

DAY 2:

Theme: Dominance & History: selected ideas for presentation and discussion

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General Overview/Orientation & basic information

Mode of interaction: Groups of 5-7 students of different nationalities and General Forum (it is highly recommended to employ both students and teachers alike in the activities sometimes for guidelines, expertise or simply to enrich the discussion pool with versatile opinions)

Tasks: the activities aim to address the following questions/issues:

- Introduce the concept of dominance in history and on “personal/individual” level
- Provide and share examples of different countries’ historical experiences involving dominance
- Draw conclusions/make observations how dominance in the past “dominates” the present
- Analyse the national anthems of different countries with the emphasis on the ‘dominance’ motif-What is behind that story? What do we learn from it?
- Remembrance and identity through the echoes of the past
- How can we better understand each other’s mentality based on historical experiences?
- Great debate on the role of history and motif of dominance/violence in shaping the nations
- Other notions to be discussed in the reference to the topic of dominance:
 - Independence vs dominance vs freedom vs subjugation
 - Nation states vs unification/unified entities (like the EU)
 - Individualism vs collectivism
 - Patriotism vs nationalism/chauvinism/cosmopolitanism
 - Personal liberties vs state legislation
 - Superpower power vs limited power
 - And other ideas... (to be suggested by the students themselves as well)
 - Is there “a/the third way?”
- Linking past with present – how about the impact of dominance on our future? Time to speculate and speak your mind – political incorrectness is very welcome! ☺
- Sharing conclusions, afterthoughts, all and any relevant comments on the topic

Modus operandi:

0. Point “zero” with some teasers: videos, comments and a little different concept of history.....
1. “Surprise” picture on violence/dominance to be shown to the students as a “mini social experiment” and subject for discussion (“What would you do...?”) The outcome may truly surprise the participants (not to be revealed at this stage to guarantee, hopefully, a total surprise and great food for thought afterwards).

2. **"Lord of the Flies"** (book and its film adaptation) as an example of lust for power/dominance/control – a universal metaphor of human character: a hidden ugly face of human nature or a universal instrument of self-preservation/survival instinct?
3. Reading, analysis and discussion on **"A History lesson"** poem. Some additional questions are asked later on by the teacher – group work and then a short discussion on general forum (another stimulus to share thoughts/opinions/ideas as in point 1).
4. War as an instrument of dominance: set of questions to be discussed within student groups – Have We (as human species/civilisations/countries/organisations) made any real progress towards more peaceful and less violent, dominance free world?
5. Top 3 Dates in the history of your country: presentation and discussion – how are they connected with the dominance vs independence issues?
6. Reading comprehension, analysis and preparation for the discussion on the lyrics of national anthems (with English translation)
7. The students work in groups of 5-7 and provide some basic historical background concerning their national anthems. Later they follow the task instructions and have a round of presentations and discussion on the topic.
8. Music, please! (half a minute or so should be enough) Does the tune/melody produce any additional drama to the lyrics? Please, make notes about your impressions and share them within your group (and if possible on general forum as well).
9. The Great Debate on Dominance: the TASK issues/questions (as stated above on page 1) are to be discussed first in groups and then altogether (on general forum) Students prepare a set of questions for debate/discussion based on the list of suggestions or their own ideas.
10. Additional/optional activities: the students analyse and discuss the EU anthem in a similar manner as before – Does it serve its implied purpose of unification and ideals of EU in your view? As a follow-up activity, the students may venture to create within groups a new anthem/or modified anthem project to be filled with their ideas – What notions should be included into the lyrics? Should they reflect past or present/future of the EU nations and European history? Is there a chance for one unanimous "European nation/common voice to be agreed with and shared by all Europeans? (these are just a few example questions to start with and the students should be carried away by the flow of spontaneous questions/remarks on their own)
11. Final discussion on the question: "How can we avoid dominance in today's world based on our historical experiences? Can we, really...?" The students make a list of ideas/suggestions/solutions and discuss them first in their groups and later altogether on general forum.
12. Time for feedback: Did you like/dislike the activities? Were they interesting/boring/valuable/pointless/worthy of your attention? How to (if possible) improve them or make some modifications by including different ideas? All & Any comments, please! The students are asked to fill in a short survey.

