# **Cross-Cultural Comparison Workshop**

# East Asian Studies Center at Indiana University

# (October 22, 2022)

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## Title

Gastrodiplomacy: Understanding Foreign Policy through State Dinners

**1. Reflection**

On Saturday, October 22, I had the great fortune to be able to participate in the 2022 Online Workshop sponsored by Pathways to Cross-Cultural Understanding. The topic of this workshop was Food through History and Culture. One of the presentations that truly stuck with me after the completion of the workshop was Glen Hackett’s “Pretty Little Dishes.”

I thought more about the topic of food in history and culture as I worked on coming up with ideas about my lesson plan. Typically I would gravitate toward planning for a World History or World Geography class for a topic such as this, but I found myself wondering how I could incorporate this topic into my United States Government classes. We’re getting ready to start studying the Executive Branch, and as I started going over my notes for class, I started to think about how presidents play multiple roles in office, and one of those is of Chief Diplomat. In this role the president deals directly with the heads of foreign governments, a role that is mirrored by heads of state of foreign governments. One tool that the president has at his disposal is the State Dinner. It is a way for the government to honor a visiting Head of State and their spouse, but it is also an opportunity for a government to show its power and strength, as well as a chance to showcase the link between the two countries. But let’s not forget – at the end of all the formality and diplomacy is the actual dinner itself. We would be unwise to consider the thought that goes into the preparation of the actual meal itself, and how the chosen menu itself is an act of diplomacy. From this thought comes my lesson plan – Gastrodiplomacy: Understanding Foreign Policy through State Dinners.

The focus of this lesson plan is to look at how state dinners are used as diplomatic tools for the president’s role as Chief Diplomat, and specifically how menus served at the state dinners reflect the relationship between two countries. We will look at this through state dinners that have been held between the United States and South Korea, as well as at a meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un.

**2. Explanation of Opportunities**

I am able to teach about East Asia in both classes that I teach. The easiest in which to implement the subject area is in my Honors World History classes, but I am increasingly finding ways to incorporate it into my U.S. Government classes. My Honors World History class is a yearlong class that meets for approximately 4.5 hours per week. Classes are divided into two 90-minute blocks and one 35-minute block. I currently have 40 sophomores enrolled in Honors World History. My U.S. Government classes also are broken down into the same time frames, and I currently instruct 87 seniors in this course. In World History (and sometimes Geography & History of the World, which we alternate), we talk about different cultural aspects, bringing in ideas as we touch upon a historical topic, and provide opportunities for students to link what we are learning about with what we identify as our own culture. In U.S. Government, we compare and contrast different government types. I will have the opportunity to share my lesson with colleagues within my department at school, as well as with the art teacher, who may be interesting in pairing on this project.

**3. Description**

This lesson plan is designed for use in a 90-minute block in a suburban high school. It is a Social Studies unit, designed according to the standards for United States Government, for the twelfth-grade student. The lesson will take place over three 90-minute blocks. Students will need to do work outside of class in order to complete the activities required for this lesson.

**Lesson activities**

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| Day 1 | * Students will take notes over the roles that a president fulfills while he is in office. After taking notes, students will watch “The White House State Dinner,” a six minute video explaining the history of the State Dinner.
* After viewing the video, students will break into pairs to read the article “How Countries Use Food to Win Friends and Influence People” Students will use a to graphic organizer in order to gain a deeper understanding of the political, social, and economic goals that can be met through a state dinner, as well as the planning that goes into menu planning.
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| Day 2 | * Half of the class will be given the Trump article (“What to feed a president? Chefs in South Korea mix fusion with familiar for Trump”) and the other half will be given the Biden article (“Traditional Korean food served at state dinner for U.S. president”). Both articles cover what was served at state dinners hosted by South Korea for Presidents Trump and Biden.
* Class discussion on why menu planning was a concern for Trump and Biden. How did South Korea, if at all, cater to the American palate? For which president was there greater accommodation? Why is it important for a president to be happy while on a visit to another country?
* Students will research United States foreign policy concerning South Korea and North Korea, and the number of state dinners hosted by the United States for South Korea. What was served at each of the state dinners? Was the Korean palate accommodated?
* Students will sample Korean food. A visit to a Korean grocery or an online store can provide many options. For my lesson, I plan to offer rice, seaweed, kim chi, sliced yellow radish pickles, and some fantastic kimbap made at a store nearby. I’ll also purchase some Korean sweets and serve green tea.
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| Day 3 | * Students will read the article concerning what was served at the Trump-Kim summit. As this summit was held on neutral ground, how were the palates of both leaders accommodated in the menu offerings? What do you think each leader ate?
* Students will read “All the Presidents’ Meals” and design a menu that President Biden might serve to French president Emmanuel Macron (as of this writing, President Biden will host his first state dinner on December 1 2022, approximately one month after the writing of this lesson).
* To close, students will watch the Season 1, Episode 7 of “The West Wing” entitled “The State Dinner.”
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**4. Standards**

