

Unit Guide

Reading to Challenge Cultural Perceptions About Islam

Anne Marie Esposito

This four week, 90 minute block-scheduled curriculum unit will have students do a close, analytical reading of *The Kite Runner*. The unit will require twelfth grade students to challenge their understanding or preconceptions about literature, Islam, and Islamic countries and culture through their study of the novel and various supplemental readings and films. Students will learn to recognize how an author uses language, allusions, motifs, and symbolism to help readers better understand character, conflict, and theme. Through a brief overview on the political and historical background of Afghanistan and a self-directed small group we-search project, students will be able to identify the areas of potential conflict within a culture and between cultures. As they begin reading the novel, students will explore the cultural attitudes and traditions that create the conflict between characters, propelling them to make the kind of choices that divide rather than unite them. Supplemental resources and directed activities will require students to consider how literary allusions and recurring motifs underscore the developing themes of friendship, betrayal, and redemption. Students will demonstrate their understanding of these techniques through a series of short assessments completed as they progress through the work. By the end of the novel, and the unit, students will recognize that cultural conflict, unchecked, can undermine the development of a just society.