Activity number 1

Look at the picture for a moment and write down your answer to the following question:

“What would YOU do if you found yourself in this situation?”

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Discuss your responses/reactions in groups – it’s important to be honest when describing your emotions and actions and provide some more relevant comments. The teacher will ask you for some feedback and later will assist you with a further analysis by means of additional questions. There may be an interesting and unexpected outcome at the end of the exercise...

Activity number 2

You are going to watch a couple of video clips from the 1990 movie adaptation of the novel “Lord of the Flies”.

First read the following introduction to the plot [wiki]:

Lord of the Flies is a 1954 novel by the Nobel laureate British author William Golding. The plot concerns a group of British boys who are stranded on an uninhabited island and their disastrous attempts to govern themselves.

Themes include the tension between groupthink and individuality, between rational and emotional reactions, and between morality and immorality.

The book never states the location of the unnamed island, although it is implied to be located somewhere in the Pacific Ocean.

The setting is important for the novel's narrative progression. Because no adults have survived and remain with them, the boys need to be pre-adults who attempt to establish order among themselves to survive within their hostile environment.

The setting also symbolizes the development of human civilization, society, and government, as the boys try to form a community with themselves and eventually elect a "chief" to lead them. It then goes on to examine aspects of war and chaos, as the setting itself is placed during a war that has begun before the boys arrive on the island.

The only survivors are boys in their middle childhood or preadolescence. A fair-haired boy named Ralph and a fat boy nicknamed "Piggy" find a conch, which Ralph uses as a horn to convene the survivors to one area. Ralph immediately commands authority over the other boys using the conch, and is elected their "chief". He establishes three primary policies: to have fun, to survive, and to constantly maintain a smoke signal that could

alert passing ships/aeroplanes of their presence. Ralph joins a red-haired boy named Jack and a quiet boy named Simon in using Piggy's glasses to create a signal fire.

The semblance of order deteriorates as the majority of the boys turn idle, and ignore Ralph's efforts towards improving life on the island. They develop paranoia around an imaginary monster they call the "beast", which they all come to believe exists on the island. Ralph fails to convince the boys that no beast exists, while Jack gains popularity by declaring that he will personally hunt and kill the monster.

At one point, Jack summons many of the boys to hunt down a wild pig, drawing away those assigned to maintain the signal fire. The smoke signal goes out, failing to attract a ship that was passing by the island. Ralph angrily confronts Jack about his failure to maintain the signal, but he is rebuffed by the other boys. Disillusioned with his role as leader, Ralph considers relinquishing his job, but is persuaded not to do so by Piggy.....

[don't want to spoil the whole story so let us stop here and proceed with some clips from the movie adaptation]

Please, while watching, try to recognize the following primary and secondary characters:

Primary

- Ralph: The charismatic protagonist who is the elected leader of the boys. He is often the representative of order, civilization and productive leadership. At the beginning of the novel, Ralph sets out to build huts and think of ways to maximize their chances of being rescued. Ralph's influence over the boys is, at first, secure but it declines as the boys defect to Jack and succumb to savagery.
- Jack: The strong-willed and egomaniacal antagonist who represents the instinct of savagery, violence and power. At the beginning of the novel, he is infuriated by losing the leadership election to Ralph. He then leads his band of choirboys into the deep forest where they hunt pigs and turn into barbarians with painted faces. By the end of the novel, he is using the boys' fear of the "beast" to assert control over them.
- Simon: An innately spiritual boy, he is often the voice of reason in the rivalry between Ralph and Jack, and when the boys on the island turn to savagery.
- Piggy: Ralph's intellectual and talkative friend, he helps Ralph to become leader and is the source of many of Ralph's innovative ideas. He is the representation of the rational side of humanity. Despite this, Piggy's asthma and poor eyesight make him a target of scorn and violence.
- Roger: An intense and quiet boy at the beginning until, by the middle of the novel, he begins to terrorize other boys. When Jack rises to power, he turns into a brutal sadist.

