

CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUES THROUGH CITIES

HONORS 2104

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Course Description

By the year 2050, the United Nations anticipates that 68% of the world population will reside in urban areas. The study of cities, what we often call urbanism, will become a dominant intellectual and political paradigm. Cities themselves are palimpsests—full of surfaces, forms, and peoples who bear the traces of what came before and what it is to come. What we will learn to practice in this cross-cultural Intellectual Traditions course is how to read the cultural, social, and political development of cities and how individuals situate themselves within these overlapping histories. Together we will explore a range of global urban locations—Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Accra, Paris—through cultural documents—poetry, film, a novel, a memoir, and critical essays. We will also apply the interpretive techniques of urban geography to our own relationships to urban environments here in Salt Lake City. Writing in this course will take creative and critical forms: interpretive essays, experiential journaling, and site studies. Our goal is not only to see cities for all their complexity and detail but also to learn new ways to document our experiences as urban dwellers and travelers.

What motivates me as a teacher is finding ways to place your curiosities and interests at the center of what we do. Throughout our time together, I will strive to create spaces and ways for you to be creative, personal, and honest in your writing as well as our conversations. In turn, I ask everyone to come to class ready to build the kinds of respectful, compassionate relationships that will make us a productive classroom community.

Click here to jump ahead to the [Weekly Syllabus](#).

Required Texts

The Beautiful One's Are Not Yet Born, Ayi Kwei Armah [1968] (Heinemann, 1989)
Impossible City, Karen Cheung [2022] (Random House, 2022)

All other readings will be provided as PDFs via Canvas.

Learning Goals

This course addresses the following Essential Learning Outcomes: *Inquiry and Analysis*,

Written Communication, Community Building, and Intercultural Knowledge and Competence.

Inquiry and Analysis: As a student writer, you will explore a broad range of interconnecting issues and concepts while deeply engaging a single topic of your choosing. You'll explore many forms of writing and communication, understanding that as access and exposure to information becomes more and more complex, our methods of discernment and evaluation must become more acute and thorough.

Written Communication: You will build a significant body of rhetorical content concerning a project of your choice resulting in a final project which will broach topics regarding a possible Honors Thesis. We will focus on personal narrative, narrative and rhetorical strategies, cultural competency, as well as the assessment and incorporation of scholarly research. Along these lines, student writers will explore writing as a creative, analytical, and imaginative process.

Community Building: The success of our course depends on the classroom community that we build together. This includes not only listening actively and respectfully to your peers in conversation but also responding with care, detail, and compassion to their written work. Writing is above all a collaborative process and, like academic research, is most effective when it is in conversation with others, past and present.

Intercultural Knowledge and Competence: We will work together to examine our cultural biases and to put our positionality, values, beliefs, and backgrounds in dialogue with the differences we encounter in texts and peers. We will ask questions of things we don't know, listen actively, and engage empathetically with the perspectives of others.

Grades and Grading Scale

The majority of your grade will come from two places: writing assignments and participation. The majority of your grade will come from our major assignments (Narrative Essay (20%), Dialogic Essay (20%), Investigative Essay (30%)). The final grade will include revisions, which give you an opportunity to revisit your work and improve specific aspects based on feedback. Reading responses, discussion, and workshop engagement will count for an additional 20% of your grade. Consistent tardiness or absence will negatively affect your overall grade.

The overall grading scale is as follows:

94-100 A (95)	90-93 A- (91)	87-89 B+ (88)	83-86 B (85)	80-82 B- (81)
77-79 C+ (78)	73-76 C (75)	70-72 C- (71)	67-69 D+ (68)	63-66 D (65)
60-62 D- (61)	00-59 F (55)			

Notes on Content and Accommodation Policy

Our course materials and class discussions will sometimes focus on difficult subjects, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression. It is sometimes the case that the work we read represents views or uses language that is offensive. We will strive to use these moments as opportunities for critical reflection and thinking. In such moments, it is important to respect the range of emotions we might feel in response: anger, fear, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, sadness, shame. We do not use the N word in academic conversations or writing and will not tolerate the use of slurs that marginalize, dehumanize, or harm others.

If our course materials or discussions are especially difficult for you, you have the right to leave the classroom, no questions asked, and to approach me or a trusted member of the university community to discuss your feelings. It is our responsibility as a classroom community to uphold each other's dignity and to bring sensitivity and awareness every day to how our complex personal experiences and backgrounds position us in the classroom. If for whatever reason the content of the course conflicts with a student's deeply held, core beliefs, they should consider dropping the course. Please visit the Administration Policy and Procedures Website (<http://www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/index.html>) and look under Accommodations Policy for complete details.

Students with Disabilities/Nondiscrimination Statement

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Safety

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been

harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

WEEKLY SYLLABUS

Week 1 (Jan 9 to 13th)

Tuesday

Syllabus and Course Agreements

Thursday

Fictional Introductions / Introduce Experiential Journal Project

URBAN GEOGRAPHIES AND THE POSTMODERN CITY

Week 2 (Jan 16 to 20)

Tuesday

Richard Sennett, "Introduction," *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*

Thursday

Richard Sennett, "Movements of the Heart," *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*

Week 3 (Jan 23 to 27)

Tuesday

Jane Jacobs, "Introduction" *The Life and Death of American Cities* (excerpt)

Thursday

Frederick Jameson, *On the Bonaventura Hotel and Postmodern Hyperspace, Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*

Week 4 (Feb 6 to 10)

Tuesday

Watch first segment of Thom Anderson, *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (2003)

Thursday

Scene work with *Los Angeles Plays Itself*

Week 5 (Feb 13 to 17)

Tuesday

First Essay Workshop (City as Spectacle / The Body and the City)

Thursday

First Essay Due

CITIES WITHIN CITIES

Week 6 (Feb 20 to 24)

Tuesday

Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century"

Thursday

Watch clips from Peter Watkins, *La Commune (1871)* (2000)

Week 7 (Feb 27 to Mar 3)

Tuesday

Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune*

Thursday

Selections of Poems by Rimbaud

Week 8

Spring Break

Week 9 (Mar 13 to 17)

Tuesday

Impossible City, Karen Cheung

Thursday

Impossible City, Karen Cheung

Week 9 (Mar 20 to 24)

Tuesday

Impossible City, Karen Cheung

Thursday

Impossible City, Karen Cheung

Week 10 (Mar 27 to 31)

Tuesday

Second Essay Workshop

Thursday

Second Essay Due

COSMOPOLITANISM

Week 11 (April 3 to 7)

Tuesday

Kwame Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*

Thursday

Kwame Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*

Week 12 (April 10 to 14)

Tuesday

Armah, *The Beautiful One's Are Not Yet Born*

Thursday

Armah, *The Beautiful One's Are Not Yet Born*

Week 13 (April 17 to 21)

Tuesday

Armah, *The Beautiful One's Are Not Yet Born*

Thursday

Armah, *The Beautiful One's Are Not Yet Born*

Week 14 (April 24 to 28)

Tuesday

Closing Discussion / **Final Essay Due**