

RCAH 202 | THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST: ‘QHIPARU NAYRARU UÑTAS SARTAÑANI’

RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE IN THE ARTS & HUMANITIES
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
SPRING 2008 | RCAH 202 SECTION 002
MTWR 9:10 – 10:00
CLASSROOM | SNYDER C202

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COURSE DESCRIPTION |

History is not dead! In fact, as humans we cannot escape the ‘presence of the past’ and the manner that history continues to shape our contemporary lives. In this course we will examine the past and investigate how looking at the past will better suit us to comprehend the present. By understanding our contemporary environment and its historical situatedness, we will become better equipped to adequately change it. In the vein of the common Aymara adage: “*Qhiparu nayraru uñtas sartañani.*” Looking back, we will move forward.

This course will focus on five themes and how they influence and inflect our contemporary lives: IMAGINING UTOPIAS; BUILDING COMMUNITIES; CONSTRUCTING CULTURE; ASSEMBLING SOLIDARITY; MAKING MEANING, CRAFTING CHANGE; and THINKING WITH THEORY. While my section of RCAH 201 investigated the transcultural relations that emerged between and amongst people in the ‘contact zones,’ this course will look at the way we may use this historical and sociological knowledge to construct a democratic and egalitarian society. In the European tradition of the often mistranslated Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is *also* to change it.”

OBJECTIVES |

Due to the interdisciplinarity of this course, the goals and objectives are likewise multiple. By reading, discussing, analyzing, and engaging course material, in addition to participatory activities, students will accomplish the following:

- Examine the complex role that history plays in contemporary society.
- Identify the interrelatedness of various histories/societies.
- Investigate the relationship between and amongst cultures and societies.
- Explain how and why we create meaning within social spaces.
- Interpret the meaning of signs (be they visual, oral, or performative).
- Recognize one’s individual potential to transform the world.
- Construct a vision that connects the past, present, and future

READINGS |

- Stephen Duncombe. *The Cultural Resistance Reader* (New York: Verso, 2002).
- Thomas More. *Utopia* (New Haven: Yale University, 2001).
- David Trend. *Everyday Culture: Finding and Making Meaning in a Changing World* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2007).

ADDITIONAL READINGS > available as PDFs on angel.msu.edu. Log on with netID and password.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS |

presentation 1 >>	05%
project + presentation 2 >>	05%
presentation 3 >>	10%
museum review >>	15%
civic engagement paper >>	25%
weekly writing >>	20%
participation >>	20%

ATTENDANCE |

As part of the Residential College in the Arts & Humanities, attendance is expected!! Although I will not be actively 'taking roll,' you will be obliged to reflect upon classroom activities and discussion. Therefore, continued absences will alter your ability to comprehend the overall themes of the course. Moreover, your presence in the classroom is needed for full participation credit. As such, your attendance may positively and/or negatively affect your final grade through multiple venues.

QUESTIONS |

Each week we will compose a series of questions that frame the dialogue for that respective week. This process will be done collectively, as will most activities in this course. You will be expected to participate in the construction of the weekly questions, as well as in-class discussion.

SYLLABUS

07 JANUARY 2008

THINKING ABOUT THE PAST

M	Taanshi Kiyawow [Welcome]
T	Memory v. History
W	Amnesia
R	The Past + The Future

14 JANUARY 2008

IMAGINING UTOPIAS

M	More's Utopia governance + labor
T	More's Utopia travel + slavery
W	Utopia as Dialogue military
R	Vincent Thomas

21 JANUARY 2008

KING, SOCIAL JUSTICE + LIBERATION

M	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
T	Spirituality + Community
W	Visualizing Black Liberation
R	Open Discussion