Secondary

- Sam and Eric: Twins who are stranded on the island, they are some of Ralph's few supporters at the end of the book but are forced to join Jack's tribe by Roger.
- The Officer: An officer who rescues Ralph, Jack, and the other boys at the end of the book/film. He does not understand the boys' warlike behaviour, despite being a military man himself.

Some questions will be asked and tasks designated after the videos, so please immerse into the story and try to remember as much as possible!

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Based on the videos of the story you have watched try to discuss the following questions within your groups [try to modify them or come up with different questions as well]:

1. What is your personal reaction to the story? How much do YOU remember? (I mean which parts are especially memorable to YOU personally) WHY?
2. Do you identify with any of the characters? Do you already have “a ready role to play” in a similar scenario?
3. If YOU found yourself in a similar situation, what would YOU do? Think of 5 top “things” that should be taken care of/organised in the first place...
4. When we build any society/civilisation from a scratch [from the very beginning or after its collapse], do we always need organisation with division of power and tasks?
5. Where do YOU imagine yourself in the power pyramid?
6. Can we live and function without a dominant leader or group?
7. Is it easy for YOU to dominate others or to be dominated by others?
8. Is it our natural instinct [like animals in the wild] to fight for dominance/power and territory/resources – is it all just about survival?
9. Do YOU think you have already adopted one of these two roles in your discussion groups: Are YOU a dominating leader or Are YOU a regular member of your group?
10. Does the story demonstrate some universal truth about human fights for dominance? And again, isn't HISTORY just a recorded collection of similar stories ???

More comments, if YOU will, please...

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Activity number 3

Teaching History & Teaching (put words/phrases as your own ideas) through History.

Why, what and how ? A short poem to stimulate your thoughts – what are your personal experiences as concerns studying history? Share them with others but first, Please, read the poem now...

Miroslav Holub

A History Lesson

The dead like so many strained noodles
a pound of those fallen in battle,
two ounces of those who were executed.
several heads
like so many potatoes
shaken into a cap-
Geniuses conceived
by the mating of dates
are soaked up by the ceiling into infinity
to the sound of tinny thunder,
the rumble of bellies,
shouts of hurrah,
empires rise and fall
at a wave of the pointer
the blood is blotted out-
And only one small boy,
who was not paying the least attention,
will ask
between two victorious wars:
And did it hurt in those days too?

Some questions to help YOU with analysis and discussion:

1. What is your personal reaction to the poem "History Lesson"?
2. How about your school experiences and history classes – are they similar to the poem?
3. Do you find the subject interesting and worthy of your time and attention?
4. Do you have a "personal" problem with history as a subject of just too much information, dates, figures, stories to memorise.
5. How can history be taught in a different way to stimulate genuine interest and enthusiasm for the subject.
6. Why do we teach/learn history as such? Think of it in terms of remembrance, identity, culture, patriotism, social studies, practical values and other reasons...
7. Is there anything we truly learn from history? (apart from the very fact that history teaches us that we DO NOT learn from history...)
8. Do YOU think that HISTORY DOMINATES our lives and casts a shadow onto the present and the future? All & Any other comments, please

And now (if given enough time) let's have a more specific discussion on HISTORY: select SOME of the questions below for a few more minutes talk – YOU may work in pairs or as a whole group

(A) PART

- (1) Is history important to you?
- (2) Did you like studying history at school?
- (3) What period of history interests you most?
- (4) What do you think of the recent history of your country – the past fifty years?
- (5) What do you know about the early history of your country
- (6) What do you think of the overall history of your country?
- (7) Do you think history repeats itself?
- (8) What period of history would you like to go back and live in?
- (9) Napoleon Bonaparte said "History is a set of lies agreed upon". Do you agree with this?
- (10) "Half of writing history is hiding the truth." What do you think of this quote in relation to what was in your school history books?

(B) PART

- (1) Why do people like/dislike history?
- (2) What do you know about your family history? Can you create a family tree of more than 3 generations?
- (3) Is there a history of great stories in your family? Do you somehow commemorate them?
- (4) Would you like to be a historian? Your family's historian?
- (5) In his book 1984, George Orwell says: "He who controls the past, controls the future; and he who controls the present, controls the past." Do you agree? Does this apply to countries today?
- (6) Which people in the world have a troubled history?
- (7) Do you think history comes back to haunt us?
- (8) Does your country have a proud or violent history in your opinion?
- (9) How would the world change if schools stopped teaching history to children and all history books were destroyed?
- (10) Sir Winston Churchill said: "Those that fail to learn from history, are doomed to repeat it." Do you agree with him?

