

Spring 2014
ENGLISH 4931-101
TOPICS IN LITERATURE AND WRITING
Thematic Title: *Cultural Preservation*
MWF 11:00-11:50 AM
David Straz Hall 365

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Recently, “sustainability” has become a powerful concept in both academic discourse and popular debate; however, since the time of Heraclitus in Ancient Greece philosophers have recognized that change is inevitable and that there is always tension between what we should preserve and what is disposable. Funded by an “Enduring Questions” grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, this new special topics course will use interdisciplinary scholarship to probe the central question underlying all cultural preservation: what should we value enough to pass on to future generations? It will ask students to confront this dilemma by interrogating what precisely makes an artifact, practice, or natural resource sufficiently valuable to cherish and keep. In our time, the concept of “value” is dominated by economic language, but this view is crucially incomplete: what gives objects value is not their exchangeability but the fact that humans care about them and are willing to preserve and maintain them. A church is just a building unless people consider it sacred; books are mere paper unless they are read, appreciated, and shared. Establishing and asserting these sorts of non-economic values has long been a defining characteristic of study in the humanities, which have always appreciated how shared heritage links us to the past, creates meaning and relevance in the present, and allows us to shape our collective future. In that spirit we will examine a wide variety of philosophical and aesthetic questions around durability and cultural preservation, and develop a framework for engaging pressing contemporary debates about the preservation of our shared cultural and natural heritage.

LEARNING GOALS

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural, historical, and political contexts in which various projects of cultural preservation (both real and imagined) have been undertaken;
- Apply techniques of critical analysis as appropriate to diverse cultural documents;
- Participate and intervene in contemporary public debates over cultural preservation and heritage;
- Use literary and cultural study to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
- Read and discuss a variety of literary and nonliterary texts on the levels of both form and content.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Book Marq on 16th Street)

Kim Stanley Robinson, *Red Mars*

Brian Friel, *Translations*

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Cory Doctorow, *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*

Additional readings and course materials will occasionally be made available via D2L.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance, Participation, and Blog Comments	20%
First Blog Post (1-3 pages)	7.5%
Second Blog Post (1-3 pages)	7.5%
Final Paper (10-12 pages)	
Pitch	5%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Abstract	10%
Final Paper Presentation	15%
Final Paper	25%

Detailed descriptions of the papers will be distributed in class well in advance of the due dates.

GRADING

Grades will follow the following rubric:

* To earn a **C**, you must clearly restate the meaning or project of a text in your own terms. A C essay may volunteer an original argument, but will likely lack evidence or analysis of its sources. C essays are clearly written, though they might display some grammatical weakness.

* To earn a **B**, you must begin to raise important questions about the text under consideration and to use those questions to drive your own interpretive agenda. A B essay typically advances an original argument and provides solid analysis of the text(s) under consideration. B essays are clear, concise, and free of grammatical errors.

* To earn an **A**, you must construct an essay that does more than simply comment on the work of others; you must forward, counter, or transform what they have to say. An A essay advances an original argument that builds toward a climax and makes a persuasive case for its own significance. A essays are clearly written, and often eloquent.

* A **D** means that you have not written in clear prose or that you seem to have deeply misunderstood the text. An **F** means that you did not fully or seriously engage the assignment.

* **AB, BC, and CD** grades fall squarely in the gaps between the above categories.

FORMAT OF WRITTEN WORK

Your final paper should be typed in twelve-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, saved in a format Microsoft Word can open. Your filename should contain *your name* in it, for example, yourlastname-firstpaper.docx.

I expect you to *edit* and *proofread* all written work, even blog posts and blog comments. Drafts that contain excessive typos or grammar mistakes may be returned to the author for correction before I offer comments.

Please give each piece of writing an original title, and include your name, assignment, and due date in a header on the first page. Insert page numbers if your work spans more than one page.

All sources relied upon for the writing of your paper, including the primary text, must be appropriately cited.

PAPER SUBMISSION

The final paper should be submitted via D2L's Dropbox by class time on the due date. **Because this is a final exam, late final papers cannot be accepted.**

Your other written work (the short blog comments and the longer blog posts) will be posted on the course blog. These papers will have flexible due dates driven by your own interests and responses. **It is thus your responsibility to make sure you are properly keeping up with this portion of the course.**

Except in very unusual circumstances, work will not be accepted by email.

TECHNOLOGY IS TERRIBLE: PLAN AHEAD!

