



Renison University College
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AFFILIATED WITH THE **UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO**

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Renison University College Territorial Acknowledgement

With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, community building and outreach, and is centralized within the work of our Truth and Reconciliation Working Group and the [University of Waterloo's Office of Indigenous Relations](#).

[Beyond Territorial Acknowledgements](#) by Chelsea Vowel

[An Indigenous View on #BlackLivesMatter](#) by Leanne Simpson

WINTER 2024

Course Code: SDS 441R

Course Title: Popular Culture & Social Change

Class Times/Location:

Wednesdays
2:30PM-5:20PM
REN 2918

Instructor: Dr. Craig Fortier

Office: REN 1612A Department of Social Development Studies

Office Phone: 519-884-4404 Extension 28715

Office Hours: Wednesdays (1:30PM – 2:30PM) or contact instructor to set a mutually agreeable time to meet via Zoom.

Email: craig.fortier@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description

Social change happens on many levels: politically, economically, socially, emotionally, and culturally. This course focuses on the interaction between the radical imagination of movements for social justice and the realm of popular culture. During the term we will explore instances of this interaction to understand how radical movements insert or find themselves in the popular imagination and how popular culture itself influences the radical imagination. By examining popular culture in the radical imagination, we will investigate how radical subcultures enter the mainstream, how social movements resist and push back against the appropriation, corporatization, erasure, and sanitization of their material, social and cultural production, and how individuals involved in mainstream popular culture interact with grassroots political movements.

Investigating text, video, audio, and other mediums of communication, this course seeks to develop student's critical capacity to investigate aspects of popular culture in a social and historical context.

Pedagogy

This course is developed under the premise that **knowledge** is created and generated in multiple ways (i.e. through oral traditions, land-based traditions, lived experiences, spirituality & ceremony, scientific & academic research, etc.) and that we must resist the colonialist limits of Western ontologies that delegitimize other ways of knowing and being. As such, the readings, activities, videos, and assignments that I have curated in this course will draw on these various ways of knowing and learning. Each week will combine a mix of reading, viewing/listening, discussion, case studies, and short answer/self reflection.

Your lived **experience and interactions** with other humans, non-human beings, and the earth are foundational to engaging with the course materials. This engagement could be rooted in the communities in which you have developed relationships (i.e. work, family, social organizations, activist groups, ethnocultural and/or religious communities, recreational/artistic/sporting communities, etc.). It might also develop through active engagement in social movements/groups that you have identified as being of particular interest to you in this course.

I would like to create a space that opens up **discussion** between you and your classmates. This will be a place to grapple with the course materials in a respectful and thoughtful manner – it is not the same as Twitter or the comments on social media – but rather a space for careful, humble, and serious discussion and debate. It should be a place where you are open to being challenged about your politics and positions, but also a space where your critiques should be tempered by your understanding that folks are entering this space with a desire to learn and change. This means that we should attempt to create a space of care, mutual respect, accountability, and trust – this is very difficult to do in any social space.

While this is a space of learning, it is also a space that seeks to **resist** the structures of oppression that permeate our day-to-day interactions. As such, I urge all students to be **self-reflexive** about behaviours or comments that have been identified as patriarchal, misogynist, classist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, et cetera. This self-reflection **applies to me as well**. We are all in a process of learning and unlearning these logics that dominate our

society, so there is no expectation here that anyone is self-actualized and perfect – all I ask is that you are mindful of how what you think, say and/or the way in which you interact with others is circumscribed by these forces.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should:

- A. Have knowledge of the ways in which popular culture and grassroots social movements are interrelated and influence each other.
- B. Be able to produce an original piece of work that is publishable in a peer-reviewed academic journal or blog for upper level undergraduate students.
- C. Have the ability to **synthesize** various forms of popular culture and situate them within a broader structural and intersectional social context in relation to grassroots social movement.
- D. Be able to **mobilize knowledge** through creative workshops and knowledge sharing practices.

Required Texts

- Hartman, Saidiya (2019) *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. New York: Norton.
- B, Daphné (2020) *Made-Up: a true story of beauty culture under late capitalism*. Toronto: Coach House.
- Brown, Adrienne Maree (2017) *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. Oakland: AK Press.
- Jemisin, NK (2015) *The Fifth Season, Broken Earth Trilogy Vol 1*. New York: Orbit Books.