Discuss the following quotes:

"History is written by the victors [winners]"

"History is the study of all the world's crime."

"History is who we are and why we are the way we are."

"A generation which ignores history has no past and no future."

"If you want to understand today you have to search yesterday."

"History is a vast early warning system."

"The entire history of mankind is, in any case, nothing but a prolonged fight to the death for the conquest of universal prestige and absolute power."

"If you don't know history, it's as if you were born yesterday. If you were born yesterday then any leader can tell you anything."

"What experience and history teach is that nations and governments have never learned anything from history, or acted upon any lessons they might have drawn from it."

"The historian must serve two masters: the past and the present."

"The more I study history the more I realise how little mankind has changed. There are no new scripts, just different actors."

WHAT'S THE DOMINANT MOTIF IN HISTORY IN YOUR VIEW?

DO YOU AGREE THAT HISTORY IS DOMINATED BY THE FIGHT FOR POWER & CONTROL OF RESOURCES?

IS HISTORY "JUST" A STORY OF DOMINANCE ???

Activity number 4

Answered by ChatGPT

How many wars have been fought on earth?



It is estimated that there have been over 17,000 wars fought on Earth throughout history. However, this number is difficult to accurately determine as there is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes a "war." Additionally, many conflicts throughout history have gone unrecorded...

How many wars are there NOW as of 2023?

There are 32 ongoing conflicts in the world right now, ranging from international conflicts, drug wars, insurgencies, ethnic or religious conflicts and civil wars...

IF WAR IS "JUST" AN INSTRUMENT OF FIGHTING FOR OR EXERTING DOMINANCE...

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT WITHOUT ANY FURTHER ADO...

Choose some of the following questions and discuss them in pairs or your groups:

(A) PART

- (1) Why war?
- (2) Does war ever do any good or is ever justified?
- (3) Have you ever experienced a war? Do you know somebody that has?
- (4) Do you think we'll ever stop making wars?
- (5) Why are some countries so eager to wage war, while others aren't?
- (6) What wars has your country fought in the recent past?
- (7) Would you fight in a war to save your country?
- (8) Would you like to work as a war correspondent?
- (9) Aeschylus said: "In war, truth is the first casualty." Do you agree with this?
- (10) Anti-war slogan: "Join the Army, see the world, meet interesting people - and kill them all." What do you think of this quote?

(B) PART

- (1) What comes to mind when you hear the word 'war'?
- (2) Is there ever any news programme without mentioning any kind of war going on now?
- (3) What do think of the so called "civilized war"? Does this concept make any sense to YOU?
- (4) The Geneva Convention(s) issued a list of the rules of war. What do you think these are? Does it seem strange to have rules for war?

- (5) How do you think current wars could be stopped?
- (6) What do you think future wars will be fought over?
- (7) Do you think there'd be fewer wars if all countries were ruled by women?
- (8) What would you do today if a war broke out in your country tomorrow?
- (9) "In war, there are no unwounded soldiers." Do you agree with this? Think of PTSD
- (10) "War does not determine who is right - only who is left." What do you think of this quote?

Activity number 5

YOU are now asked to choose and present to your group 3 TOP HISTORICAL DATES in relation to your native country. While preparing them, please consider the following questions:

- WHY are the dates important for your country's history? WHO? WHAT? WHEN?
- HOW are they taught/commemorated/celebrated on a daily basis in your country?
- Do the dates reflect or describe any historical experiences that include fights for or against DOMINANCE ???

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Now present them to your fellow group members – exchange information and try to draw some conclusions afterwards:

- Do all the dates have something/anything in common? Is there a pattern(s)?
- Are similar historical events celebrated throughout your countries? Do they play important role for your country and national identity?
- Finally, have the dates strong connection with aspects of dominance/violence/oppression/freedom/independence/others...?

