

## 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: BUILDING COMMUNITIES; IMAGINING UTOPIAS; 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](http://angel.msu.edu). Log on with netID and password.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS |

presentation 1 >>	05%
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/negatively affect your final grade through multiple venues.

**QUESTIONS |**

Each week we will compose a series of questions to 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	Presentation 2
R	Presentation 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, PDF; King, 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, 83-100.

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	Marcos, <i>Conversations with Durito</i> , PDF.
T	Contemporary Native Culture	Selections, PDF.
W	Culture + Solidarity	<i>New Socialist</i> 58, PDF.
R	Returning the Gift Conference	No Class.

**17 MARCH 2008**

CULTURE AS CONSUMPTION

M	Questioning Consumption	Trend, Chapter 2.
T	Purchasing the Past	Duncombe, 267-274.
W	NACCS, Texas	None.*
R	NACCS, Texas	None.*

\* Visit MSU Museum during W + R

**24 MARCH 2008**

WHO OWNS CULTURE

M	How Museums Work	SMC, <i>Museums + Social Justice</i> , PDF.
T	Museum Constructions of Past	Atalay, 'No Sense of the Struggle,' PDF.
W	Repatriation + NAGPRA	Barker, 'Indian™ USA,' PDF.
T	Cinematic Telling of History	Trend, Chapter 3.

**31 MARCH 2008**

FINDING YOURSELF

M	Who are You?	None.
T	Finding the Self	Trend, Chapter 4.
W	Discovering Others	Bessis, 'The Backlash,' PDF. ???
R	Local Histories	Hayden, <i>Power of Place</i> , PDF.

**07 APRIL 2008**

WORKING WITH OTHERS

M	Thinking Globally, Acting Locally	<i>Critical Moment</i> , PDF.
T	Non-Hierarchical Strategies	Duncombe, 333-346.
W	Student Activism + Action Research	Smith, 'Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects,' PDF.
R	NAIS, Georgia	Guest lecture, Estrella Torrez.

**14 APRIL 2008**

STUDENT SOLIDARITY

M	Presentation 3	None.
T	Presentation 3	None.
W	Presentation 3	None.
R	Presentation 3	None.

**21 APRIL 2008**

MAKING MEANING, CRAFTING CHANGE

M	Q + A	None.
T	Thinking in Theory + Jargon	Eagleton, 'Losses and Gains,' PDF.
W	What does this Mean?	None.
R	But the point is to change it!	None.

**28 APRIL 2008**

FINALS

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