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| USG.4.2 | Describe how different governments interact in world affairs. |
| USG.4.3 | Analyze reasons for conflict among nations, such as competition for resources and territory, differences in ideology, and religious or ethnic conflicts as they affect the United States or United States foreign policy. |
| USG.4.5 | Analyze powers the United States Constitution gives to the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government in the area of foreign affairs.. |
| USG.4.6 | Identify and describe strategies available to the United States government to achieve foreign policy objectives. |
| USG.4.8 | Identify and explain world issues, including political, cultural, demographic, economic and environmental challenges that affect the United States foreign policy in specific regions of the world. |
| USG.4.9 | Discuss specific foreign policy issues that impact local community and state interests. |

**5. Days and Class Time Required**

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**6. Resources**

Fifield, Anna. “Analysis | What to Feed a President? Chefs in South Korea Mix Fusion with Familiar for Trump.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 1 Dec. 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/11/06/what-to-feed-a-president-chefs-in-south-korea-mix-fusion-with-familiar-for-trump/>.

Hickey, C.K. “All the Presidents' Meals.” *Foreign Policy*, 16 Feb. 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/all-the-presidents-meals-state-dinners-white-house-infographic/>.

Lee, Hae-rin. “Traditional Korean Food Served at State Dinner for U.S. President.” *Koreatimes*, The Korea Times, 23 May 2022, <https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/culture/2022/05/141_329602.html>.

Nguyen, Tina. “Hillary Clinton Taps Celebrity Chefs as Diplomatic Strategy.” *Mediaite*, 3 July 2012, <https://www.mediaite.com/food/hillary-clinton-celebrity-chefs-state-department/>.

Parasecoli, Fabio. “How Countries Use Food to Win Friends and Influence People.” *Foreign Policy*, 20 Aug. 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/20/food-diplomacy-countries-identity-culture-marketing-gastrodiplomacy-gastronativism/>.

Ponniah, Kevin, and Minji Lee. “Trump Kim Summit: What Food Was on the Diplomatic Menu?” *BBC News*, BBC, 12 June 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44447714>.

“The White House State Dinner.” *The White House Historical Association*, [https://www.whitehousehistory.org/videos/the-white-house-state-dinner. Accessed 26 Oct. 2022](https://www.whitehousehistory.org/videos/the-white-house-state-dinner.%20Accessed%2026%20Oct.%202022).

**7. Other Materials**

* Selection of Korean food for students to try
* Copy of Season One of “The West Wing,” specifically Episode Seven

**8. Enrichment**

* If you have more time, you may want to try rolling your own kimbap in class! We are discussing creating an enrichment component to home room once a month where students can learn something new that is non-academic. Rolling their own kimbap would be a fun activity to share with students that would provide them an opportunity to learn about another culture while making their own lunch! There are a multitude of YouTube videos out there that can provide instruction, or you can sweet talk the ladies at the Korean grocery to teach you, as I have done before!
* Students may wish to learn more about Korean cuisine. The resource box provided by PCCU would be a great tool here! If you are a teacher who wants their own culture kit, now is the time to check out the programs offered by Pathways to Cross Cultural Understanding, and sign up for a workshop! You can find out more at <https://www.pcrosscultural.com/>.