

**Dr. Buckman, HRS 162: American Space and Identity (sections 01 and 02),** Fall 2009

Area: C4, Discussion

Office: Mendocino 2020/ Office Phone: 278-5335/ I am not on campus MWF

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 10:30-11:00am and 1:15-2pm; Tuesday 4:30-5pm and by appt.

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“We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness” Thomas Jefferson

“Here man is free; as he ought to be; nor is this pleasing equality so transitory as many others are.” Hector St. John de Crevecoeur

“I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him.” Abraham Lincoln

“If the effort to describe the United States as homogeneous was unavailing, our predecessors could and did succeed in defining what they called the American Character. They constructed images of national identity with such concepts as individualism, pragmatism, optimism, ambition, idealism, and progress and attributed them variously to the influence of the frontier, affluence, and a classless and nonhierarchical society. ... As Americans, we celebrated an aggressive individualism, nurtured by political democracy and producing economic prosperity as its much desired offspring. But this interpretation of our past was built on silences...” Alice Kessler-Harris

### **Required Materials:**

#### 1. Texts available at bookstore:

- a. Cresswell, Tim. *Place: A Short Introduction*
- b. Paredes, Americo. *George Washington Gomez*

#### 2. Packet, available at University Copy and Print. Materials from packet also on reserve

#### 3. SacCT materials

#### 4. Materials presented in class

**Available Reserve Materials:** Texts on Reserve (2HR): (alternative to buying course pack and/or textbooks)

#### a. Books:

- i) Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*
- ii) Paredes, Americo. *George Washington Gomez*
- iii) *Urban Latino Cultures/ La vida latina en L.A.*, Eds. Michael Dear, et al.
- iv) Zukin, Sharon. (4) *Whose Culture, Whose City? And After the World Trade Center* (required); *Point of Purchase, Landscapes of Power* (recommended)
- v) Cresswell, Tim. *Place* (if I.m able to get another copy to put on reserve)

vi) Recommended: Simpson, John W. *Visions of Paradise*; Tompkins, Jane. *West of Everything*.

b. Chapters/Articles:

i) Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. Pages 1-67 from *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*

ii) Marback, Richard, Editor. *Cities, Cultures, Conversations* (Jim Burklo and bell hooks articles, pgs. 61-76)

iii) Zukin, Sharon. *The Cultures of Cities*, pgs. 1-46

**Catalog Description:** Examination of the ways in which physical spaces and places within America contribute to the formation of American identities and vice versa. Interdisciplinary and topically organized, analyzes both exterior and interior spaces: city, suburb, regions, body, mind, and the borderlands, to name a few. Also studies the interaction of race, class, gender, and sexuality with space and identity.

**Course Description:** Fundamental to this course is the way in which physical spaces within America contribute to the formation of American identities and vice versa. Both historical and contemporary interactions between Americans and their environment will be examined. Topically, we will be exploring exterior spaces, including those of the city and suburb; interior spaces, including those of the body and mind; as well as those which cross interior/exterior boundaries, such as the borderlands. The ways in which popular culture and race, class, gender, and sexuality impact upon the construction of particular spaces also will be a part of this examination. A variety of fields will be included in our assaying of the territory: cultural geography, landscape studies, gender studies, history, literature, sociology, and art are only some of the fields with which we will connect.

**Course Objectives:** The goals for your learning in this course include:

An understanding of:

- the ways in which multiple disciplines come together to create meaning
- how particular disciplines construct meaning
- the ways in which the construction of space within America constructs us as individuals and vice versa

A demonstration of visual and textual literacy

The ability to:

- compare and contrast the experiences of diverse populations within the United States in relationship to space and place
- The ability to apply the techniques of formal analysis to a variety of texts
- The ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written formats

**Coursework:** Your grade will consist of participation, multiple short essays, a presentation and a long, researched essay. Essays are due *at the beginning of class*; papers turned in after the beginning of class are subject to a 5 point deduction for tardiness. Late papers will be penalized 5 points for every day thereafter and will not be accepted more than one week after they are due. If you have problems completing an assignment, please talk to me BEFORE it is due.

Presentations: You will sign up for one presentation. Details forthcoming.

**Essays: Formatting:** Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and have 1 inch margins. The font and its size should be normal (ex. Times 12). Please staple your essays. Don't bother with plastic or cardboard covers or folders. At the top of the first page, single-spaced, include a descriptive title for your paper in addition to tagging information (your name/the date/essay #). E-mailed essays will not be accepted.

**Research Essay.** The research essay will consist of an analysis of the construction of space in a particular piece of film, music, literature, or other artwork. Use specific evidence from the text with which you are working, including direct quotes or visual references. Demonstrate why these references or quotes support your argument. Do not simply summarize or describe your primary text or your research! Students will present their paper topics to the class in workshop sessions. You will need to use a specified number of sources for this essay. More information will follow.

**Common courtesies:** Please do not come to class late, since it disrupts both the other students and the professor. If you know that you are going to be late or have to leave early, you should inform the instructor prior to class in order to minimize disruption. Due to the recent proliferation of inappropriate use of laptops in the classroom, laptops are not allowed in class without prior approval. All electronics should be turned off. Students using laptops, cell phones, or other electronic equipment in class without prior approval will be asked to leave.

