Overview
Research shows that critical thinking can be gained from discussing and writing about controversial issues in class. When students are encouraged to write about a controversial topic, whether in an essay or creative piece like a poem, they work on their communication skills and critical thinking skills at once. The literature classroom is a natural environment in which to explore students' expression and critical thinking skills because themes in literature often touch upon controversial issues like those they may encounter online and offline.

This project will provide classroom activities for English teachers who wish to utilize the power of social media to harness the critical reading, writing, and thinking skills of their students. The resource includes video and audio playlists, discussion questions, readings, essay topics, grading rubrics, and writing activities to help bring extremism and its effects to light.

Learning Objectives
- To introduce the topics of extremism and anti-extremism
- To apply critical thinking skills in online and classroom discussions
- To write critically about the topic of extremism and anti-extremism
- To introduce a variety of poems and literature relevant to the study of extremism and anti-extremism
- To write creatively based on extremism and anti-extremism

Duration
The following activities and handouts are meant to be flexible and adaptable to different learning settings. Though documents are organized linearly, they may be restructured to suit the preferences of the instructor.

Overview

The following is a sample course outline that was used for a CEGEP-level English Genre Course.

Sample Course Outline

Instructor Information:

(Instructor should provide his/her name and contact information)

General Information:

Sample Description and Course Context

Students will learn to think critically on the topic of extremism. Throughout the course, students will learn to analyze poetry based on extremism and anti-extremism, and write essays and poems based on the class content. The first few weeks of class will be devoted to learning about poetic conventions. Students will also read poems that deal with different kinds of extremism. Next, students will practice writing poems and reflecting on the readings through portfolio writing. After that, students will learn to write and talk about poems and extremism both online and in class. Finally, students will produce a poem based on anti-extremism, share their work, and explain the analysis of the poem.

Sample Course Materials

Required Materials
• Course Reader and a College-Level Dictionary

Sample Evaluation Activities and Weighting of Assignments:

In-Class Essay (Tentatively Week 6): 25%
Portfolio (in-class, on-going): 15%
Participation (online, tentatively weeks 7-14): 15%
Take-Home Essay (Tentatively Week 12) 25%
Creative Project (Tentatively week 14): 10%
Oral Presentation (Tentatively Week 15): 10%

Course Policies:

(Instructor should include course policies including those related to submissions, plagiarism/cheating, attendance, etc.)

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Sample Readings, Videos & Playlists
Level: High school and Higher Education
Author: Sarmista Das

Overview
The following document lists relevant readings, videos, and online playlists useful for the study of poetry and extremism.

Suggested Readings, Videos, and Playlists

Print resources:
- *Poetry as Insurgent Art* by Lawrence Frelinghetti
- *My Best Friend is White* by Klyde Broox
- "The Rock Cries out to us Today" by Maya Angelou
- "I, Too, Sing America" by Langston Hughes
- "Soldier from the Wars Returning" by A. E. Housman
- *Education, Extremism and Terrorism: What Should be Taught in Citizenship Education and Why* by Dianne Gereluk
- *Brave New Voices: The YOUTH SPEAKS Guide to Teaching Spoken Word Poetry* by Jen Weiss and Scott Herndon
- *Writing in Rhythm: Spoken Word Poetry in Urban Classrooms* by Maisha T. Fisher
- *The Spoken Word Workbook: Inspiration from Poets who Teach* edited by Sheri-D Wilson
- *Impure: Reinventing the Word: The Theory, Practice, and Oral History of 'Spoken Word' in Montreal* by Victoria Stanton and Vincent Tinguely
- *Style and Substance*, by Claudia Rock & Suneeti Phadke

Video and online resources:
- HBO's 2009 Brave New Voices series (available on DVD):
  - Available for purchase: http://store.hbo.com/russell-simmons-presents-brave-new-voices-dvd/detail.php?p=472469
  - More information: http://www.hbo.com/russell-simmons-presents-brave-new-voices
- CBC's "Love, Hate, and Propaganda" documentaries, particularly "The War on Terror," available in 2 parts:
  - http://www.cbc.ca/lovehatepropagandawaronterror/2012/05/episode-1.html
    and

