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NEH Immigration in CA  
Implementation Plan  
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## Exploring the Immigration Narrative, a Seminar

### **Background of School's Seminar and Enrichment Program<sup>1</sup>**

Programmed into seven classes and a lunch period, each day follows an alternating block schedule of four, 90-minute periods and is concluded by a 45-minute enrichment period. The longer class periods are beneficial to learning in multiple ways: students are able to engage more deeply and completely with the material; homework loads are more manageable; and students naturally begin to navigate a weekly schedule that will require the development of time-management needed for success in higher education.

The enrichment period can best be described as after school time built into the school day. In order to support our students' multi-dimensional growth, enrichments allow students to create weekly schedules that meet their individual needs. As an example, in just one week, a student can access tutoring, start athletic practice, attend a presentation by a professional expert, or attend a club or organization meeting (just to name a few) in any combination. Furthermore, all of this takes place before the final bell.

Payton's seminar program provides students with a unique opportunity to de-stress and find their passions through exposure to a variety of learning experiences. Every other Wednesday, Payton students participate in two 90-minute seminars or one 180-minute seminar. Seminars are semester long and taught by both Payton teachers as well as professional partners and have ranged from judo, improv comedy, Pilates, and 3D modeling and printing to Morningstar financial analysis, acoustic guitar, rock climbing, and yoga—just to name a few.

### **Description of Seminar**

In this year-long seminar and enrichment, students will spend the first semester exploring the different media used to tell immigrant stories. Texts in this class will include film, documentary, drama, fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, and visual art. Each time we meet for the long seminar period, a new text will be the focus of discussion. Depending on the length of the text, we will either read or view ahead of time, or read or view during class immediately before discussion. In our discussions, we will focus not only on content but also on form. Emphasis will be placed on the history, biography, and production of the text.

During the second semester, the class will meet during enrichments. Students from the seminar will spend enrichments producing their own immigration narratives. Possible products will be artwork, short fiction, poetry, film, and even short drama to be used during the Mash

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<sup>1</sup> Official verbiage from school brochure.

Up<sup>2</sup> with drama class and the Payton Players. For the drama component, many ideas learned during the NEH institute will be shared with students, including adaptation of fiction, creating *Undesirable Elements*-inspired short performances using text from questionnaires, and hybrids of all of all of the forms presented by faculty during the institute.

Ideally, students will be able to publish a literature/art magazine to distribute by the year's end, publish a short documentary online via the University of Minnesota website, and have at least one script accepted by the drama classes for production in the annual Mash Up.

### **Assessment**

Students are graded on a Pass/Fail basis for seminars. Enrichments are not graded at all. My hope is that this seminar will attract only students interested in our immigration history and the current status of refugees and those affected by the travel ban. Of course, students should also have an interest in creative writing, publishing, drama, and film.

### **Materials**

Besides texts, students will also be provided with computers with Adobe InDesign and Adobe Photoshop.

### **Texts<sup>3</sup>**

Fiction: Selections/excerpts from *The Woman Warrior* (Kingston), *Perfume Dreams* (Lam), *Birds of Paradise Lost* (Lam), *The Kite Runner* (Hosseini), and *Brooklyn* (Tóibín). All of *The Circuit* (Jimenez).

Non-fiction: Many essays and articles on assimilation/acculturation, immigration law, immigration patterns, xenophobia, etc. Authors will include Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Erika Lee, and Judy Yung.

Films and Documentaries: *Sin Nombre* (2009), *Welcome* (2009), *Oh, Saigon* (2007), *Sentenced Home* (2006), and *Namesake* (2006).

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<sup>2</sup> The Mash Up is a very popular event at Payton. Each day after school (during the Enrichment period), the drama classes put on series of 10-minute plays written by creative writing students.

<sup>3</sup> This is a working list and will be amended many times before and during the seminar depending on the students and their interests. Enrolled students will be encouraged to add titles to our reading and viewing lists.