**Academic Integrity:** Please turn in work that is solely your own. Appropriate credit must be given to the work of other authors that is used; this includes the proper use of paraphrasing and quoting as well as citation within and at the end of the paper. If you are unsure about what this means, please come and speak with me. Plagiarism is not an option: it can mean failure of an assignment, failure of a class, and/or expulsion from the university. In this class, it will mean a zero for the assignment as well as a report to the appropriate office. If plagiarism occurs again, you will receive a failing grade for the course. If you are uncertain what plagiarism is, please see me. Additionally, you should examine the following URL:

<http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353>

**Accommodations:** Accommodations will be made for disabilities recognized by the university, provided the student notifies the instructor of all official requirements and provides certification of said disability. Students must also take responsibility for expressing their needs clearly to me as well as for all forms and appointments required.

**Participation:** This class depends upon the full engagement of students with the material and the class itself. I expect students to participate in discussions on a regular and informed basis. Simply being in attendance does not qualify as participating in the class. You can receive a failing participation grade even if you attend every class. Disruptive behavior works against you in your participation grade, and you may be asked to leave the class.

**Grading:** (see above on plagiarism)

*Short Essays (2):* 15 points each; *Regular journal entries:* 15 points total (more instructions forthcoming); *Research Essay (inc. presentation):* 35 points; *Presentation of reading:* 10 points; *Participation (see above):* 10 points

\*Anyone who does not complete the research essay will not pass the course\*

*Due to mandatory faculty furlough days (9 days/semester), this syllabus may be adjusted. According to fair labor practices, I am restricted from doing CSUS-related work on those days. This includes grading, e-mailing and class preparation. Furlough days may also include the cancellation of class meetings.*

**Schedule of Readings** (may change at discretion of instructor):

**Week 1: *Introducing Place*:**

9/1 Intro to course, syllabus, clips

9/3 What does it mean to be *in place*? How does this relate to our identities? Cresswell, ch 1

Purpose: Begin to understand how place functions within our lives. How do we apply this idea to American identity?

**Week 2: *Exploring the Landscape: New England Origins of an 'American character'***

9/8-10: Lecture: the Puritans. Read: John Winthrop and William Bradford. Winthrop: final

section of *A Model of Christian Charity*: <http://www.kosmicki.com/234/cityhill.htm>;

Bradford *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Chapter IX:

<http://www.histarch.uiuc.edu/plymouth/bradford.html#nine>; Cresswell, ch 2; Nathaniel

Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" <http://www.online-literature.com/hawthorne/158/>

Purpose: Begin to develop visual and critical analysis skills.

**Weeks 3-5: *Historical Viewpoints on the Landscape: Native American and Western***

9/15-22 View: *Hopi: Songs of the Fourth World* (on own – available on YouTube. Watch all

parts); read Native American texts on SacCT; read selections from *Wisdom Sits in Places* in

packet; read Momaday, selections from *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

9/24-29 *A Short History of the West*. Read: Turner's Frontier Thesis, chap 1 (SacCT); de

Crevecoeur, Hector St. John. *Letters from an American Farmer*: "What Is An American?"

Letter III"

<http://www.civics-online.org/library/formatted/texts/crevecoeur.html>

\*\*10/1 View video: *The Wilderness and the West*; select images available on

SacCT. (see also <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/NATURE/cap2.html> for more)

(Recommended: Simpson, *Visions of Paradise*, pgs. 1-115; Tompkins, *West of*

*Everything*)

**\*\*Essay 1 due 10/1**

Purpose: How does art and literature reflect the sociopolitical atmosphere of the time in which

they are produced? How is place used to express national and regional identities? How are

Native Americans situated in relation to place? Have Native Americans and Euro-Americans

thought about place differently?

**Weeks 6-8: *Borderland Spaces/ Space as Resistance: The (South)West, Mexican American Identity, and Borderlands***

10/6-8 Paredes, *George Washington Gomez*

10/13-15 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ la Frontera*, chaps. 1, 2, 5

10/20-22 View: Sayles, *Lone Star*; Read essay by Sandoval, Tomas. "The Burden of History

and John Sayles' *Lone Star*" <http://bad.eserver.org/issues/1996/28/sandoval.html>

Purpose: To analyze how Others relate to the margin and the center, using Mexico-US

relationship as example. Can the margin be a space of liberation as well as constriction

or exile? How is place a part of history and South/Western identity?

**Weeks 9-10: *City Spaces*:**

10/27 TBA **Bibliography, outline, and thesis statement due**

10/29-\*\*11/05 Zukin, Sharon. .Whose Culture? Whose City?. *The Cultures of Cities*. Pgs. 1-46 (on reserve); recommended: other Zukin texts

Rushbrook, Denka. .Cities, Queer Space and the Cosmopolitan Tourist. available on Project Muse, LOCUS and SacCT (Project Muse is available through the library.s search engine of databases); Sorkin and Zukin, "Introduction" and Setha Low's "Spaces of Reflection, Recovery, and Resistance" in *After the World Trade Center*, which is on reserve. These are pages vii-xi and 163-171.

**\*\*Essay 2 due 11/5**

Purpose: How do cities sell themselves? How are cities constructed in our imaginary productions?

**Weeks 11-12 (11/10-19): Student Presentations of Research**

**Week 13 (11/24-11/26):** TBA (11/24; possible furlough day) and Thanksgiving (11/26)

**Week 14 (12/1-3):** Suburban and Small Town Spaces: *The Gilmore Girls* and the American Dream

Purpose: Examine how suburbs and small towns function. How do people relate to each other and what are the social, economic, and cultural parameters in and of them? How do master statuses exert influence upon the suburban experience? Do they? How have filmmakers critiqued the suburbs? Can suburban space reflect an American identity?

**Week 15 (12/8-10):** TBA

**Research essay due: 12/15 by noon**