



ENGL 309G: The Discourse of Dissent

Territorial Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised and given to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Queries: what is the significance of the territorial acknowledgement? Why does it matter where we gather? What does the history of the land on which we meet matter to the land's traditional peoples? Why should it matter to settler Canadians? Having offered a territorial acknowledgement, what are our responsibilities to the land and its traditional peoples?

Course Description

In this course, we will examine together the social, historical, and rhetorical dimensions of collective action. We will study the manufacture of consent and conformity in order to understand why, how, and to what effect dissent is enacted. We will explore the complex relationships between power and domination, coercion and consent, resistance and transformation, as well as the philosophical, social, organizational, and rhetorical features of effective dissent.

Learning Outcomes

- Recognize dissent and distinguish dissent from efforts to conserve and reproduce existing power relations, culture, and/or a particular social order
- Recognize both for the purposes of analysis and practice the rhetorical appeals associated with historical and current dissent movements
- Apply appropriate theoretical, critical, and rhetorical concepts and practices to speaking and writing dissent

Queries: What do you hope to learn in this course – really? What is the nature and extent of your commitment to your own learning and to the learning of your classmates?

Class Location and Time: Monday, Wednesday 10:00-11:20 SJ2 2001

Instructor: Dr. Frankie Condon

Office Location: Hagey Hall 147

Telephone: 416.768.4253 (accepting calls and texts after 8AM and before 7PM Monday through Friday). In case of emergency, text or call anytime

Email: fcondon@uwaterloo.ca

Office Hours: Tuesday from 11AM-12:30PM and Thursday from 2:30PM to 4:00PM. If you are in class during those hours, I can also make myself available to you by appointment. Don't be worried about asking for the time you need: just do it! Contact me via text for a meeting.

QUERIES: Queries: what are your preferred pronouns? By what name would you like me to call you?



<http://www.globalresearch.ca/>

Where all your rights become only an accumulated wrong; where men must beg with bated breath for leave to subsist in their own land, to think their own thoughts, to sing their own songs, to garner the fruit of their own labours - and even while they beg to see these things inexorably withdrawn from them - then surely it is a braver, a saner, and a truer thing to be a rebel in act and deed against such circumstances as this than tamely to accept it as the natural lot of men.

Sir Roger Casement, 29 July, 1916

Course Design

A traditionally delivered course in which a teacher holds forth, telling students what is important, how to understand that importance, what to think, and how to represent that thinking seems absurd given the subject of our study together. Therefore, this course will not be that. Instead, we will study, together, the dimensions of dissent by exploring the ways in which collective action might be conceived, organized, and enacted within and beyond the classroom community.

All of us will learn more and find the course more enjoyable to the extent that each of us participates as fully as possible in daily discussions and activities. I will ask you to contribute to our deliberations by bringing ideas, insights, current events or other materials of interest to class with you. In most cases, I will not assign these acts or signs of engagement and you will need to decide whether you will engage with the course material by doing only what is demanded of you by the course design, or whether you will resist constructions of “student” and “teacher” that such relationships of exchange reproduce.

In other words, the success of any course as a whole or of the learning of individual students is not dependent merely on the labour of the teacher, but also on the interest, the curiosity, the sense of wonder and commitment, and the active engagement of students individually and collectively. I commit to each of you that I will work as hard as I am able to share with you what I know, to provide you with the means and ability to learn more about what you want to know, and to teach you in ways that are principled, humane, and both pedagogically sound and innovative. Each of you will need to decide what you will give and whether or how much you will commit to the creation of a fun and interesting course. You should know as you make these decisions that what you choose to do or to withhold from the class will also affect the quality of learning and enjoyment of your classmates and me (as, indeed, nearly all of our choices impact on those around us).

Here are your choices with regard to established assignments:

- you may complete the assignment as designed to the best of your ability
- you may design a collective action with some or all of your fellow students to change the terms and conditions of the assignment or its outcomes
- you may design an individual act of dissent by producing an alternative piece of work that seems to you to be useful and meaningful (I recommend that you consult with me if pursuing this course of action and commit myself to aiding you to the best of my ability in producing an assignment that serves your needs and interests
- you may refuse to participate in the assignment (note: this is the one course of action to which there may be a penalty attached).

Queries: what questions or concerns arise for you as you consider the course description and design above?

