COURSE OVERVIEW

‘Even on a Saturday morning I am a geographer. Geography is everywhere.’ (Denis Cosgrove, 1989: 119)

This course takes a creative and critical approach to the role of geographic, cultural and historical imaginations in shaping landscapes, environments and society. Students will explore several major themes current within the sub-disciplines of historical and cultural geography. In addition, two other key objectives are to introduce students to many of the influential geographical imaginations that continue to light the creative fires in our discipline, and to help students discover their own. Recorded mini-lectures will be offered in relation to a host of invited guests from academic and non-academic communities. Your “presence” is cherished: although we will not be with you in real-time most weeks, we want to check in on your progress and your well-being. Assignments will require students to stretch themselves creatively and intellectually. This is a challenging course and will require a considerable time commitment on your part for reading, making and writing, an essential practice in developing your geographical imagination and key to good historical-cultural geographical analysis.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this class will:

- Understand theories of power, discourse, place, materialism and representation and their relevance to contemporary geographic scholarship;
- Enhance critical thinking, writing, creative and research skills and demonstrate these skills in their class contributions and written submissions;
- Demonstrate familiarity with key issues and debates in contemporary historical and cultural geography by engaging with and citing course readings and other publications in their term paper and other assignments;
- Challenge taken-for-granted understandings of the world and share critiques;
- Create new and potentially more inclusive spaces for geographical imaginations through experimentation and collaboration.

COURSE TOPICS

The course is composed of three overlapping sections: ‘historical geography’, ‘senses and the field’ and ‘cultural geography’. We will spend some time at the beginning of the course becoming familiar with some important theoretical concepts such as ‘geographical imagination’, ‘culture’, ‘nature’, ‘place’, ‘discourse’, ‘power’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘representation’. These theoretical building blocks will be crucial for understanding the material covered in the rest of the course. Next, the course will span a range of topics that contemporary historical and cultural geographers are interested in, such as: sonic and musical geographies; relational ecologies; ‘happy’ cities; decolonial practices; possibilities of friendship and what David Harvey calls ‘spaces of hope.’

SELECTED COURSE TEXTS & READINGS

Cosgrove, Denis. Geographical Imagination and the Authority of Images (Stuttgart, Germany: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006)
Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake, As We Have Always Done. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017)