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WORKING-CLASS LITERATURE

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- ✦ Elizabeth Gaskell
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TEACHING ABOUT CLASS

Many people tell us that they want to teach more about class but say that they're not sure how to approach the subject. Class is a complex concept, involving economic and social structures, conflictual relationships, aspects of identity, and cultural patterns. Different scholars use different definitions of class, and they use different kinds of resources and methods to study how class works. A good starting place for both faculty and students are some accessible readings and an overview chart, both created for YSU's graduate course in Class and Culture.

- [Readings about Class](#)
- [Class Theory Table](#)

[Text Analysis Rubric](#)

In our teaching, we use a wide range of representations -- maps, photos, poems, popular songs, statistical data, and so on. We've found, however, that students read these materials better if they can approach unfamiliar texts of all kinds with a common set of questions. We also found that if we ask the same kinds of questions about different types of representations, then students can more easily recognize and analyze the connections among these texts. To help them do this, we designed the test analysis rubric.

The rubric poses questions about why representations were created, their content and structure, how they were used, and what experiences, assumptions, biases, and knowledge we bring to them. We're currently writing an online textbook using this approach to critical reading to analyze the experience and meaning of work, building on our experience teaching Work in America.

We hope you'll find the rubric useful in your own courses. The rubric page includes the questions plus two examples. If you click on any of the colored icons in the examples, you'll see our notes toward analyzing the Kenneth Patchen poem and the Michael Williamson photograph.

NEW/UPDATES

» [PREVIOUS NEWS](#)



Class in the Classroom: Strategies and Resources

The following ideas were developed by participants in the 2006 "Class in the Classroom" Summer Institute, sponsored by the Center for Working-Class Studies with support from the Ford Foundation.

- 1) [Read and discuss "The Golf Links,"](#) poem by Sarah Cleghorne
- 2) [Discuss bell hooks's book, *Where We Stand: Class Matters*](#)
- 3) [Analyze Visual and Oral Histories of Southerners](#)
- 4) [Class Quiz](#)
- 5) Exploring [how marketers view class in specific locations](#)
- 6) [AFL-CIO Website](#)
- 7) [Using newspaper articles and photographs](#) to explore class and language
- 8) [Using poetry](#) to initiate conversations about class
- 9) Discuss class issues in the [UN Declaration on Human Rights](#)
- 10) Analyzing class in specific situations using a [social systems map](#)
- 11) Borrow [lesson plans from the New York Times "Class Matters" site](#)



12) [Films for classroom use](#)

13) [Websites for and about teaching about class](#)

14) ["Working-Class Heroes: Films about the Labor Movement"](#)

