

## **Unit 9: Examining the Mexican-American Experience in *Zoot Suit* by Luis Valdez**

Content Area: Latino Theatre, Living Newspaper, Ping Chong's *Undesirable Elements*

Time Period: March-April

Length: 4 weeks

### **Unit Overview:**

#### **What does this unit focus on?**

Exploring the Mexican-American experience in Los Angeles, CA in 1942 via Luis Valdez's *Zoot Suit* and historical sources

#### **What are the key skills/procedures that will be taught?**

Historical Research, Ping Chong's *Undesirable Elements* Technique, Critical Thinking, Script Analysis, Translation, Staged Reading

#### **What is the culmination of this unit?**

A) Historical research of the Sleepy Lagoon Murder Trial gathered and presented in-class in the Interview Based Undesirable Elements theatrical style of Ping Chong

B) A cross-curricular staged reading of *Zoot Suit* with Theatre Academy III and the AP Spanish class

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#### **Essential Questions: (Number may vary)**

1. What elements of the Sleepy Lagoon Murder Trial have been repeated in the history of the American court system?
  2. What effect does ethnicity and birth origin have on educational and social development?
  3. What is justice?
  4. What impact has Luis Valdez's *Zoot Suit* had in American history and culture?
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**Content Standards: (Number may vary. Add/delete rows as needed)**

Standard #	Description (copy/paste standard)
1.1.12.C.1	Theatre and the arts play a significant role in human history and culture.
1.2.12.A.1	Cultural and historical events impact art-making as well as how audiences respond to works of art.
1.2.12.A.2	Access to the arts has a positive influence on the quality of an individual's lifelong learning, personal expression, and contributions to community and global citizenship.
1.3.12.C.2	Presentation of believable, multidimensional characters in scripted and improvised performances requires application of specific physical choices, sustained vocal technique, and clearly motivated actions.
1.4.12.B.1	Archetypal subject matter exists in all cultures and is embodied in the formal and informal aspects of art.

**Skills and Topics:**

- **SKILLS:** Ping Chong's Undesirable Elements method of theatrical presentation will be used in researching and presenting historical data about the Sleepy Lagoon Murder Trial and other events that were happening in 1942.
  - **TOPICS of RESEARCH:** Zoot Suits, Pachucos, Los Angeles-1942, Mexican Emigration/American Immigration, Living Newspaper, Japanese internment camps, WWII
  - **SKILLS:** Theatre Academy students will teach the AP Spanish students the skills needed for a STAGED READING, including vocal and physical warm-ups, projection, character choice, lifting text off the page.
  - **SKILLS:** AP Spanish Students will translate the *Zoot Suit* "corridos" from Spanish to English and share the translations with Theatre Academy students.
  - **TOPICS:** *Zoot Suit* the play by Luis Valdez, *Zoot Suit* the movie, corridos, actos, historias, Teatro Campesino
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### **Major Assessments/Performance Tasks:**

- Undesirable Elements presentation of historical research surrounding the Sleepy Lagoon Murder Trial.
- Timeline of Events
- Unit Test on new terminology and themes
- Staged Reading of Luis Valdez's play, *Zoot Suit* with the AP Spanish Class reading the corridos.

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### **Resources and Technology:**

- *Zoot Suit* by Luis Valdez
- *Zoot Suit* the film with Edgar James Olmos directed by Luis Valdez
- Worksheets on Teatro Campesino, Actos, Corridos, Historias
- You Tube Clips of Luis Valdez, Cesar Chavez,
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdelwysKwJM>
- Pachucos
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hINsoiLIJ3E>
- *MIGRA! Chpt 4 and 5:* By Kelly Hernandez
- Historical sources documenting the Sleepy Lagoon Murder
- Japanese Internment Camps
- <http://www.ushistory.org/us/51e.asp>
- Spanish Vocabulary Lists