The Internet goes down. Files become corrupted. Computers crash. These are predictable facts of twenty-first century life, not emergencies. For this course, for all your courses, for the rest of your career and your life in this world you need to develop work habits and strategies that take into account the basic, inescapable unreliability of computers. Start your assignments well in advance of the due date; save them often; save backup copies of essential documents, including copies off-site using a service like Carbonite, Dropbox, or Google Drive.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class discussion is an essential component of this seminar; class discussion, not lecture, will be the primary means by which we will investigate these texts together. It is crucial that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it. **Consequently, attendance in this class is mandatory.** You should plan on attending every class. Please talk to me (in advance if possible) if you ever find you will need to miss a class meeting.

The course adheres to Marquette University's attendance policy, which can be found on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>.

You are allowed **four absences** over the course of the fall semester. **After that, your class participation will drop by a letter grade for each additional unexcused absence.** Upon the seventh unexcused absence, you will receive a WA (Withdrawn—Excessive Absences) for the semester.

Merely being present in class is insufficient to earn an “A” for class participation. Each student is expected to *participate in* and *contribute to* our discussions. Just being in the room is not enough.

DISCUSSION INAUGURATOR

Beginning with Week 5, each member of the class will have one day in which they are expected to inaugurate our discussion. The requirements for this are necessarily very loose, as each day of the course will have a very different type of text to be discussed; in general, however, the discussion inaugurator will be asked to (1) succinctly describe the project of the text; (2) articulate a brief critical response to the material; and (3) direct our collective attention to one or two problems in, questions about, or particularly important moments in the text.

A signup sheet for this role will be distributed in class.

CLASS BLOG

This course will make extensive use of a class blog at muculturalpreservation.wordpress.com. In addition to being a place where you can find electronic copies of the syllabus and links to other course handouts, the blog also features an online commenting system where you can express your response to the material before class begins and where we can continue our discussions after class is over.

The blog is an excellent place for people who may feel inhibited by in-class discussion to share their opinions with the class. I will be reading it before every meeting of the course and I ask you do the same. You may choose either to begin a discussion thread on a new topic or to respond to a post composed by one of your classmates.

Before class on Friday, every student is required to take the following actions:

- * **sign up for an account at wordpress.com;**
- * **upload an avatar icon to their wordpress.com profile;**
- * **upload a picture of their face to their [D2L](#) profile;**
- * **write a short blog comment responding to at least one of the readings for this week.**

After that, students must write **four short (approximately 2 paragraphs) comments** responding to **any four** texts across the remainder of the course. These posts should be completed either by 10 PM before one of the class discussions devoted to that text or by 10 PM the night before the following class. At least half of the posts must be completed before Spring Break.

When you find a text that moves you (either to praise or to anger!), you should feel free to write one of your **two required blog posts (1 to 3 pages in Microsoft Word; approximately 600 to 1000 words)** in response. Again, at least one of these must be completed before Spring Break.

I encourage you to think of your blog posts and comments as “seeds” for the longer papers; feel free to begin to develop your thoughts there. Shorter comments can be the seed for a blog post; either a comment or a blog post can be the seed for the term paper.

You are also encouraged to kill two birds with one stone by posting a blog comment or a flash paper on the day you are scheduled to be discussion inaugurator.

Additional posts and comments, and comments that respond substantively to other students' arguments, will be looked upon very favorably when I calculate your final grade.

Please remember that the blog is a public forum and that your discussions there will reflect both on you as emerging scholars as well as on Marquette as a whole.

EMAIL

Students in this class are required to check their official Marquette email account—whatever account D2L sends its emails to—at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

I endeavor to respond to all emails within 24 hours, usually much less—but please do not send me urgent emails regarding your assignments on the night before they are due and expect an immediate reply.

LAPTOP POLICY

In-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. is permitted for access to electronic versions of our texts and for notetaking. However, students *must* refrain from non-class-related computer use, including email, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and the like. I reserve the right to ban individual technological devices if this becomes a problem. No use of cell phones will be permitted during class time; please turn off your ringers and put them out of sight.

WORKSHOPS

Several days on the syllabus have been designated “workshops.” On these days you will bring in four copies of your most recent progress towards your final paper to share with a small group. Attendance is mandatory on workshop days as it is on any other day in which class is in session.

CONFERENCES

In lieu of our scheduled class on March 21, **all students are required to meet with me in a short one-on-one conference at my office at least once during the semester** to discuss the course and your work within it. Please know I am very happy to meet with you individually to discuss either graded work or work-in-progress in excess of this requirement as many times as you like. Simply come to my weekly office hours, or see or email me to set up an appointment.