- o http://www.cbc.ca/lovehatepropagandawaronterror/2012/06/episode-2.html

- Extreme Dialogue: http://extremedialogue.org/
- Facing Extremism: http://www.visiontv.ca/videos/facing-extremism/

Playlists on war and extremism:
- TED talks playlist on war: https://www.ted.com/playlists/69/war_stories

- Filmmaker discusses how children are brainwashed into Taliban terrorists: https://www.ted.com/talks/sharmeen_obaid_chinoy_inside_a_school_for_suicide_bombers#t-271400

- Journalist who discusses her coverage of war and the healing/learning/humanity that can take place, resilience in a way: https://www.ted.com/talks/janine_di_giovanni_what_i_saw_in_the_war

- Resilience and friendship between grieving mothers from 911 (Muslim/Christian): https://www.ted.com/talks/9_11_healing_the_mothers_who_found_forgiveness_friendship

- Coping with war (Afghanistan psychologist). Psychologist went to Afghanistan to help people cope and be resilient. Violence as a type of coping mechanism so she provides alternatives. How empathy specifically is key: https://www.ted.com/talks/inge_missmahl_brings_peace_to_the_minds_of_afghanistan

Poetry performances and audio:
- Brave New Voices (HBO) series (available on DVD)

- Suheir Hammad's poetry featured on TED: https://www.ted.com/talks/suheir_hammad_poems_of_war_peace_women_power and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fhWX2F6G7Y

- Spoken word poetry performance of "Sudanese Children" by Shannon Leigh: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tw5w4ocsx-w

- Emmanuel Jal: Sudanese poet & musician who was a former child soldier: https://www.ted.com/talks/emmanuel_jal_the_music_of_a_war_child

- Branden Wellington's poetry performance of "America in 4 Minutes:" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZDNUGMMxLk

- Mike Rosen's poetry performance of "When God Happens:"
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2Ks06Al8c0

- Gil Scott-Heron's "The Revolution will not be Televised:"
  http://www.metrolyrics.com/the-revolution-will-not-be-televised-lyrics-gil-scottheron.html

Additional Resources:

- Curriculum plan for classroom spoken word activities based on conflict and peace:
  http://www.acgc.ca/09/images/file/developmentinabox/LB3-WVspeak.pdf

- Creative writing brainstorming ideas: http://www.meridianstories.com/media-resource-collection/creative-how-to-guides/creative-brainstorming-techniques/

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Video Discussion Questions
Level: High school and Higher Education
Author: Sarmista Das

Overview
The following student handout focuses on the documentary Facing Extremism. The video may be purchased or viewed online here: http://www.visiontv.ca/facing-extremism/.

Learning Objectives
- To introduce the topics of extremism and anti-extremism
- To reflect on and write about the ideas presented in the video

Discussion Questions based on the Video "Facing Extremism"
Video viewable at http://www.visiontv.ca/videos/facing-extremism/

Name: _____

1. What kinds of extremism are shown in the video (for example: racist extremism, etc.)?

2. What reason does Arno Michaels give for explaining his interest and involvement in violent extremism?

3. What does educational psychologist Dr. Karen Mock say about hatred?

4. What does Peter Coleman say about the problem with exposure of hate speech in the media?

5. What explanation does Mubin Shaikh give to explain why young Muslim men might be lured to extremism?

6. According to the former extremists in the documentary, what makes someone susceptible to become extremist?

7. What are "ideal" conditions for extremism?

8. What helped Arno Michaels come out of a life of violent extremism?

9. What transformed Mubin Shaikh from an extremist to a CSIS informant?

10. What challenges do extremists face when they want to renounce their extremist point of view?

11. What might help prevent extremism, according to the interviewees in the documentary?

Reflecting on the documentary:

12. Were you shocked by the variety of extremism that exists in Canada? Why or why not?

13. Write a short paragraph outlining your concerns or thoughts about the video below:

Overview
The following online activities are designed to help students learn how to communicate their ideas related to extremism in writing.