28 JANUARY 2008

ALTERNATIVE UTOPIAS

M	Indigenous Utopias
T	Pirate Utopias
W	Presentation 1
R	Presentation 1

04 FEBRUARY 2008

BUILDING EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES

M	Why build communities?
T	Joining
W	Building
R	The Levellers, aka Diggers

11 FEBRUARY 2008

IMPORTANCE OF THE EVERYDAY

M	The Everyday as Revolution
T	Everyday Resistance
W	Everyday Aesthetics
R	Desire for Cultural Alternatives

18 FEBRUARY 2008

BUILDING ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES

M	Culture as Center of Community
T	Punk Rock as Community
W	Project 2
R	Project 2

25 FEBRUARY 2008

MAKING MEANING FROM MEMORIES

M	Resisting Amnesia
T	Performance and/as History
W	Songs as Memories
R	Performing Memory

READINGS

None.

Rowe + Schelling, *Memory + Modernity*, PDF.
Brown, 'Polyrhythms and Improvisations,' PDF.
More, vii-xxviii.

More, 51-72.

More, 72-105.

More, 105-139.

None.

No class.

Tyson, 'Not Forgotten,' PDF; King, 'Detroit,' PDF.

Excerpts from Douglas, *Black Panther*, PDF.

None.

Duncombe, 193-200; Cleaver, *Zapatistas!*, PDF.

Duncombe, 113-118.

None.

None.

None.

Trend, Chapter 5.

Trend, Chapter 6.

Duncombe, 19-34.

None.

Duncombe, 82-100.

Haapala, PDF.

Duncombe, 119-134.

Kun, 'Two Turntables...', PDF.

Duncombe, 166-182.

None.

None.

A'ness, 'Resisting Amnesia,' PDF.

Taylor, 'Performance and/as History,' PDF.

Duncombe, 215-239.

None.

03 MARCH 2008

SPRING BREAK

10 MARCH 2008

INDIGENOUS PAST = PRESENT = FUTURE

M Evoking the Indigenous Past
 T Contemporary Native Culture
 W Culture + Solidarity

R Returning the Gift Conference

Marcos, *Conversations with Durito*, PDF.
 Selections, PDF.
New Socialist 58, PDF.
 [read pages 2, 16-17, 20-22, 35-37].
 No Class.

17 MARCH 2008

CULTURE AS CONSUMPTION

M Questioning Consumption
 T Purchasing the Past
 W NACCS, Texas
 R NACCS, Texas

* Visit MSU Museum during W + R

Trend, Chapter 2.
 Duncombe, 267-274.
 None.*
 None.*

24 MARCH 2008

WHO OWNS CULTURE

M How Museums Work
 T Museum Constructions of the Past
 W Repatriation + NAGPRA
 R Cinematic Telling of History

SMC, *Museums + Social Justice*, PDF.
 Atalay, 'No Sense of the Struggle,' PDF.
 Barker, 'Indian™ USA,' PDF.
 Trend, Chapter 3.

31 MARCH 2008

FINDING YOURSELF

M Who are You?
 T Finding the Self
 W Discovering Others
 R Local Histories

None.
 Trend, Chapter 4.
 Bessis, 'The Backlash,' PDF. ???
 Hayden, *Power of Place*, PDF.

07 APRIL 2008

WORKING WITH OTHERS

M Thinking Globally, Acting Locally
 T Non-Hierarchical Strategies
 W Student Activism + Action Research
 R NAIS, Georgia

Critical Moment, PDF.
 Duncombe, 333-346.
 Smith, 'Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects,' PDF.
 Guest lecture, Estrella Torrez.

14 APRIL 2008

STUDENT SOLIDARITY

M Presentation 3
 T Presentation 3
 W Presentation 3
 R Presentation 3

None.
 None.
 None.
 None.

21 APRIL 2008

MAKING MEANING, CRAFTING CHANGE

M Q + A
 T Thinking in Theory + Jargon
 W What does this Mean?
 R But the point is to change it!

None.
 Eagleton, 'Losses and Gains,' PDF.
 None.
 None.

28 APRIL 2008

FINALS

7:45-9:45 | TUESDAY, 29 APRIL 2008