Course Readings

Reflections

Ursula LeGuin, *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*
Deming, Barbara. “On Anger.” <http://peacenews.info/node/7610/anger>
West, Cornel. “Prisoners of Hope.” http://www.alternet.org/story/20982/prisoners_of_hope

On Class/Class Struggle

Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*
Intersections: Race/Class/White Supremacy/Eco-Fascism
Shooter Manifestos: New Zealand, Pittsburgh, El Paso
NYT: The New Nativists: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/14/us/anti-immigration-cordelia-scaife-may.html>

Civil Rights

Martin Luther King: “Letter from the Birmingham Jail.”
Fannie Lou Hamer: “I’m Sick and Tired of /Being Sick and Tired” Speech delivered with Malcolm X and the Williams Institutional CME Church, Harlem, New York, 20 December, 1964.
Malcolm X, *The Ballot or the Bullet*
<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech/mx.html>

Feminisms

Brittney Cooper, *Intersectionality*
Intersections: Feminisms/Race/Language
Gloria Anzúdua: *How to Tame a Wild Tongue*
Cheryl Suzack: *Indigenous Feminisms in Canada*

Indigeneity and Sovereignty

Adam J. Barker: *The Contemporary Reality of Canadian Imperialism*.
Marie Battiste: “You can’t be the doctor if you’re the Disease: Eurocentrism and Indigenous Renaissance.”
CAUT Distinguished Academic Lecture, 26 April, 2013.

Intersections: Indigeneity and Environmentalism

Children of the Poisoned River: <https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/children-of-the-poisoned-river-mercury-poisoning-grassy-narrows-first-nation/>

Assembly of First Nations National Water Declaration



“If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth--certainly the machine will wear out... but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.”

— Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays*

Assignments and Graded Events

1. Discussion Notes: (10 points)

Using the course calendar as your guide, each of you should compose four sets of discussion notes addressing the queries below (also posted in the Notes column of the calendar). Use the course readings and our in-class discussion to help you both interpret the queries and to help you develop your responses to them. *You will receive full marks for participating by drafting notes, however informal, that address the topics of discussion, associated readings, and in-class discussion and uploading all four sets of notes to Dropbox.* Recognition of your work on Discussion notes will also be reflected, albeit less directly, in your participation grade.

- Where do you go when you learn hard truths and oppression and privilege? Upload to Dropbox on or before September 18, 11:59 PM
- What are you afraid of? October 7, 11:59 PM
- What are the sources of your courage to speak up and speak out? October 30, 11:59 PM
- What are the limits to your perspectival horizon and how do you address those limits? November 13, 11:59 PM

2. Teach-In (20 points)

Summary of Requirements

In groups, students will prepare a teach-in for the class. Each group will have three weeks (minimum) to design, develop, and deliver their teach-in.

- Each group will take choose a historical issue and movement from the list below as well as choosing a current social issue and related movement (see list below) that intersects with the first as their teach-in topic
- Each group must meet with Dr. F at least once as they prepare their Teach-in, and should send delegates to Dr. F for guidance, advice, troubleshooting, or other issues at least once (but as many times as needed during the preparation process)*
- Each group must prepare a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) for the group prior to their meeting with Dr. F and must share that analysis with her during their required full-group meeting

- Each group must organize and distribute tasks equitably; each group member is responsible for taking on tasks, meeting timelines, communicating honestly and openly with group members, and treating group members with kindness, compassion, and generosity
- Leadership of the group as a whole or of a small team drawn from the ranks of the group counts as a responsibility but does not absolve leaders from participating in the concrete labour required to design, develop, and deliver the teach-in.
- Each group is responsible for the kindness it shows, the care it takes, and the compassion it enacts among its members
- Each group may begin their research using materials curated for them on the course YouTube channel or on our Learn cite. However, each group is responsible for supplementing that material significantly, drawing on scholarly resources, web-based research, outreach to movement leaders or activist organizations, as well as other means.
- Each group has 30 minutes for their teach-in
- Each teach-in must include four movements (see below). Included somewhere within the four movements, facilitators should include one group activity and one action item for audience-participants
- Presentation modes must resonate with the philosophy, principles, organizing and activist strategy and tactics of the movement about which the group is teaching
- Must be delivered accessibly (including visual aids such as PowerPoint, handouts, and other assists for diverse learners)
- Must include a minimum of 10 minutes for Q&A
- Each group must curate all of their teach-in materials, including notes for talks, slides, handouts, activity sheets, and action items as well as preparatory materials, including organizational notes, sub-committee memberships and tasks, full group and sub-committee timelines, etc. as well as an annotated bibliography of all research materials to hand in on the day of their teach-in
- Each individual group member must prepare a one-page narrative of their work within and contributions to the group that includes a self-assigned grade.
- Absent extraordinary circumstances, no one may award themselves, nor will they be awarded a grade of 100% (30 points) or of 0. Dr. F reserves the right to adjust self-awarded grades to adjust for both the care, kindness, and compassion enacted by the group member toward their peers AND the exchange value of their individual labour in the context of the university and academic endeavor.
- Political or ideological consensus is not required within groups for their Teach-in to be a success. Conflicts should be addressed with intelligence, integrity, and kindness. Such differences and the group's address of them may, indeed, shape and enhance the Teach-in as a whole. Groups requiring assistance to address internal conflict should contact Dr. F immediately (don't wait until the conflict turns to open warfare, backbiting and gossip, power struggles for leadership, of general group dysfunction.