(any wild guesses Why yes/Why not?)

Activities number 6-7-8

You are going to work now on the analysis, presentation and comparison of national anthems of your native countries. I don't mean just the anthems of the six countries your universities are located in, but obviously, YOU as a group of international students probably represent more countries and nationalities! ☺

Please, make notes as YOU work on the points below:

1. Find the English language version of your country's national anthem: the lyrics and the tune as well
2. Prepare the basic facts behind the origin of your national anthem
3. Focus on the lyrics of your national anthem: what are the DOMINANT MOTIFS/THEMES?
4. How is the history of your country reflected in the lyrics of the anthem? Are there any dramatic, emotional or spectacular references?
5. Get ready to present your findings/observations to your group
6. Have a round of presentations – if it is feasible, try to play the melody of the anthem for a short time!
7. Discuss together by comparison and analysis any interesting similarities and differences between all of them. Is there/Are there any patterns emerging? Do YOU think the tune of your anthem plays an important and special role, too?
8. Time for general forum discussion – Would YOU like to share now your comments with everybody, please?

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Activities number 9-12

Please, refer to page 2 to follow instructions

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION! 😊

And to leave YOU all with some more food for thought, here's a short "comment" on history by my favourite Polish poet, Zbigniew Herbert [with my poor English translation – my apology!]

And my final and a very personal question:

"What do you think future generations will think of us as people from their past?"

Dlaczego klasycy

Zbigniew Herbert

1

W księdze czwartej Wojny Peloponeskiej
Tukidydes opowiada dzieje swej nieudanej wyprawy

pośród długich mów wodzów
bitew oblężeń zarazy
gęstej sieci intryg
dyplomatycznych zabiegów
epizod ten jest jak szpilka
w lesie

kolonia ateńska Amfipolis
wpadła w ręce Brazydasa
ponieważ Tukidydes spóźnił się z odsieczą

zapłacił za to rodzinnemu miastu
dozgonnym wygnaniem

exulowie wszystkich czasów
wiedzą jaka to cena

2

generałowie ostatnich wojen
jeśli zdarzy się podobna afera
skomlą na kolanach przed potomnością
zachwalają swoje bohaterstwo
i niewinność

oskarżają podwładnych
zawistnych kolegów
nieprzyjazne wiatry

Tucydides mówi tylko
że miał siedem okrętów
była zima
i płynął szybko

3

jeśli tematem sztuki
będzie dzbanek rozbity
mała rozbita dusza
z wielkim żalem nad sobą

to co po nas zostanie
będzie jak płacz kochanków
w małym brudnym hotelu
kiedy świtają tapety...

Translation:

Why the classics

Zbigniew Herbert

1

in book four of the Peloponnesian War
Thucydides tells the story of his failed expedition

amid the long speeches of the commanders
plagues sieges battles
a dense network of intrigues
diplomatic overtures

this episode is like a pin
in the forest

Athenian colony of Amphipolis
fell into the hands of Brasidas
because Thucydides came too late with relief forces
he paid his hometown for it
with lifelong exile

the exuls of all times
know what the price is

2

generals of recent wars
if a similar scandal occurs
whimper on their knees before posterity
they praise their heroism
and innocence

they accuse subordinates
envious colleagues
unfavourable winds

Thucydides only says
that he had seven ships
it was winter
and he sailed quickly

3

if the subject of art
will be a broken jug
a little broken soul
with great self-pity

what will be left of us
is like a lovers' weep
in a small dirty hotel
when wallpapers dawn...

Fill in a Short Survey – It's Time for Feedback from YOU

I personally believe that it is truly important to receive honest and critical comments from YOU – please, help me with my work and do not hesitate to speak (write☺) your mind!)

or in other words - HOW IT WAS & HOW IT SHOULD BE:

Did you like/dislike the activities? Please specify why ↓↓↓

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Were they interesting/boring/valuable/pointless/worthy of your attention and time?

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How to (if possible) improve them or make some modifications by including different ideas?

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Have you learnt anything special and/or valuable from this History & Dominance experience?

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All & Any other comments or suggestions, please!

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THANK YOU! ☺