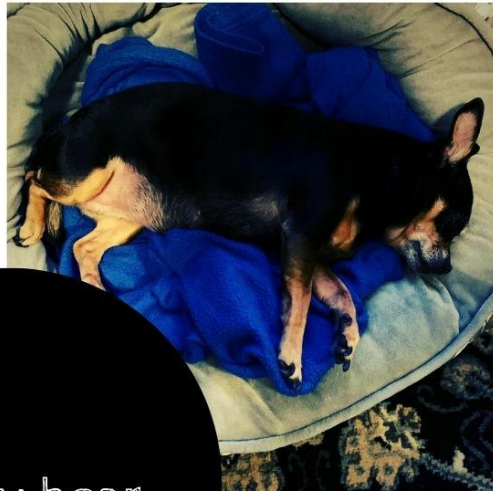


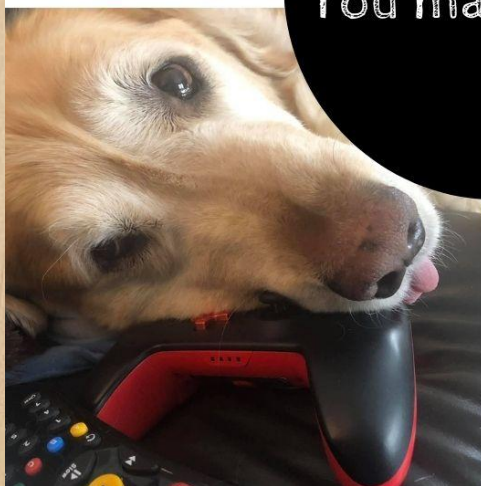
**Making the Case
for Alternative
Student-centered
Assignments**

Tara Fitzpatrick
&
Dawn Stahura

Salem State
University



You may hear...



Objectives

- Understand benefits of student-centered assignments.
- Learn the what, how and why of two student-centered assignments.
- Identify and develop ideas for your own student-centered alternative assignments and possible faculty collaboration.

Student Centered Learning

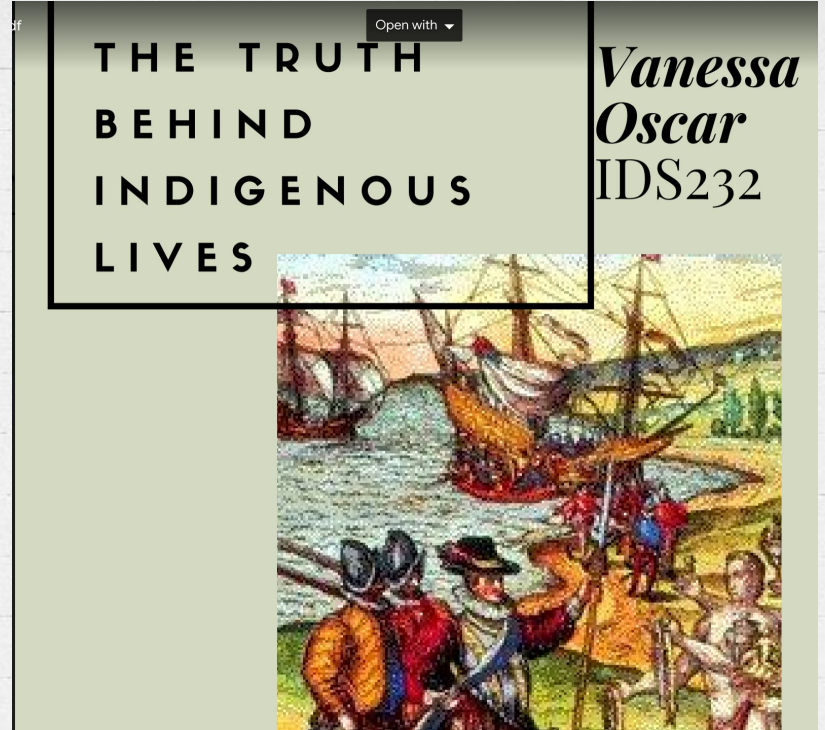
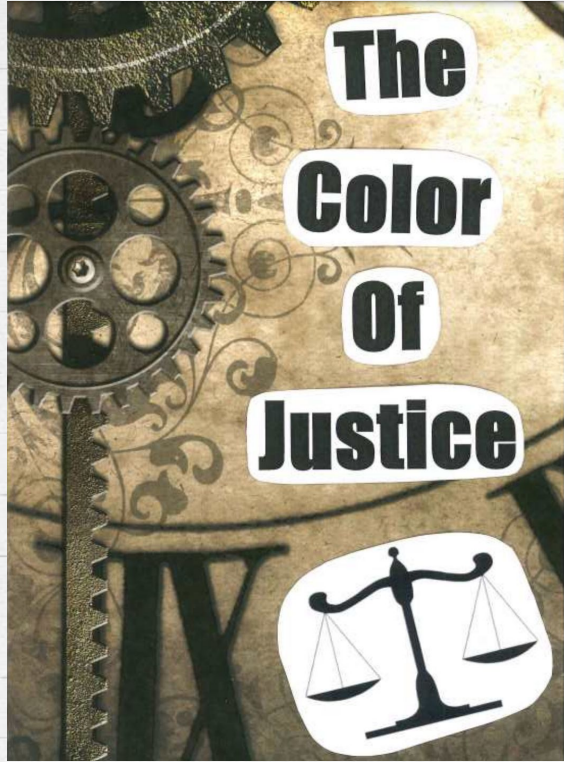
- Learning that is cooperative, collaborative & community-oriented
- Students direct their own learning and work with other students on assignments that are “culturally and socially relevant” to them
- Students become empowered, self-confident, self-directed and proactive. Gives them ownership
- Promotes student engagement & shared responsibility

