

Reacting to the Past

What is Reacting to the Past?

RTTP is a method of teaching intellectual history. Students assume the persona of a historical actor and debate about an important event. There are RTTP games that deal with Henry VIII's break from Rome, the Death of Caesar, American Revolutionaries, Shakespeare's Rivalry with Kit Marlowe, and more.

Usually in RTTP games there is more time to research into a historical actor and there are also usually written assignments.

Wait, are you making me play some kooky historical Dungeons and Dragons here?

Not exactly! RTTP relies on role play, yes, and there is a system, much like in D&D or other role play games. However, this is set up to be used in a classroom setting to help students engage with complex ideas in ways that are not just rote memorization from a text book.

Like D&D this relies on your willingness to play pretend and to have fun. That's all this really is – playing pretend with a purpose.

What is Reacting to the Past? Or, WHAT are we doing this week for discussion?!

Hi everyone! This week for our ultimate discussion in class I thought it'd be fun to try something a little different. This week we are going to have a debate based off of the Black Robe movie we will be watching.

I've created each of you a character for the debate. Because this involves a bit more work on your part before you come to class this week, I've tried to get your sheets to you with enough time to review them and for you to get an idea of who your character is. (and to email me with questions, ceherber@huskers.unl.edu)

Things to Know:

- You are a Jesuit for this activity. So whatever you need to do to feel Jesuity – do it! Come in costume, adopt an accent, whatever you need to do to inhabit your character is great!
- You are a Jesuit on the High Council of Jesuits that I've made up for this activity. You all come together to debate issues of the day and to set policy recommendations to the Superior General (actual head of Jesuits).
- Depending on your character, you may have two goals. One of those goals could be to either send a mission into New France or to block a mission being sent to New France. The second goal is your character's individual SECRET goal. You don't want to let everyone know right away this is what you want.
- This game is set in the early 1660s, several decades after the events of the film.
- All information that you can find is fair game (so long as you can argue that your character would have had access to that information). If you want to do more reading on your character's particular issue before you come to class, feel free. I have included in this document suggestions of readings from class to revisit and a particular important point to know about.
- It IS possible to win the game – if you complete all of your objectives then you win! Multiple characters can win and that's ok.
- HAVE FUN! 😊

How will our class session look?

1. Movie!
2. Then I will introduce the game, much as I have here and give a couple of minutes for questions.
3. After that, you will have time for faction meetings to discuss strategies. We will come back and debate the big question (whether or not to send a mission to New France).
4. After that is settled, we will have a chance to debate other aspects related to your secret objectives. Some of those may be tied into whether or not there is a mission sent, but they may not.
5. After this is done, Dr. Schleck may also have some additional discussion questions directly related to the movie.

Important Things to Know

Here is the general information that your character as a Jesuit would know.

Remember – you are also to include Black Robe as a primary source and can (and should) debate with events and ideas taken from the movie.

One of the cool things about RTTP is anything is fair game. If you have knowledge of or can find primary sources – bring them in to the debate!

Good Topics to Revisit:

- Ricci's Debate with the Chinese Scholar
- Our other readings from last week
- Anything on Pocahontas or La Malinche

Also – this is just taken from Wikipedia.

Important Things to Know

The **Chinese Rites controversy** was a dispute among [Roman Catholic missionaries](#) over the religiosity of [Confucianism](#) and Chinese rituals during the 17th and 18th centuries. The debate centered over whether [Chinese ritual practices](#) of honoring family ancestors and other formal [Confucian](#) and Chinese imperial rites qualified as religious rites and were thus incompatible with Catholic belief.^{[1][2]} The [Jesuits](#) argued that these Chinese rites were secular rituals that were compatible with Christianity, within certain limits, and should thus be tolerated. The [Dominicans](#) and [Franciscans](#), however, disagreed and reported the issue to [Rome](#).

Rome's [Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith](#) sided with the Dominicans in 1645 by condemning the Chinese rites based on their brief. However, the same congregation sided with the Jesuits in 1656, thereby lifting the ban.^[1] It was one of the many disputes between the [Jesuits](#) and the [Dominicans](#) in China and elsewhere in [Asia](#), including [Japan](#)^[3] and [India](#).^[4]

The controversy embroiled leading European universities; the [Qing dynasty's Kangxi Emperor](#) and several [popes](#) (including [Clement XI](#) and [Clement XIV](#)) considered the case; the offices of the [Holy See](#) also intervened. Near the end of the 17th century, many Dominicans and Franciscans had shifted their positions in agreeing with the Jesuits' opinion, but Rome disagreed. Clement XI banned the rites in 1704. In 1742, [Benedict XIV](#) reaffirmed the ban and forbade debate.^[1]