Narrative Description of the Teach-in Project

In groups students will prepare a teach-in for the class to which we may each invite two guests – so this will be public, at least in a limited way.

Each Teach-in will be organized in four “movements”:

a history of the struggle that addresses the key ideas, philosophies, and principles that have historically shaped the struggle, historical events critical to the struggle, historical strategies and tactics of dissent and resistance.

the current state of the movement that addresses how key ideas, philosophies, and principles have changed with changes in historical context, political and ideological adaptations, appropriations, or suppression of dissent, emerging strategic shifts – *and the intersection of historical struggle with current emerging or ongoing struggles.*

future imagining: based on the evidence (which includes historical events, shifting ideological positions, shifts in political power and strategy in response to resistance, this movement should explore the implications of quietude, of social and political inertia, of the silencing of dissent for the future.

action: this movement should address the what-to-do for the Teach-in audience. Action plans need not be focused on solving-the-wicked-problem once and for all, but on concrete actions each of us might take to join our voices with the ongoing struggle that is the group's focus and one or two actions we might take right now to make even a small difference in the cause of social justice. These actions should be specifically directed toward the group's chosen issue.

Groups may take a topic from the following list as the historical ground for their teach-in or choose another so long as that change is approved by Dr. F:

- The labour movement and working class struggle
- The Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, and Black Nationalism
- Indigenous Rights and Sovereignty struggles
- Feminist Movements
- Queer Liberation
- The October Crisis, Quebec Independence, and French Language Rights
- Immigration, Migrant Rights, the United Farm Workers
- Anti-War Movement
- Prison Rights and Prison Abolition

Each group will choose a current issue that intersects with their chosen historical topic. These may include, for example:

Current union or working-class struggles including international trade, tariffs, working class alliances with the 1% and apparent endorsements of white supremacy, anti-immigration, linguistic imperialism, anti-feminisms, etc.

The Black Lives Matter Movement

Indigenous sovereignty and liberation; climate change and environmental abuses including, for example, water pollution on reserves, pipeline struggles; missing and disappeared Indigenous women; overpopulation of Indigenous peoples in Canada's prisons; other matters impeding or giving the lie to state-sponsored Truth and Reconciliation efforts.

Third wave and international feminisms and/or the intersections of 3rd wave feminism with anti-racism, religious freedom, migrant rights, reproductive health, Trans rights, etc.

Trans rights and ongoing Queer liberation movements, anti-racism, emerging understandings of gender identity and identity politics within Queer communities, etc.

Linguistic imperialism within and beyond Canada, Quebec's suppression of religious expression, the rise of anti-immigration and white supremacy movements in Quebec (and beyond).

Immigrant, refugee, and migrant rights in Canada and beyond, migrant worker struggles in Canada (migrant farm workers and others), 21st century anti-immigration and white supremacy movements, etc.

Disability rights and resistance struggles

Ongoing wars and their impacts on civilian populations around the world, current and recent genocides, the emergence of new concentration camps and detention centres around the world as well as in Canada, etc.

Canada's prisons and the imprisonment of children and adolescents, abuses of solitary confinement, prison crowding, prison privatization and its consequences, incarceration and abuse of the mentally ill, incarceration and abuse of women who have or may exercise their reproductive rights, the overpopulation of Canada's prisons with Indigenous men, women, and children and other peoples of colour.

Climate change, environmental racism, pipeline struggles, the Paris Accord and its success or failure.

Groups may propose an alternative corresponding or intersectional topic but these must be discussed with and approved by Dr. F.

3. Individual writing (30 points)

In consultation with Dr. F, each student will compose, revise, and polish a ten to twelve page essay or produce a maker-project that either builds upon the research they have done with and for their group or addresses a distinct issue in which you are particularly interested and invested. Essays will be of a blended genre, including narrative or story-telling, critical theory or philosophy, and historical or communication research. Maker-projects must similarly address these areas but may do so via alternative means and/or by an accompanying author's note that explains the project and its relationship to the dissent movement it addresses as well as to the subject of the course.

Essay projects should use Times Roman, 11-point font, with one inch page margins and 1 1/2 line spacing. Writers may choose among MLA, Chicago Style, or APA for in-text citations and works cited pages.

Maker projects must be approved by Dr. F. They must require equivalent time and effort to the essay and the manner and media of their making must resonate with their topic. Maker projects should be accompanied by an annotated bibliography and an author's note that describes the making of the project, its relationship to the issue and form or enactment of dissent being addressed. The author's note should guide the project's audience in understanding what and how the project comes to possess meaning. This author's note may be combined with the following so long as the above is fully addressed (in which case, the author's note will be longer than one page).

Each student must include a one-page analysis of their work on this final project that includes an exploration of the use value of their work and the learning they have accomplished (or begun) in completing the project and the grade they assign to themselves. Absent extraordinary circumstances no student may award themselves nor will they be awarded a grade of either 100 or 0. Dr. F reserves the right to adjust grades to account for exchange value within the economy of the university and academic endeavor and the quality of effort demonstrated in the project in its final form.

4. Midterm and Final Exams (10 points each)

There will be an alternative midterm and final exam for this course. Both take place during class time and neither requires studying, memorizing, preparing in any way (other than coming to class, participating, and doing the regularly assigned readings when they are assigned). For each exam, students will receive a grade of 100 so long as they show up to class on examination days. Failure to attend on an examination day will result in a grade of 0. Midterms and finals cannot be made up and will be offered during a regularly scheduled class meeting. Just to be clear, these are not your run-of-the-mill, high anxiety, make-you-suffer exams. You do not have to write, memorize, or study beforehand, or undertake any other form of traditional test preparation.

5. Attendance and Participation (20 points)

Attendance and Participation are required elements of this discussion-based course. Further, participation marks will be affected by the quality of contribution to the group project. On the other hand, Dr. F will adjust

participation marks based on individual students' strengths and developmental needs. That is, if, for example, you are rather more introverted and less comfortable speaking during large group discussions, Dr. F will weight your participation in small group discussion or in regular office hour visits with her more highly. If you are rather more extroverted, for example, and tend to speak often and at length in large or small group discussions, Dr. F will adjust your mark positively for the quality of your listening and your purposeful and kind inclusion of your peers. You will help yourself and Dr. F with regard to participation marks by communicating early and often as well as openly and honestly with her about your strengths and needs as a student in a discussion-based course.

Attendance is critical to your success in this course. As a reminder, there will be no make-up days nor make-up work for midterm and final exams absent extraordinary circumstances (these do not include vacations – an issue that has come up in the past. Please plan to remain at school and in class throughout the term). You should communicate with Dr. F BEFORE you miss a class via text message. Two or more absences will result in a lowered attendance mark (absent extraordinary circumstances, which must be communicated with Dr. F for an emergency absence as soon after the event as is possible). *Each of you may have one free mental health day, should you choose or need to use that option for an absence. Please communicate with Dr. F BEFORE you take your mental health day. You may not exercise the mental health day option on any Teach-in day (your group's or anyone else's group) or on the days when the midterm and final exams are scheduled.*

Queries: what questions or concerns arise for you as you consider the course assignments and requirements described above?

Grading

Activity	Use Value	Exchange Value	Other	Final
Midterm Exam			10 points	10
Final Exam			10 points	10
Discussion Notes			10 points	10
Teach-In	20 points	+/- adjustment		20
Final Project	30 points	+/- adjustment		30
Participation and Attendance			20 points	20
FINAL TOTAL				100

*Final grades will be calculated as a percentage of the total possible points.

Course Calendar (Tentative)

DATE	TOPIC	ACTIVITY	ASSIGNMENT	NOTES
SEPT 4	Introductions	Syllabus Overview	Read Ursula LeGuin; Respond to Syllabus queries in writing	Begin to prepare discussion notes addressing the question: where do you go when you learn hard truths and oppression and privilege?
SEPT 9	Reflection: Resistance/suppression of dissent	Discuss LeGuin	Read Deming On Anger	Syllabus queries responses due; Talk from discussion notes
SEPT 11	Reflection: Anger, violence and nonviolence as discourses of dissent	Discuss Deming	Read West	Talk from discussion notes
SEPT 16	Reflection: Dissent and the action of hope	Discuss West		Talk from discussion notes
SEPT 18	Reflection: Critical Self-Reflection and the Practice of Dissent	Discussion: Actionable Feeling and the Importance of Humility	Read Marx	Talk from discussion notes
SEPT 23	Class Struggle	Discuss Marx	Read Manifestos and New Nativists	
SEPT 25	Class Struggle/White Supremacy/Eco-Fascism	Discuss Manifestos and New Nativists	Read King	Prepare discussion notes addressing the question: what are you afraid of?
SEPT 30	Civil Rights and Anti-Racism	Discuss King		Talk from discussion notes
OCT 2	Teach-Ins: Getting organized and getting started	Group Formation and Group Work for Teach-Ins		Talk from discussion notes; Schedule a group meeting with Dr F ASAP
OCT 7	Civil Rights and Anti-Racism	Discuss Hamer and Malcolm X	Read Hamer and Malcolm X	Talk from discussion notes
OCT 9		ALT-MIDTERM		
OCT 14	XXX		REST YOUR BONES	Thanksgiving
OCT 16	XXX	XXX	Work on Teach-ins and Final Projects	Reading Week
OCT 21	XXX	XXX	Work on Teach ins and Final Projects	Dr. F traveling
OCT 23	XXX	XXX	Work on Teach-ins and Final Projects; Read Cooper	Dr. F traveling; Prepare discussion notes addressing the question: What are the sources of your courage to speak up and speak out?
OCT 28	Feminisms	Discuss Cooper	Read Anzuldua	Talk from discussion notes; Consider scheduling an individual meeting with Dr. F to discuss final project
OCT 30	Feminisms/Race/Language	Discuss Anzuldua	Read Suzack	Talk from discussion notes
NOV 4	Feminisms/Indigeneity	Discuss Suzack	Read Barker	Prepare discussion notes addressing the question: what are the limits to your perspectival horizon

				and how do you address those limits?
NOV 6	Indigeneity and Sovereignty	Discuss Barker	Read Battiste	Talk from discussion notes
NOV 11	Indigeneity and Sovereignty	Discuss Battiste	Read Poisoned River and National Water Declaration	Talk from discussion notes
NOV 13	Indigeneity/Sovereignty/Environmental Racism	Discuss Poisoned River and National Water Declaration	Final preparation for Teach-ins	Talk from discussion notes
NOV 18		TEACH IN ONE		Turn in group portfolios
NOV 20		TEACH IN TWO		Turn in group portfolios
NOV 25		TEACH IN THREE		Turn in group portfolios
NOV 27	Dissent at root: gathering courage and building solidarity	“And the world will not end” final discussion of course learning		
DEC 2		ALT-FINAL		LAST DAY OF CLASS
DEC 9				Final Projects due to Dropbox by 11:59 PM or Dr. F’s office by 5:00 PM

University Mandated Course Policies

Attendance: Your presence in this class is required. In order to be excused, every absence must be documented with a doctor’s note (or other appropriate authority). Missing four or more classes will result in a failing grade for the course. If you must miss a class due to illness, you may mitigate the consequences of your absence by emailing me *in advance of the class you will be missing*. A class missed in order to finish an assignment for another class will not be excused.

Academic Integrity: Take the time to familiarize yourself with the summary of Policy #71. In order to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, consult “How to Avoid Plagiarism and Other Written Offences: A Guide for Students and Instructors”. Consult [Academic Integrity at UW](#) for more information. Visit [this link](#) to learn about the University of Waterloo’s expectations and policies regarding Academic Integrity.

Accommodations: The University of Waterloo (claims to have) a long-standing commitment to support the participation and access to university programs, services, and facilities by persons with disabilities. Students who have a permanent disability as well as those with a temporary disability get [AccessAbility Services](#). To register for services, you must provide [documentation from a qualified professional](#) to verify your disability. Please contact them at 519-888-4567 ext. 35082 or drop into Needles Hall 1132 to book an appointment to meet with an advisor to discuss their services and supports. Let’s acknowledge that historically students have sometimes struggled to get the support they need from the services offered by the University. From my perspective, you don’t need any documentation; you need only ask and I will do my best to give you whatever accommodations or additional support you may need in order to thrive in this class.

Grievances: In case that a decision affecting some aspect of a student’s university life has been unfair or unreasonable, they may have grounds for initiating a grievance according to Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: Familiarize yourself with “[academic integrity](#)” to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for your actions. Consult Policy 71 for all categories of offences and types of penalties.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) (other than a petition) or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals)<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Frankie Condon
Fall 2016

For many years, I have been both moved and inspired by a question posed to Mary Rose O'Reilly by one of her professors, Ihab Hassan: "Is it possible to teach English so that people stop killing each other?" (*The Peaceable Classroom* 9). Removed from the social and educational context in which the question was originally posed, however - a widespread, collective recognition of the brutality and senselessness of war during the Vietnam era - the pairing of the teaching of English with peacemaking is more likely to provoke confusion than insight among readers of a statement of teaching philosophy such as this one. To understand whether or how there might be any sort of intersection between the study of English - of rhetoric and writing in particular - and the transformation of human relations requires something more than allowing the query to stand, functionally, as a rhetorical question.

In his book, *The Geometry of Violence*, criminologist Harold Pepinsky, argues that violence plays out along a spectrum of human relations ranging from the least affiliative and most violent to the most affiliative and least violent. Societies and cultures with expansive definitions of affiliation and higher valuations of affinity, care, contingency and mutuality are less likely to be riven by either systemic violence (e.g. political or social violence) or by widespread patterns of individual violence. The study of rhetoric and writing, it seems to me, constitutes one means by which we may examine, engage, and extend the critical, analytical, interpretive, performative and communicative means by which we have historically made and continue to make our relations: preserving and reproducing conditions produced by existing or inherited relations or, alternatively, creatively resisting and shifting or transforming those relations. That the process of insertion into existing social relations and, by extension, into particular perspectival horizons begins at birth and continues throughout our lives is true. It does not necessarily follow, however, that we possess no agency within those relations; we can, in fact, shift, alter or even transform those relations. How we do this work, by what means, within what limits, for what purposes, and to what effect are questions with which I am most concerned both as a scholar and as a teacher.

There are, Linda Alcoff notes, two aspects to what we might understand as social identity: "our socially perceived self within the systems of perception and classification and the networks of community in which we live;" and our *lived subjectivity* or who we understand and experiences ourselves as being (*Visible Identities* 93). Rather than representing these two aspects of social identity in binary terms (exterior and interior or embodied and felt, for example), Alcoff asks us to consider the ways and degrees to which disparate experiences of being a self and of being called to perform *as if* one is a particular sort of self fail to map neatly onto one another. She asks readers to notice and make sense of the discontinuities among and between the range of experiences that constitute our being in and of the world. While we cannot possess objective understanding of our lives as we live them, as Gadamer points out, our situatedness in place, time, and experience do enable ways of knowing. We are capable of what Gadamer terms *effective historical consciousness*: capable, in other words, of "reflective awareness of the horizon of our situation." We are capable of recognizing that horizon as fluid and dynamic rather than static and given, and capable of recognizing that this horizon is not the only determinant of our understanding and our ability to make meaning. (Alcoff 95)

My aim in the classroom is to invite students to notice, wonder at, and engage critically the power not only of language, itself, but of particular rhetorical modes and strategies for communicating (and performing) the known and the production of new knowledge. I challenge students to question and critique representations of social relations as natural and given and to recognize the ways and degrees to which these relations are, in fact, the products of human labour. I want students to recognize the ways in which they are always, already knowledge producers and rhetorical agents in the construction of meaning. I want also to support and sustain students as they recognize the degree to which as they exercise rhetorical agency they are in fact participating in the reproduction or potentially at least the struggle to transform social relations. I want to support and sustain students, providing them with appropriate conceptual and practical scaffolding as they acquire broader and deeper fluencies in the range of analytical, interpretive, performative and communicative modes of engagement or acts that constitute the means by which individual and collective perspectival horizons are recognized and shifted for themselves and others. I hope to teach my students also to recognize the degree to which these modes of engagement are constituted by complex, ongoing processes of affiliation and disaffiliation or the making and unmaking, creating, inhabiting, and destroying or transforming of human relations. In other words, the study of rhetoric is also necessarily the study of how human relations are forged in and through language: shaped, enabled, and constrained through our representations of ourselves, of others, and of that which constitutes knowledge within particular contexts or communities. The study of rhetoric should engage all of us in the study not only of what is said and how, but also toward what ends and for whose benefit. We make and claim our relations as we compose across a wide variety of contexts asserting the legitimacy of our presence as rhetors and knowledge producers within communities to which we do or hope to belong. We may pass on the ideological as well as the intellectual legacies of our forebears, but we may also transform those legacies as we compose. I hope students leave my courses with an expanded sense of their intellectual and rhetorical antecedents as well as with a much greater sense of their own contingency, their interdependence and the mutuality of their needs and interests across disparate

visible and invisible identities and social and lived subjectivities. Furthermore, I hope that students leave my courses with a greatly enlarged sense of their capability and responsibility as scholars, rhetoricians and writers, as citizens of the world, to those who will come after us.

I recognize the political and hence contested nature of the work I aim to do as a teacher. I believe that the purpose of critical theory is not only to explain the world, but also to change it. By extension, I believe that the purpose of writing as an activity central to higher education curricula is not merely to prove that one has learned, but to contribute meaningfully to the conditions in which learning is possible: to participate in the collective creation and sustenance of learningful relations as well as in the making of meaning and the production of new and usable knowledge.

Often, I believe, critical pedagogy is misunderstood and misrepresented as being inherently coercive and critical teachers as being engaged in the political inculcation of their students. These misconstruals are, I believe, an effect of an inadequate understanding of the range of conceptions of change and change-agency that inform the theory and practice of critical pedagogy. While I am not dismissive of the power of the *agon* in the cultivation of rhetorical agency or of oppositional pedagogy (a praxis distinct from the tradition of critical pedagogy) per se, these are not modes or approaches that play a significant role in my own teaching. I tend to see both oppositional pedagogy and the *agon* as being tactically useful on occasion, but more generally ineffective (and often dishonest) in argument, persuasion, as well as in teaching and learning. Neither am I terribly interested in the pedagogical potential of traditional practices of negotiation, which I believe preserve the status quo by, in effect, purchasing or manufacturing consent. Instead, as a teacher I labour to both enact and teach an array of interconnected intellectual and rhetorical processes that, taken together, constitute both a rhetorical appeal and a rhetorical means by which shifts in perspectival horizon and, consequently, in the character and quality of human relations might be initiated.

In brief, these processes might be categorized into four types: those associated with *decentering*; those associated with *nuancing*; those associated with *kairotic engagement*; and those associated with *readiness*. *Decentering* is the ongoing process of listening (recognizing and acknowledging) to the meaning-making practices of others while, simultaneously recognizing and honouring difference by dis-placing one's self (social and lived subjectivities) from the center of meaning. I understand the process of *decentering* as a continuous revisioning of the quality of one's presence with/for and attentiveness to the other. *Nuancing* is the ongoing process of transmemoration and witness: of situating one's own story of being and becoming - of social and lived subjectivity - in relationship to the histories, epistemologies, and rhetorical traditions of others without privileging one's own story or using that story to overwrite, subvert, or appropriate the stories others might tell. *Kairotic engagement* is the ongoing process of recognizing, articulating, revising, and re-articulating the rhetorical exigence that attends analysis, interpretation, critique, creative intervention, and the making of meaning or new knowledge; that is, of continual engagement with the ways and degrees to which problems, contradictions, or questions are amenable to address (or redress) through discourse. *Readiness* is the ongoing process of cultivating and sustaining a mindscape capable of wonderment: capable of being surprised by and interested in the world, in why the world is as it is and how it came to be so, and in the marvellous variety of ways in which the world might be created, inhabited, and represented by others. Here I understand "interest" in the double sense of being both intrigued by others - by what others say and know and do - and being needful of affiliation and of the recognition and care co-created through affiliative relationships with others. Finally, however, none of these processes taken singly or together nor the variety of in-class discussions and activities and writing assignments that I might engage in any given course seem sufficient to me to justify a claim that mine is a critical praxis absent an ongoing, reflective consciousness of the constancy of failure to the endeavours of teaching and learning and a shared commitment to learn from failure. That is, *humility* is central to any meaningful practice of critical pedagogy and integral to *humility* is the recognition that failure is inevitable. I strive for willingness to learn from failure and, when appropriate and ethical, to make pedagogical failures visible to students such that they might engage reflectively and learningfully with them as well.

Frequently, critics of critical pedagogy assert that the greatest risks associated with this approach to teaching are that students will feel pressured to adopt the politics of their teachers in order to succeed in the course or, alternatively, be so alienated by the fact of their political differences with their teacher that learning becomes impossible. My own experience suggests a different kind of risk or challenge altogether. To engage - to really engage - critically in the study of writing as a communicative act requires that we study the epistemological and rhetorical means by which knowledge is produced and disseminated. To engage - to really engage - critically in the study of writing as a communicative act requires that we study public rhetorics that, by design, shape how we think, perform our selves, and act in relation to others. But to engage - to really engage - at all in any of these studies requires both interest and a sense of need for learning. The greatest challenge I face in the classroom is the extent to which students tend to confuse exchange-value and use-value or, more frequently, to believe that the only thing to be gained from any given writing assignment or any writing course is the exchange-value represented by a grade. My challenge is not that students adopt my politics in service of achieving a good grade; they just don't nor do I require or expect them to. My challenge is that some of my students have learned too well the lesson that school is boring; that the subjects about which one might write as well as the activity of writing are boring; that being curious is boring; that the only knowledge worth acquiring

in school are the usable skills that might be associated with workplace competencies and that learning those is boring. Too many of my students have been schooled for years by the ringing of bells that not only tell them it's time to move from one classroom to another, but also to shut off the past moment from the current one--that there are no integral or fruitful intersections, continuities, or intriguing discontinuities between the subjects that they study (Gatto 1-5). The interferences of an audit culture in public education seem to have had the prevailing effect of teaching students that the value of learning and the quality of one's education is measured by the number and range of information bytes emptied of nuance and complexity one might acquire that can be easily and quickly performed and judged.

And so perhaps it is most accurate to say that my greatest challenge as a teacher is to create and sustain conditions in which joy is possible in the classrooms I share with students and to help students recognize the necessity of joy to learning well and deeply. I am speaking less here of fun - though, of course, I think having fun is good - than of the affective dimensions of learning at the conjoinment of interest and pleasure, seriousness and absurdity. These are the intellectual and creative intersections where learners discover in themselves and one another the strange and unfamiliar and find it good; where laughter fractures totalities; where the possibility exists for both gentle and exuberant celebrations of the miracle of our collective presence on this earth, at this place - together at the interstices of learning and knowing, being and becoming, of self and other (Ehrenreich 261). The value of joy to learning is not the degree to which momentary pleasure releases us from labour, from pressure, anxiety, or loss. I do not think of joy as a safety valve, for example (Ehrenreich 257). Rather, I think the value of joy derives from the ways in which the experience of joy releases us from bondage to the expected and the familiar - from rigid adherence to rules and compulsive adherence to social constraints. To experience joy in learning is to experience, even momentarily and provisionally, a release into creative intellectualism - into the as-if, the what-if, and the whys of matters that viewed without joy seem either exceptionally mundane or so permanent, so fixed as to be beyond question. In some sense, I suppose I am suggesting that learning - really learning - constitutes an act of misbehaviour in relation to the familiar and the known and that, similarly, writing well demands a certain mischievousness - the willingness to play the trickster as well as an openness to being tricked and making sense of that. I am interested and, I'll admit, invested as a teacher, a co-learner, and as a writer in the ebullient joy that erupts among students as they learn to collude in the making of mischief as well as in the gentler joy that emerges in moments of recognition and acknowledgement of mutuality, contingency, interdependence, for it is in such moments that I am most convinced that not only are we all learning, but that our lives as learners and as writers are and will be changed for the better by having learned together.

Works Cited

Alcoff, Linda Martin. *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006.

Gatto, John and Thomas Moore. *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling*. New Society Publishers, 2nd edition, 2002.

O'Reilly, Mary Rose. *The Peacable Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1993.

Queries: What is your learning philosophy or the principles by which you claim your own education and act as an agent in your own learning?