Important Considerations for Online Activities
- Choose a Web 2.0-based technology appropriate for your students (for example, Facebook, Blogger, Tumblr, Collaborize Classroom, etc.). The examples below all use Collaborize Classroom, available at www.collaborizeclassroom.com.
- Initiate/Train students to use the technology. Do not assume that all students know how to use social media or Web 2.0 technologies.
- Show students samples of well-written posts. Discuss online safety and online etiquette.
- Respond to your students' posts and comments. Bring up the online discussion during class to create further dialogue.

Learning Objectives
- To introduce spoken-word poetry
- To introduce the topics of extremism and anti-extremism
- To encourage students to think about the link between literature and extremism
- To apply critical thinking skills in online and classroom discussions
- To write critically about the topic of extremism and anti-extremism
- To introduce a variety of media (such as poems, lectures, and documentaries) relevant to the study of extremism and anti-extremism

Duration
The following activities and handouts are meant to be flexible and adaptable to different learning settings. Though documents are organized linearly, they may be restructured to suit the preferences of the instructor.

First Sample Online Activity

Task: Watch the following 3 videos and answer the following questions in the comments box below:
1) Which video did you find most interesting and why?
2) What could you analyze in a spoken word poem that's different from a poem that's printed on the page?
3) The videos all indirectly deal with the subject of "extremism." Provide 1 example from any of 3 videos.

Videos:
1. "Brave New Voices: Episode 1" (Total time - 28 minutes): http://www.imdb.com/video/user/vi694158105
2. "America in 4 Minutes" (Total time - 4 minutes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZDNUGMMxLk
3. "Somewhere in America" (Total time - 4 minutes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YshUDa10JYY

Sample post-activity: Read the comments and respond to them online. An in-class option is to show select posts from the class during lecture, generating in-class discussion based on the student posts. The instructor can also ask students to generate discussion questions based on the videos on the student posts during class time.

Second Sample Online Activity

 (1) Watch the Part 1 and 2 of the CBC Documentary "Love, Hate & Propaganda" based on "The War on Terror"
here: http://www.cbc.ca/lovehatepropagandawaronterror/2012/05/episode-1.html
(2) Do one of the following. Either (a) post one unique discussion question related to the video OR (b) respond to one of the discussion questions posted by your peers.

Third Sample Online Activity

The prevalence of child soldiers is a tragic phenomenon that spans different warring nations. Watch and respond to the following video by a former Sudanese child soldier named Emmanuel Jal.

Instructions: Click on the following link and follow the instructions written below:
https://www.ted.com/talks/emmanuel_jal_the_music_of_a_war_child#t-265435

1. Read the biography on the page
2. Watch the video
3. Post either an original discussion question OR respond to a peer's discussion question.

Fourth Sample Online Activity

1. Select a video from the following playlist on war:
https://www.ted.com/playlists/69/war_stories
2. Post a discussion question based on the chosen video. Be sure to clearly indicate which video the discussion question concerns.
Optional follow-up activity: Have students pair up, watch each other's selected videos, and answer each other's discussion questions.

Fifth Sample Online Activity

Task: Find a spoken word poem (available online) that deals with the topic of extremism. Post the link to the spoken word poem and add a discussion question based on the content of the poem.

Follow-up online activity: Have students select 3 of their peers' videos, view them, and respond to their discussion questions.

Overview
The following student handout introduces students to writing a structured diamante poem.

