoner in his home while they proceed to run the company much better than he ever did. In a discussion following the movie, the first point will be what is the message? The next salient point is how does the movie get the message across? Students will also reflect on a brief history of women’s rights, focusing on how far women have come in their quest for equality, and whether they do indeed have the same rights that men do.

The next step will be for students to do research on Currier and Ives humorous illustration *The Age of Brass* (subtitled *or the triumph of women’s rights*). A discussion will ensue on the historical background and Currier and Ives’ interpretation of women’s rights. Did this artwork reflect the dominant thinking at that time? Were the artists serious, were they trying to poke fun at women, or were they in fact supportive of women’s rights?

Students will begin the design process to create an artwork reflecting their individual views on women’s rights. They will draw thumbnail sketches of ideas, choose the subject from the thumbnails, draw more sketches to design the composition, select the idea they want to use, and then create the artwork in the medium (or media) of their choice.

Assessment: Students will be assessed using a rubric based on Craftsmanship, Design, Inventive and Imaginative Expression, Technical Competency, and Visual Communication. In addition, students will do an Art Criticism based on the 4-step process (Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment) on their finished piece.

Lesson Plan 3: The Mexican Muralists and Immigration

Objectives: Students will be able to understand the issues underlying the current immigration problems here in the United States and will demonstrate this by creating a unique artwork about immigration.

TEKS: 117.55. (1) Perception. (A) Design process. (B) Language of Art. (2) Creative expression/performance. (A) Design process. (B) Evaluation and Reflection. (C) Composing and creating artwork. (3) Historical/cultural Heritage. (A) Period in Art. (4) Response/evaluation. (B) Analyze and critique artwork.

Materials: *Frida*, DVD player, selected research on the Mexican Muralists, and choice of media and support selected.

Procedures: Students will watch the movie *Frida*, about artist Frida Kahlo who was married to Diego Rivera. She was considered to be one of the Mexican Muralists on a small scale (due to health issues, she was physically unable to paint murals). In a discussion following the movie, students will reflect on the history of Mexico during the early 20th century and why Mexican citizens want to emigrate to the United States. This would be a good time to define the immigration issues facing the United States today. An important question to include is whether the impact of illegal immigration in the United States is perceived or real?

The next step will be for students to do research on the Mexican Muralists. Why were they producing social realism? How did social realism factor into events occurring in Mexico during this time period? Students will choose a Mexican Muralist to investigate (including Frida Kahlo). They will give a presentation of their research and findings and produce an outcome artwork in the style of the Mexican Muralist that they chose.

Students will begin the design process to create an artwork reflecting their individual views on immigration. They will draw thumbnail sketches of ideas, choose the subject from the

thumbnails, draw more sketches to design the composition, select the idea they want to use, and then create the artwork in the medium (or media) of their choice.

Assessment: Students will be assessed using a rubric based on Oral Presentation, Craftsmanship, Design, Inventive and Imaginative Expression, Technical Competency, and Visual Communication. In addition, students will do an Art Criticism based on the 4-step process (Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment) on their finished piece.

Lesson Plan 4: Political Cartoons

Objectives: Students will be able to condense their viewpoints into a succinct political cartoon based on the previous three lesson plans.

TEKS: 117.55. (1) Perception. (A) Design process. (B) Language of Art. (2) Creative expression/performance. (A) Design process. (B) Evaluation and Reflection. (C) Composing and creating artwork. (3) Historical/cultural Heritage. (A) Period in Art. (4) Response/evaluation. (B) Analyze and critique artwork.

Materials: *A Doonesbury Special*, DVD player, selected research on *Doonesbury* and author Gary Trudeau, paper, pencils, pens and ink.

Procedures: Students will watch the short animated movie *A Doonesbury Special* based on the comic strip *Doonesbury*. In a discussion following the movie, students will reflect on the purpose and aesthetics (both written and visual) of political cartoons.

The next step will be for students to do research on *Doonesbury*. They will compare the history of actual events to the comic strip. What is Gary Trudeau trying to do with *Doonesbury*? What is his point of view? How does he get his point across? How does he narrow down his message to just a few short sentences?

Students will begin the design process to create an artwork reflecting their individual views on any of the topics covered so far – war, women’s rights, and immigration. They will first write out the point they wish to convey, and narrow it down as succinctly as possible. Then they will do the same thing with an opposing viewpoint. The next step will be to determine how to visually portray both messages by drawing thumbnail sketches and choose the best ideas from the thumbnails. They can either draw a single cartoon or a strip. They will draw the political cartoons in pencil and then trace back over them in ink.

Assessment: Students will be assessed using a rubric based on Craftsmanship, Design, Inventive and Imaginative Expression, Technical Competency, and Visual Communication. In addition, students will do an Art Criticism based on the 4-step process (Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment) on their finished piece.

Conclusion:

My goal is for students to become aware of the part that the visual arts play in the world, and the power of the image. I want them to think about how visual communication is created and how powerful a tool it can be. I also want students to question the images to which they are exposed. Students creating their own messages will be able to clearly see how images can be manipulated. My ultimate goal is for my students to become independent thinkers. I want them to decide what they think after analyzing all their research, investigation, planning, and options.

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