Two Examples
from Library
Land

What is a zine (ZEEN)?

- *Self-published and the publisher doesn't answer to anyone
- *Small, self-distributed print run
- *Motivated by desire to express oneself rather than to make money
- *Outside the mainstream
- *Low budget--no special equipment
- *DIY culture/ethos --you write the stories that need to be heard.





ZINES: WHAT ARE ZINES?

DIY

What are zines?

Making Zines

Teaching with Zines

INSTRUCTION

- ★ feminist
- ★ pedagogies of empathy
- ★ dominant narratives
- ★ information is not neutral
- ★ expertise is vetted

ZINES

- ★ students as experts
- ★ critical creativity
- ★ open pedagogy
- ★ 'I' in research

ARCHIVING

- ★ community building
- ★ institutional knowledge
- ★ semantics
- ★ inclusive collections
- ★ anti-oppressive

Instruction + Zines + Archiving is one way to decolonize your curriculum.

LOCATING ZINE RESOURCES

Zines at SSU

Books on zines

Distros

Zine Communities



Teaching with zines

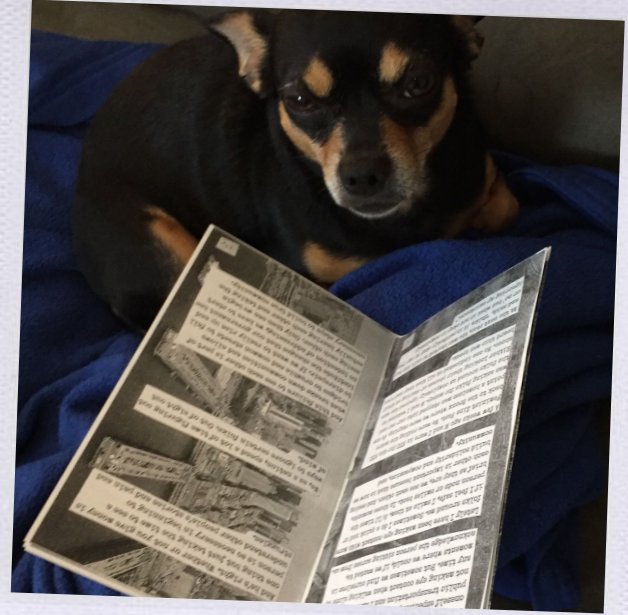


I worked with each faculty member to create zine assignments and grading rubrics.

For BIO 218, it was important to take the scientific knowledge and present it to the public in a way that makes them want to care about the topic.

For IDS 232, students used archival materials to explore identity and what it means to be an American.

For SOC 336, students wrote their own grading guidelines and presented a gallery-walk assessment where each group were graded by their classmates.



Behind the zines



Pre-Pandemic:

- Originals are housed in Archives and Special Collections.
- Each zine became part of the SSU Zine Collection (non-circulating) and the Digital Commons.
- Zines are 'cataloged' by me on a website separate from the library. This circumvents the need for original cataloging.

Pandemic and Post-Pandemic:

- Zines are created via Canva and/or Google Slides.
- Zines are upload to the Digital Commons.



Student
Comments

“I learned many things throughout my zine project. It was one of my favorite projects I've done in this university. The reason why my experience was so great is due to the fact that not many rules applied, we could present our information in our own way, which also required a lot of creativity and imagination. It made me want to learn more about water pollution in Africa as I was researching and thinking how will I incorporate what I've learned from this little research.”

“The fact that each individual group had the autonomy to create what they wanted was really exciting and engaging.”

“This project changed who I am as a student, and as a “scientist”.”

