

Dr. Alyson Buckman

HRS 162: American Space and Identity

Spring 2009

Area: C4, Discussion

Office: 2020 Mendocino Hall

Office Phone: 278-5335

Office Hours: TR10:30-11:30am

e-mail: abuckman@saclink.csus.edu

R 4:00-5pm and by appointment

I am not on campus MWF

Required:

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

Reserve materials:

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

a. Books:

- i) Anzaldua, 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:
 - o the ways in which multiple disciplines come together to create meaning
 - o how particular disciplines construct meaning
 - o the ways in which the construction of space within America constructs us as individuals and vice versa
 - o the ways in which the both internal and external spaces are represented
- 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: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and have 1” margins. The font and its size should be normal. 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. Do not simply summarize or describe the piece! Students will present their papers to the class. Demonstrate why these references or quotes support your argument. 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.

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. 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.

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.

Grading:

Short Essays (4) 10 points each

Presentation of reading: 10 points

Research Essay (inc. presentation): 40 points

Participation: 10 points

Anyone who does not complete the research essay and at least 3 short essays will not pass the course

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

Week One: An Introduction to Viewing the Landscape:

1/27 Intro to course, syllabus, clips

1/29 Excerpts from Marback, Richard, *Cities, Cultures, Conversations*: Burklo and hooks (pgs. 61-76, photocopy on reserve); Cresswell, ch 1

Purpose: Begin to understand how place functions within our lives

Week 2: Exploring the Landscape:

2/3-2/5: Jackson, *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*, pgs. 1-39 (photocopy on reserve); Frost, Robert. "Mending Time" (on SacCT); Cresswell, ch 2.

Purpose: Begin to develop visual and critical analysis skills. How do Jackson, hooks, Burklo, and Frost come together in discussing how living spaces, including communities, function?

Weeks 3-5: Historical Viewpoints on the Landscape:

2/10 View: *Hopi: Songs of the Fourth World*; read Native American texts on SacCT; **Short Essay 1 due

2/12 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://spider.georgetowncollege.edu/english/coke/bradford.htm>

2/17-2/19 A Short History of the West. Read: Turner's Frontier Thesis, chap 1 (SacCT)

2/24 **Short Essay 2 due; TBA

2/26 No office hours: view video: *The Wilderness and the West*; select images available on SacCT. Recommended: Simpson, *Visions of Paradise*, pgs. 1-115; Tompkins, *West of Everything* (I will be at a conference this day)

Purpose: 'Reading' visual art. How do visual images of art reflect the sociopolitical atmosphere of the time in which they are produced? How have we seen regional landscapes in the past and present?

Weeks 6-8: City Spaces:

3/3 Zukin, Sharon. "Whose Culture? Whose City?" *The Cultures of Cities*. Pgs. 1-46 (on reserve); recommended: other Zukin texts

3/5 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.

3/10-**3/12 Read: *No Castles Here*, by A.C.E. Bauer; **3/12 Short Essay 3 due**

3/17-3/19 Fernandez and Chornesky, "Bars and Belonging" *Urban Latino Cultures: La Vida Latina En L.A.*, 35-44; Alcaraz, Lalo, "L.A. Cucaracha Urban Sketch Journal." *Urban*

Latino Cultures, 83-90; Gonzalez, Robert Alexander, "Learning from East L.A." *Urban Latino Cultures*, 185-198;

Purpose: what are the patterns of inclusion and exclusion in cities, bars, and art? How do specific cultures produce art and narratives in regard to the space around them? How are cities constructed in our imaginary productions?

Week 9: Suburban and Small Town Spaces

3/24-3/26 *The Gilmore Girls* and the American Dream; **3/24 **Bibliography, outline, and thesis statement due

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?

Week 10: Spring Recess

Weeks 11-12 (4/7-4/16): Student Presentations of Research

Weeks 13-14: Borderland Spaces/ Space as Resistance:

4/21-23 Paredes, *George Washington Gomez*;

4/28-4/30 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ la Frontera*, chaps. 1, 2, 5

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?

Weeks 15-16

5/5-5/14 TBA; **5/7 **Short Essay 4 due**

Research essay due: 5/21 by noon