PRESENTATIONS

The last two weeks of class have been set aside for presentations on your chosen topics for your final paper. This will be an opportunity for you to present your ongoing research to the class, field questions, and receive feedback before final submission.

A detailed description of the expectations for this portion of the course will be circulated in class.

FLEXIBILITY

If it will benefit the class, changes may be made to the above.

WRITING CENTER

Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Center, located in Raynor Library Room 240, at any stage of the writing process. Please visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.marquette.edu/english/writingcenter/> to find out how to schedule an appointment and to access the studio's online resources.

ACCOMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe they will require accommodations in this course should contact me early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met. Per university policy, you are required to provide documentation of your disability to the Office of Disability Services.

If you are unsure of what you need to do to qualify for services, you can begin by visiting the Office of Disability Services in Marquette Hall, Lower Level, Room 05, or by visiting their website at <http://www.marquette.edu/disability-services.index.shtml>.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policy outlined in your undergraduate bulletin. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.** No exceptions or special dispensations will be made.

Full details of Marquette's academic integrity policy are available on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#academichonestypolicy>.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

We all enter this classroom with preexisting political, ethical, philosophical, and intellectual commitments. You are all required to engage the material—but you are absolutely *not* required to agree either with any of the writers we will discuss, or with me, in whole or in part.

RESPECT

This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here.

Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will **severely** negatively impact your class participation grade.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class as they become necessary.

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the listed texts or chapters.

Detailed, day-by-day breakdowns for each of the different modules of the course will be made available as we confirm availability for our various field trips and collaborations with other courses on campus.

GENERAL COURSE PLAN

WEEKS 1-3: INTRODUCTIONS AND CONTROVERSIES

WEEK 3-6: HERITAGE AND MEMORY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

WEEK 7: CASE STUDY: THE NATIONAL PARKS

WEEK 8: *THINGS FALL APART*; IMPERIALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

WEEK 9: LANGUAGE STRUGGLE; *TRANSLATIONS*

WEEK 10: POSTCOLONIALITY AND ECOLOGICAL PRESERVATION

WEEK 12-13: YEAR ZERO, DIGITAL CULTURE, AND THE PROSPECTS FOR A DIGITAL DARK AGE; *DOWN AND OUT IN THE MAGIC KINGDOM*

WEEK 14-15: PRESENTATIONS

SCHEDULE FOR WEEKS 1-4

Monday	January 13	Introduction to the Course
Wednesday	January 15	Canavan, NEH Grant Proposal [D2L] Sen. Jeff Sessions, Letter to Carol M. Watson [Web] Natalia Cecire, "Humanities Scholarship Is Incredibly Relevant, and That Makes People Sad" [Web]
Friday	January 17	David Harvey, "A Brief History of Neoliberalism" [D2L] Niki Seth-Smith, "The Museum of Neoliberalism" [Web]
<i>Monday</i>	<i>January 20</i>	<i>MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY—NO CLASS</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>January 21</i>	<i>LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW</i>
Wednesday	January 22	Jyotsna Kapur, "Capital Limits on Creativity: Neoliberalism and Its Uses of Art" [Web]
Friday	January 24	David Graeber, "The Sadness of Post-Workerism, or, 'Art and Immaterial Labour' Conference: A Sort of Review" [Web]

Monday	January 27	Henry A. Giroux, “Public Intellectuals against the Neoliberal University” [Web] Clay Shirky, “Napster, Udacity, and the Academy” [Web]
Wednesday	January 29	RAYNOR ARCHIVES TOUR AND Q&A—MEET IN RAYNOR LIBRARY 301
Friday	January 31	John Ruskin, “The Lamp of Memory” [D2L] John Ruskin, “The True Ideal” [excerpt] [D2L]
Monday	February 3	CHUDNOW MUSEUM OF YESTERYEAR TOUR AND Q&A—MEET AT CHUDNOW
Wednesday	February 5	Jukka Jokilehto, <i>History of Architectural Conservation</i> [excerpts] [D2L]
Friday	February 7	F.T. Marinetti, Futurist Manifestos [excerpts] [D2L]

And more to come...

ENTRANCE SURVEY

NAME

YEAR

MAJOR

HOMETOWN

FAVORITE PARK, MUSEUM, LIBRARY, OR HISTORIC SITE

What drew you to this course?

Are there any particular topics or incidents of cultural preservation you're hoping we might tackle, outside the categories I've already laid out?

Having had a half hour or so to think over the big research project in the course, do any particular texts, topics, or archives spring to mind that you think you might be interested in writing about?

Do you have a class before this one?

When is your next class after this one?

What is the largest continuous block of time you have, 9 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday?