

HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES 1021E
Inquiry, Interpretation, Rhetoric:
“Perspectives on Waste”
FALL/WINTER 2011-12

Course instructor: Dr. Thomas Barnes, tbarnes@uwo.ca

Class Hours: Mondays 8:30-10:30 and Wednesdays 8:30-9:30 in HC V214

Office Hours:

Monday 10:30-11:30 and Wednesday 9:30-10:30 in office W13, or by appointment.

General Course Description:

The course engages students in exploring a variety of ways in which different disciplines and fields of study understand “waste” (refuse, household garbage, technological junk, industrial by-products, toxic or hazardous wastes, etc.). By examining the topic through a variety of disciplinary lenses, we will form ideas about differences and similarities among academic disciplines and thereby address fundamental concepts of “discipline” and “inter-disciplinarity” as they help us to understand the nature of knowledge and how it is organized.

Learning Objectives:

Students will develop as critical thinkers through reading and analysis of a variety of texts, through framing their own research question(s), and through analysis of arguments in texts. They will develop as creative thinkers through inhabiting multiple perspectives through the variety of texts and developing their lateral thinking capabilities. Understanding of the function of metaphor will be fostered through study of semiotics itself as it bears on waste, through seeing connections among disciplines, and through study of literary and film-narrative texts. Written and oral communication will be practiced through written assignments, tests and exams, and class presentations. By the end of the course, students should be able to practice an interdisciplinary scholarly approach, bringing to bear, and synthesizing, a variety of intellectual approaches to a set issue or phenomenon or work.

Class Methods:

The course will be organized around a general lecture format but will rely heavily upon student participation. As such, classes will consistently feature interpersonal dialogue and peer discussion, and will be premised upon a general atmosphere of interaction between professor and students. The course will also occasionally make use of in-class individual and group activities. To reflect the dialogic nature of our classroom activities, students will be graded on their participation (see METHODS OF EVALUATION below) and are encouraged to contribute often and consistently to the class’s collective interrogations of course topics and readings.

Required Texts:

Rogers, Heather. *Gone Tomorrow: The Hidden Life of Garbage* (available in the bookstore)

Laurence, Margaret. *The Diviners* (available in the bookstore)

Dick, Philip K. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (available in the bookstore)

Course Pack (available at InPrint in UCC)

CLASS SCHEDULE, FALL TERM

WEEK 1: Introductions

Sept. 12 Course Introduction: What is Interdisciplinary Studies?
Sept. 14 Course Introduction: What is Waste?
Strasser, "Toward a History of Trashmaking" (Course Pack)

WEEK 2: Waste and History: How have we dealt with our garbage?

Sept. 19 Rogers, "The Waste Stream" in *Gone Tomorrow*
Screening: Trashopolis, "New York" **Content Quiz #1**
Sept. 21 Melosi, "Third Pollution and Modern Solid-Waste Management" **Content Quiz #2**

WEEK 3: Trash and Psychology: How do we feel about our garbage?

Sept. 26 Scanlan, "Garbage and the Uncanny" (Course Pack) **Content Quiz #3**
Sept. 28 *Screening: Hoarders, "Linda and Steve"*

WEEK 4: Waste and Geography: Where does the garbage go?

Oct. 3 Rogers, "The Sanitary Landfill" in *Gone Tomorrow*
Screening: The Simpsons, "Trash of the Titans" **Content Quiz #4**
Oct. 5 NIMBY **Essay Response #1**

WEEK 5: Synthesizing Approaches

Oct. 10 *No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday*
Oct. 12 Pause and Review – Brining things together

WEEK 6: Garbage and Archaeology: What does trash say about those who produced it?

Oct. 17 Rathje and Murphy, “Yes, Wonderful Things”(Course Pack)

Content Quiz #5

Oct. 19 Rathje and Murphy, “What We Say, What We Do” (Course Pack)

Content Quiz #6

WEEK 7: Garbage and Literary Studies: The Thematic Use of Trash

Oct. 24 Laurence, *The Diviners*

Oct. 26 Laurence, *The Diviners*

WEEK 8: Garbage and Literary Studies: The Thematic Use of Trash

Oct. 31 Laurence, *The Diviners* / Essay Writing Clinic

Nov. 2 Library Tutorial

WEEK 9: Garbage and Literary Studies: The Thematic Use of Trash

Nov. 7 Laurence, *The Diviners*

Nov. 9 Laurence, *The Diviners*

WEEK 10: Environmental Studies and Waste: How does trash interrelate with our environment?

Nov. 14 [Screening: *Garbage!: The Revolution Starts at Home*](#)

Essay Response #2

Nov. 16 Garbage and the Environment

Rogers, “Waste and Environmentalism” in *Gone Tomorrow*,

Content Quiz #7

WEEK 11: Environmental Studies and Waste: How does trash interrelate with our environment?

Nov. 21 Rogers, “Recycling” in *Gone Tomorrow*,

[Screening: *Penn and Teller: Bullshit!*, “Recycling”](#)

Nov. 23 Litter and *Keep America Beautiful*

WEEK 12: Review of First Term and Midterm

Nov. 28 Term recap and review for Midterm

Nov. 30 **Multiple Choice Midterm**

WEEK 13: Term Two Preview

Dec. 5 Looking ahead at term two
Dec. 7 TBA

CLASS SCHEDULE, WINTER TERM

WEEK 1: Garbage and Cultural Studies: Cultures of trash and trash aesthetics

Jan. 9 Trash and culture
Jan. 11 Trash and culture

Research Essay Proposal Due

WEEK 2: Art History: Garbage and/as art?

Jan. 16 [Screening: TBA](#)
Jan. 18 Trash and Art

WEEK 3: Art History: Garbage and/as art?

Jan. 23 [Screening: *Manufactured Landscapes*](#)
Jan. 25 Trash and Art: Is there something beautiful about waste?

WEEK 4: Garbage and Economics: The business of trash

Feb. 30 Waste Management as Big Business
Rogers, “The Corporatization of Garbage” in *Gone Tomorrow*,

Content Quiz #8

Feb. 1 Waste Management as Big Business

WEEK 5: Refuse and Philosophy: Ethics and waste materials

Feb. 6 Hawkins, “An Overflowing Bin” (Course Pack)

Content Quiz #9

Feb. 8 Hawkins, “Empty Bottles” (Course Pack)

Content Quiz #10

WEEK 6: Waste and Globalization: Where does the garbage go?

Feb. 13 [Screening: "Isle of Flowers"](#)
Feb. 15 Waste and Globalization
 [Screening: "E-Waste"](#)

WEEK 7: Waste and Globalization: Where does the garbage go?

Feb. 20 *No Class: Family Day*
Feb. 22 Waste and Globalization

WEEK 8: Student Presentations

Feb. 27 *Student Seminar Presentations*
Feb. 29 *Student Seminar Presentations*

WEEK 9: Junk and Technology: What happens when things break?

Mar. 5 The Disposable Commodity
 Kennedy, "Waste" (Course Pack)

Content Quiz # 11

Mar. 7 Planned Obsolescence
 "Planned Obsolescence: Is it Fair? Yes!" Brooks Stevens (Online)
 "Planned Obsolescence: Is it Fair? No!" Walter Dorwin (Online)

WEEK 10: Techno Junk and the Future: Trash trajectories

Mar. 12 *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
Mar. 14 *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

WEEK 11: Techno Junk and the Future: Trash trajectories

Mar. 19 [Screening: Blade Runner](#)
Mar. 21 *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

WEEK 12: Techno Junk and the Future: Trash trajectories

Mar. 26 [Screening: Wall-E](#)
Mar. 28 Discussion: Wall-E

Research Essay due

WEEK 13: Disposing of the Course: Final thoughts

Apr. 2 Review
Apr. 4 Review

METHODS OF EVALUATION:

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|--------------------------------------------|-----|
| Essay Response #1 | 5% |
| Essay Response #2 | 5% |
| Research Essay Proposal | 5% |
| Research Essay | 15% |
| Content Quizzes (10 x 1/5%) | 5% |
| Presentation (10 minutes plus 5 questions) | 10% |
| Attendance and Participation | 10% |
| Mid-Term Test (Multiple Choice) | 10% |
| Final Exam | 35% |

Additional Policies

Email Correspondence

Please allow for the possibility that I might not respond to your emails immediately; I will try to respond as soon as I can, and at least within 24 hours. Also, while emails are certainly handy for short-answer questions (when something is due, what we are discussing in class this week, etc.), I find it is not conducive to those questions that require more lengthy and conversational answers (whether your thesis statement is appropriate, if I can go over the main points of the discussion we had in class that week, etc.). In these latter cases, I would be more than happy to answer your questions, but I would much rather speak to you in person about these important issues. Please discuss these sorts of matters with me in my office hours (or by setting up a special appointment).

Prerequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Conduct of Students in Classes, Lectures, and Seminars

Membership in the community of Huron University College and the University of Western Ontario implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. The academic and social privileges granted to each student are conditional upon the fulfillment of these responsibilities.

In the classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Students can avoid any unnecessary disruption of the class by arriving in sufficient time to be seated and ready for the start of the class, by remaining silent while the professor is speaking or another student has the floor, and by taking care of personal needs prior to the start of class. If a student is late, or knows that he/she will have to leave class early, be courteous: sit in an aisle seat and enter and leave quietly.

Please see the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities at:

http://www.huronuc.ca/students/student_life/student_policies

Technology

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited to, laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Academic Accommodation for Medical/Non-Medical Grounds

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

[downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading]

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the instructor.

For non-medical grounds or for medical grounds when work represents less than 10% of the overall grade for the course, the student must submit a request to the instructor in writing prior to the due date of an assignment, and immediately in the case of a test. (Or as soon as possible following a medical emergency) Students are protected under the Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy and so written requests need only include a broad and general explanation of the situation, and the approximate length of time required. At the discretion of the instructor, the granting of extensions and re-scheduled tests may require the student to submit supporting either medical or non-medical documentation to the Academic Counsellor, who will then make the determination as to whether accommodation is warranted.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an academic offence and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair or the Dean, as well as the Huron University College Statement on Plagiarism, available at the reference desk in the HUC Library and at <http://www.huronuc.ca/library/Citing/>. In addition, students may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the HUC Library. Information about these resources can be found in LibGuides on the main page: <http://www.huronuc.ca/library>.

Students found guilty of plagiarism will suffer consequences ranging from a grade reduction to failure in the course to expulsion from the university. In addition, a formal letter documenting the offence will be filed in the Dean's Office, and this record of the offence will be retained in the Dean's Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Huron University College.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com. Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Policy on Special Needs

Students who require special accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting_acc

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.

2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Class Cancellations

In the event of a cancellation of class, every effort will be made to post that information on the Huron website. <http://www.huronuc.ca/accessibility> (“Posting of Service Disruptions”)

Accessibility

Huron University College strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place as, and in a similar way to, other customers. We welcome your feedback about accessibility at Huron. Information about how to provide feedback is available at: <http://www.huronuc.ca/accessibility>

Program and Academic Counselling

Interdisciplinary Studies students registered at Huron who require advice about modules and courses in Interdisciplinary Studies should contact Dean Blagrave, mblagrav@huron.uwo.ca. Students should contact **Debbie Chadwick** or **Andrea Legato**, Academic Counsellor on other academic matters. See the Academic Counselling website for information on services offered. http://www.huronuc.ca/students/service_centre/academic_counselling