Learning Objectives
- To introduce students to a visual poem
- To introduce students to a structured poem
- To allow students to experiment with writing a structured visual poem
- To allow students to experiment with writing a structured visual poem based on extremism/anti-extremism

Writing a Diamante Poem

Name: _____

A diamante poem is a style of poetry that consists of seven lines and forms the shape of a diamond. It follows the following structure:

Line 1: The topic (as either a noun or pronoun, written in 1 word)
Line 2: 2 adjectives describing the topic
Line 3: 3 verbs ending in "-ing" about the topic
Line 4: A short phrase about the topic
Line 5: 3 more verbs ending in "-ing" about the topic
Line 6: Two more adjectives about the topic
Line 7: A synonym for the topic, expressed as a noun or pronoun

Example:

```
                    love
              joyous, painful
        meeting, exploring, forgetting
  taking your breath away, burying your soul deep
        remembering, crying, feeling
                gone, alone
                  sorrow
```

No author. From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diamante_poem

First, practice writing a diamante poem on an activity that you enjoy below:

_____

noun or pronoun

_____ _____

adjective   adjective

_____ _____ _____

verb   verb   verb

_____

write a short phrase, 4-7 words in length

_____ _____ _____

verb   verb   verb

_____ _____

adjective   adjective

_____

noun or pronoun

Second, practice writing a diamante poem on one of the following below:
War, Peace, Extremism, Love, Hatred, Violence, or Censorship

_____
noun or pronoun

_____   _____
adjective   adjective

_____   _____   _____
verb   verb   verb

_____
write a short phrase, 4-7 words in length

_____   _____   _____
verb   verb   verb

_____   _____
adjective   adjective

_____
noun or pronoun

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Euphony and Cacophony
Level: High school and Higher Education
Author: Sarmista Das

Overview
The following student handout introduces students to prosody, specifically, euphony and cacophony. It also asks students to practice writing poems using euphony and cacophony.

Learning Objectives
- To introduce students to prosody
- To allow students to experiment with writing euphonic and cacophonic poems

Poetry focus: Cacophony and Euphony

Name: _____

Part 1: Creative writing practice: writing with sound

When examining a poem's sound quality, we often discuss "cacophony" and "euphony." Below, you'll read some definitions of the terms and practice writing cacophonic and euphonic phrases.

Cacophony: harsh and unpleasant sounding words and phrases, usually with harsh consonant sounds (b, c, d, g, j, k, p, q, t, ch-). Note: we call the following sounds "plosives" as they sound "explosive" and harsh: b, d, hard g, k, p, t).

   Examples: Screech, crash, charge, disdain, batter

Euphony: is used to create pleasant sounds that are often rhythmical and harmonious. They consist of soft and pleasant sounding words and phrases; usually uses vowel sounds which are more easily pronounced than consonants: (a, e, i, o, u). Some nasal consonants and semivowels are also considered euphonious (l, m, n, r, y, w). Sometimes, depending on the verse, the following can be considered euphonic: soft f, soft v, th- and wh-.

   Examples: Euphoria, floral, cellar, aria

Practice:

Write 1-3 cacophonous sentence(s) here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Write 1-3 euphonious sentence(s) here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 2: Free-Verse poetry writing practice: Focus on Cacophony or Euphony

Either write a cacophonous free-verse poem based on extremism or a euphonious free-verse poem based on peace below. Underline the words that are cacophonous if you are writing a cacophonous poem, or, underling the words that are euphonious if you are writing a euphonious poem.

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Overview
The following student handout introduces students to prosody.

Learning Objectives
- To introduce students to prosody
- To allow students to experiment individually with writing poems using prosody

Literary Devices used by Poets: Prosody

Name: _____

The box below contains some literary devices common to poetry. Choose 8 and write an eight-lined poem on the next page. Be sure to a) ensure the poem makes sense; b) include a title, and c) indicate which literary device is featured in which line. Do not repeat literary device (you can only use a device once, so keep this in mind).