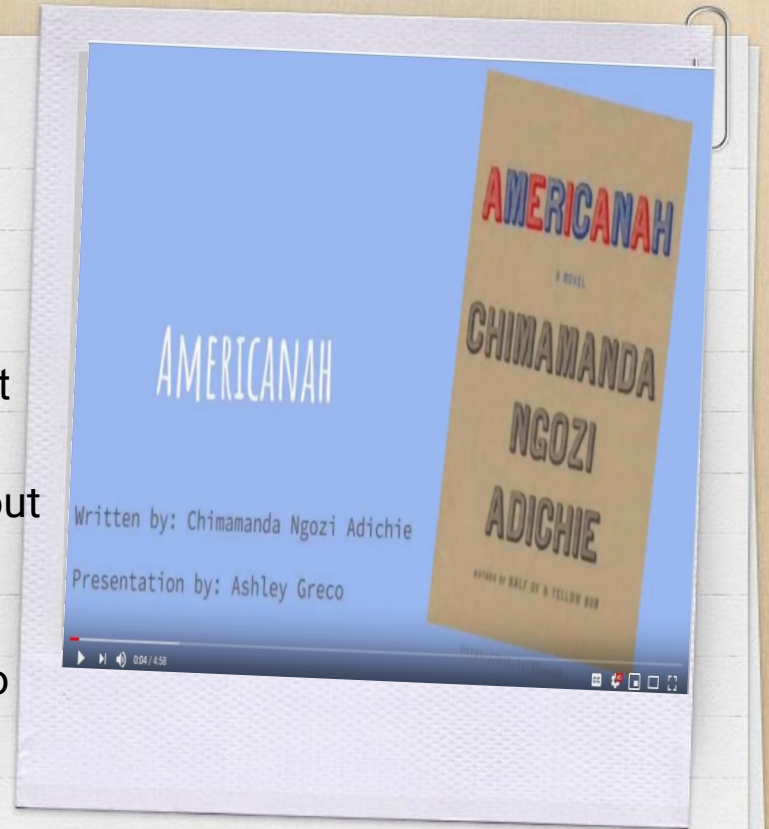
“None of us are used to being given so much creative freedom on our assignments.”

“This zine project required many different skills, demonstrating organizational skills, ability to do research, as well as teamwork. Each person bringing their individual skills into the group. This is ideal for successful group work, each student bringing something they're good at, art, writing, researching, etc. keeping the group strong in various fields.”

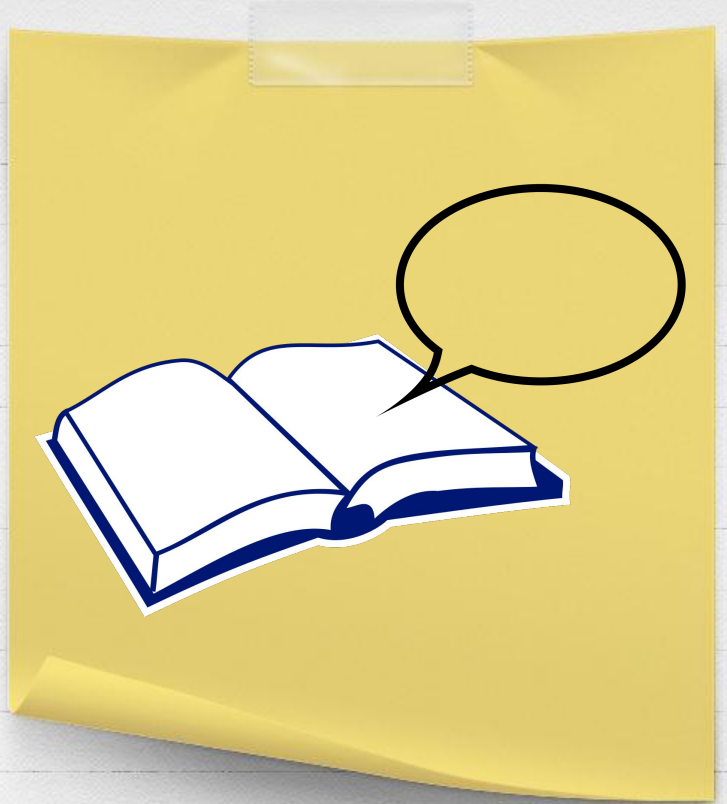
“I'm very glad that this project was assigned to me this semester. Although this project was not easy, there was still enough freedom that made learning fun and exciting. I love to be artistic, and my other science courses don't embrace the concept that creativity enhances learning. I also didn't feel stressed completing this project and I felt that I now have a deeper understanding of how important it is to be creative frequently in order to keep my mind working well. The creativity allowed me to influence my partners and allowed me to suggest ideas to them that I previously haven't thought of.”

What is a Book Talk?

