

# AMY REECE: CONTROVERSIAL CONQUISTADOR: A UNIT PLAN ON JUAN DE OÑATE

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“Don Juan De Onate’s 1598 Taos Visit” and “Trading at Taos Pueblo, 1635,” by Giovanna Paponetti. Taos Timeline Mural, near City Hall. 1998.

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This unit consists of three lesson plans that first introduce some of the controversy over public art that celebrates Oñate and then guides students into analysis of several Oñate documents and finally gives them the chance to present mini-documentaries about these documents to their classmates. In this unit, the mini-documentaries are produced using iMovie, but could also be done with Windows MovieMaker. Of course, low-tech options, such as posters, also exist.

- ☞ The Controversy
- ☞ The Documents
- ☞ The Documentary Project

Controversial Conquistador: A Unit Plan on Juan de Oñate

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## Controversial Conquistador: A Unit Plan on Juan de Oñate

Overview: This unit consists of three lesson plans that first introduce some of the controversy over public art that celebrates Oñate and then guides students into analysis of several Oñate documents and finally gives them the chance to present mini-documentaries about these documents to their classmates. In this unit, the mini-documentaries are produced using iMovie, but could also be done with Windows MovieMaker. Of course, low-tech options, such as posters, also exist.

Grade level: 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

Subject: World History, U.S. History, New Mexico History

Time Required: Four 90-minute block periods

Essential Questions:

- Who was Juan de Oñate?
- Why is he considered a controversial figure?
- How can we analyze primary source documents to discover the answers to these questions?

Primary Objective: Students will gain an understanding of who Juan de Oñate was and what he accomplished during the settlement of New Mexico, and why he is considered controversial. They will analyze primary source documents and present their findings via a mini-documentary.

Standards:

New Mexico History 9-12:

*Explain how New Mexico history represents a framework of knowledge and skills within which to understand the complexity of the human experience, to include:*

- *analyze perspectives that have shaped the structures of historical knowledge*
- *describe ways historians study the past*
- *explain connections made between the past and the present and their impact.*

World History 9-12:

*Analyze and evaluate the actions of competing European nations for colonies around the world and the impact on indigenous populations.*

U.S. History 9-12:

*Explain how United States history represents a framework of knowledge and skills within which to understand the complexity of the human experience, to include:*

- *analyze perspectives that have shaped the structures of historical knowledge*
- *describe ways historians study the past*
- *explain connections made between the past and the present and their impact.*

### Discussion of Graduate Assignment

As a U.S. History and World History teacher, I am required to teach the Spanish conquest in various ways. The New Mexico standards for U.S. History start after the Civil War, but Advanced Placement courses cover the entire time period of American history. World History standards start with the Renaissance and Reformation, not specifically mentioning the Spanish Empire. So, to make a long story short-there is not a lot of time to devote to the Conquest. But it's such a crucial topic, especially for New Mexico; how do I include it, yet not stray too far from the standards?

I have centered this unit plan around one of the conquistadors, Oñate, because he was so important to New Mexico. I have been able to incorporate local art and artists, the controversy over Oñate, and primary source documents all into one unit plan. The basic structure of the lessons could be repeated with other primary source documents, of course. The beauty of this unit plan is that it catches the student's interest from the start with the information about the controversy and keeps them interested in order to find out why Oñate was and is such a controversial figure. Along the way they will find out that there were some positive contributions, as well.

My overall work in this class has given me a much better appreciation for the Spanish Conquest. I feel much more knowledgeable and I also know where to go for more information and/or sources. The Conquest had such a profound impact on our nation and the nations of Latin America that I need to find ways of including it during the course of the year in both the course I teach. I plan to use at least some portions of the unit plan I wrote and am hoping that I will get ideas from my classmates that I can also include this next year.