Alliteration: the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words

Assonance: the repetition of the sound of a vowel near enough to each other for the echo to be discernible, as in "low to the ground and cold to the touch"

Consonance: the repetition of the same consonant two or more times in short succession, as in "pitter patter" or in "all mammals named Sam are clammy"

Enjambment: incomplete syntax at the end of a line; the meaning runs-over from one poetic line to the next, without terminal punctuation

Internal Rhyme: A poetic device in which a word in the middle of a line rhymes with a word at the end of the same metrical line

Rhyme: a repetition of similar sounds (or the same sound) in two or more words, most often in the final syllables of lines in poems and songs

Simile: a comparison using "like" or "as"

Repetition: Repetition of the same word or phrase to emphasize an idea

Enumeration: The listing of details, types, or attributes in order to amplify an idea

Cacophony: Unpleasant sounding words and phrases, usually with harsh consonant sounds (b, c, d, g, j, k, p, q, t, ch-)

Euphony: Pleasant sounds like vowels and nasal consonants/semivowels (a, e, i, o, u, L, m, n, r, y, w)

Imagery: figurative language that evokes any of the 5 senses (taste, touch, smell, sound, sight)

Title of poem: _____

Line 1 Device _____:

_____

Line 2 Device _____:

_____

Line 3 Device _____:

_____

Line 4 Device _____:

_____

Line 5 Device _____:

_____

Line 6 Device _____:

_____

Line 7 Device _____:

_____

Line 8 Device _____:

_____

Collaborative Practice with Prosody

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Level: High school and Higher Education
Author: Sarmista Das

Overview

The following student handout introduces students to prosody.   Students are required to work in pairs or triads to complete the handout.

Learning Objectives

- To introduce students to prosody
- To allow students to experiment with writing poems using prosody collaboratively

Collaborative Prosody Practice

Name: _____

Exploring different devices (prosody)

Let's practice writing poems using poetic techniques individually or in pairs.
Each pair (or individual) will start off with one line. You will be given a few minutes to write down a line with the assigned poetic device (for example, the first line will be written with alliteration). When the time is up, you will pass your paper to the group on your left (you will receive another group's paper). You will write the second line of the poem for line 2 (for example, you will have to come up with a line of poetry that has assonance). You will be given a few minutes, and then you'll have to pass the paper on to another group and so on, until all 6 lines are written.
Here are the guidelines for the poem:

Line 1. **Alliteration**: the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

Line 2. **Assonance**: the repetition of the sound of a vowel in non-rhyming stressed syllables near enough to each other for the echo to be discernible (e.g., *penitence*, *reticence*).

Line 3. **Consonance**: the repetition of the same consonant two or more times in short succession, as in "pitter patter" or in "all mammals named Sam are clammy".

Line 4. **Enjambment**: incomplete syntax at the end of a line; the meaning runs-over from one poetic line to the next, without terminal punctuation.

Line 5. **Internal Rhyme**: A poetic device in which a word in the middle of a line rhymes with a word at the end of the same metrical line.

Line 6. **Rhyme**: a repetition of similar sounds (or the same sound) in two or more words, most often in the final syllables of lines in poems and songs.

Example
Line 1   Slow and sweet the snowflakes float,
Line 2   low to the ground and cold to the touch.
Line 3   We drive to the river where the lake has frozen over,
Line 4   then lace up our skates and head onto the ice. I
Line 5   fall and trip on ice that slips,
Line 6   my pants get wet and my nose drips.

Exercise: In pairs or triads, practice writing a complete and coherent poem using the following guidelines:

Line 1 (Alliteration):

_____

Line 2 (Assonance):

_____

Line 3 (Consonance):

_____

Line 4 (Enjambment):

_____

Line 5 (Internal Rhyme):

_____

Line 6 (Rhyme):

_____

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Writing a Poem Inspired by a Photograph
Level: High school and Higher Education
Author: Sarmista Das

Overview
The following student handout asks students to write poems based on their interpretation of photographs

Learning Objectives
- To encourage students to think creatively
- To introduce students to free-verse poetry
- To encourage students to think about the effects of peace, war, extremism, and/or anti-extremism
- To allow students to experiment with writing poetry based on peace, war, extremism, and/or anti-extremism