- A short presentation about a book with the goal of convincing others to read it. (No spoilers!)
- It is persuasive & engaging; NOT a book report
- Book talks frequently include talking points about literary elements in English & Writing courses
- For other academic areas this can be altered to include connections with the book to course content and peer reviewed research



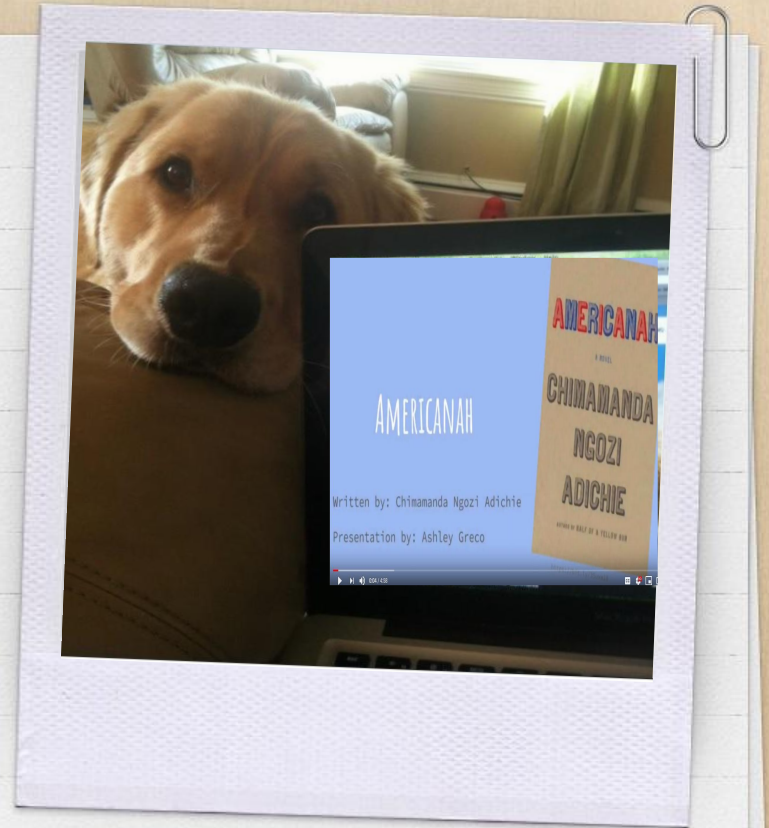
Teaching with Book Talks



SOC 306 The Black Woman seeks to provide sociological understanding of the everyday experiences of African American women in the U.S.

Faculty looking for an alternative assignment to a research paper.

Faculty and librarian collaborated on implementing a book talk lesson plan designed with the course in mind.



Guiding questions for the assignment:

How do sociological themes learned in my coursework tie into the real or fictional life experiences told in the popular book I read?

How can I convince others to read this book and share those connections to sociological thinking via a book talk?

About

- Each student chose to read one book from a list of pre-selected adult and YA fiction and non-fiction titles for the assignment.
- Each student made a book talk using Google slides and added narration by making videos using either iMovie or Screencast-O-Matic.
- Students attended 3 library lab sessions over the semester.
- As a class, students brainstormed style guidelines for their book talks.
- Students participated in 2 peer-review sessions before final videos were submitted.

- Students were required to turn in videos in MP4 format & a written document of their narration (for ADA compliance).
- Student videos were added to the Library's IDEA Den website for December's theme *The Black Woman*.
- The books were displayed in the IDEA Den along with QR codes that linked any passersby to their book talks.



- Virtual & physical display promoted via email & social media
- Launch event for the display of their work on last day of class
- Students discussed their books and the experience with attendees




SOC 306 student feedback:

The assignment had them reading (and enjoying) a book they may have never read otherwise.

They were able to apply what they were learning in class in real time by making connections from the book to sociological themes.

They liked the peer review process and uniqueness of the final product because they got to share ideas, ask questions of their classmates, and learn from each other's final book talk.

With a paper you turn it in and then what? No one else sees it, but the professor. This the world could potentially see.



There will be
hiccups.

Take-Aways

- Unique, impactful, student learning outcomes
- Opportunity for collaboration; embedded librarianship
- Look for the faculty who experiment
- “It’s gonna to take time... a whole lot of precious time... It’s gonna take patience and time...” *George Harrison*
- Unique opportunity to impact library outreach, programming, & collections



Got My Mind Set on You (1987)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_71w4UA2Oxo

Brainstorm

Thanks!

You can find us at:

- x tfitzpatrick@salemstate.edu
- x dstahura@salemstate.edu

Links:

<https://libguides.salemstate.edu/zines>

<https://libguides.salemstate.edu/soc306>

<https://libguides.salemstate.edu/IDEA-Den/TheBlackWoman>



**ANY
QUESTIONS?**