Writing a Poem Inspired by a Photograph

Name: _____

A free-verse poem is one that does not have a set rhythm, structure or rhyme scheme. These poems are meant to be liberating and less restrictive than a poem that follows a particular meter or rhyming pattern. Practice writing a free verse poem below (minimum 10 lines) by choosing an image below. Use that image as the starting point (inspiration) for your free-verse poem.

a) Choose an image on the next page and circle it.

b) Write a free verse poem in the box on the next page based on your interpretation of the image (it can be the setting, what the image reminds you of, from the perspective of one of the characters, etc.).

c) The poem should be a minimum of 10 lines and must have a title. Use any poetic devices you like.

Photograph by R.V. Spencer, June 9, 1951

Photograph by Steve Curtis, February, 1968

Photograph by Marc Riboud, October, 1967

Free Verse Poem

Title: _____

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Sample Creative Project Guidelines
Level: High school and Higher Education
Author: Sarmista Das

Overview
The following document is a sample of a graded creative project. This is meant to be a final assessment, after students have learned about the topic of extremism and have had adequate exposure to the study and writing of poetry. In this sample project, students are asked to work in pairs to write written or spoken-word poems based on the topic of extremism. A sample grading rubric is also provided.

Learning Objectives
- To write creatively and critically based on the topic of extremism and anti-extremism
- To encourage students to think about the effects of peace, war, extremism, and/or anti-extremism
- To allow students to experiment with writing poetry based on peace, war, extremism, and/or anti-extremism

Creative Project: Write a Poem

Task: Write a poem based on peace, war, extremism, and/or anti-extremism. The poem may be a WRITTEN poem OR a SPOKEN-WORD poem.

- For written poems: minimum 50 lines, maximum 200 lines.

- For spoken word poems: minimum 2 minutes, maximum 4 minutes.

- Provide paper copies of the poems (spoken and written poems) with line numbers.

- This assignment is to be completed in pairs

- Note: Your oral presentation will be to present and explain your poem to the rest of the class

Grading (/10):
- Language use: 3 marks

  - Includes spelling, grammar, syntax, word choice, punctuation

- Understanding of the Genre: 3 Marks

- Explores different conventions of the genre, quality/variety of literary devices in the poem, use of prosody (sound effects for spoken word poems, visual/sound effects for written poems)
- Exploration of a theme: 2 marks
  - Presents a clear and in-depth theme, exploration of that theme, development of the theme through the poem
- Insight and creativity: 2 marks
  - Originality of poem, depth of the poem, originality of thought/analysis

Overview

The following document is a sample of guidelines intended for oral presentations, which are based on poems students wrote on the topic of extremism. This is meant to be a final assessment, after students have learned about the topic of extremism and have had adequate exposure to the study and writing of poetry. After completing the creative project, students will be asked to present their poems to the class. They will also present an analysis of their poems. To promote dialogue, students in the audience are welcome to ask questions and provide constructive comments to their presenting peers. A sample grading rubric is also provided.

Learning Objectives
- To communicate orally
- To present ideas to an audience
- To encourage students to think about the effects of peace, war, extremism, and/or anti-extremism
- To allow students to explain their creative and critical thinking skills

Oral Presentation Guidelines

Task: Present your Creative Project poem in 7-10 minutes using the following organization:

1. Introduce yourselves and the context of the poem. By context, explain the poem's subject, theme, and what inspired you to choose this subject. You may also include historical and/or contextual information about the poem the reader may need to know in order to understand the poem.

2. Provide a reading/performance of the poem for the audience to hear (note: the teacher may record the spoken word poems in class in order to grade the performance after the class is over)

3. Explain the literary devices you used to help support the theme of your poem

Grading (/10):
- Language use (grammar, word choice): 2 marks

- Quality of Introduction/Context: 2 marks

- Quality of the Explanation of the poem: 4 marks

- Presentation Skills (eye contact, volume, pace, composure): 2 marks