All other readings are either available via the course LEARN page and/or can be accessed online or the University library's e-journal site. I have sought to make the course readings as cheap and as accessible as possible. The success of this class relies on our collective commitment to keeping up with the readings and engaging fully with them in our assignments and discussions

LEARN

Course schedules, assignments, additional readings and announcements are all posted on LEARN. You must become acquainted and proficient in LEARN in order to access some

readings and to submit all of your assignments. LEARN can be accessed at <http://www.learn.uwaterloo.ca> - Click on SDS 441R to access our page.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Evaluation
1	Jan 10	Introduction: The Radical Imagination	Kelley; Brown	
2	Jan 17	We Are Here: Graffiti, Glyphing & The Reclamation of Public Space	Recollet; and Fortier	Practice Space 1: Reading the Street
3	Jan 24	Join Us: The Art of Radical Poster, Media, and Zine Making	Hayes; Barraza	Abstract Due (10%) Jan 23 11:59pm ET Practice Space 2: DIY Zine Making
4	Jan 31	Utopia & Dystopia I: Get Out	Peele; Hartman; Jolly	Practice Space 3: The Get Out Living Syllabus
5	Feb 7	Utopia & Dystopia II: The Fifth Season	Jemisin	Practice Space 4: The Fifth Season D&D Role Play
6	Feb 14	We Gon' See The Future First: Queer Black Futurities	Ocean; Muñoz; Hartman; Brown	Practice Space 5: Afrofuturist Album Listening Session WIP/ETHICS Due (10%) Feb 13 2023 11:59pm ET
	Feb 21	READING WEEK	NO READINGS	NO DEADLINES
7	Feb 28	We Gon' See The Future First II: Animation Breaking Gender Binaries	Zielke; Bradley	Practice Space 6: Breaking the Binary Gender Reveal Party
8	Mar 6	Online to IRL I: Beauty, Influencers, Sexuality, Desire	Daphne B;	Practice Space 7: Hacking Influencer Culture
9	Mar 13	Online to IRL II: Settlers of the Game World	Veracini; Schlag	Practice Space 8: Board Game Hacking
10	Mar 20	Abolitionist Futures – Theory that Shapes Culture	Kaba; Brown	Draft for Peer Review Due March 19th 11:59pm ET Practice Space 9: Mapping the Roots of Resistance
11	Mar 27	Abolitionist Futures – Culture that Shapes Theory	Hartman; Maynard & Simpson	Peer Review (20%) Due – March 26th 11:59pm ET Practice Space 10: Dreaming

				Into Being
12	Apr 3	NO CLASS	NO READINGS	Final Submission Due – Sunday, April 7th 11:59pm ET

Course Requirements and Assessment

The course requires students to regularly attend classes; participate in discussions by sharing ideas, thoughts, and anecdotes; complete classroom activities; read and critically examine the readings and other course materials.

Assignment	Due Date	Value
Popular Culture//Radical Imagination Journal Assignment		60%
Abstract	January 23rd 11:59pm ET	10%
Work-In-Progress Submission or Ethics Protocol	February 13th 11:59pm ET	10%
Rough Work/Draft & Peer Review	March 19th/26th 11:59 pm ET (respectively)	20%
Final Submission	Sunday, April 7th 11:59pm ET	20%
Practice Space¹	See Schedule	30%
Participation	Week 6, 12	10%
Total		100%

Popular Culture//Radical Imagination Undergrad Journal Assignment

Popular Culture//Radical Imagination <https://popcultradimagination.wordpress.com/> is an online-format undergraduate journal developed out of Renison University College’s Social Development Studies program and produced as an archive of senior undergraduate student writing and an online portal for the study of popular culture in the radical imagination. The

¹ The concept of the practice space is borrowed from the Allied Media Conference which has occurred in Detroit, Michigan for over 20 years and is lead primarily by Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour including queer/trans* and gender non-conforming/non-binary folks. For more information: <https://www.alliedmedia.org/amc>

journal is a space for students to contribute essays, poetry, narrative prose, art projects, literature reviews, graphic art, and short stories on the interaction between radical grassroots social movements and mainstream popular culture.

From the worlds of fashion, music, sports, journalism, social media, television, animation, graphic arts, gaming, underground parties, and many other forms of cultural interventions, this journal focuses on the way in which popular culture influences movements for social change and how radical political struggles make their way into mainstream popular culture.

The journal is hosted on a Wordpress site updated by Professor Craig Fortier. At the end of the term you will have the option to opt-in to having your work included in a yearly edition of the online peer-reviewed journal. *You do not have to opt-in to be evaluated and you can withdraw your consent to have your work hosted at any time should you decide in the future that you do not wish to have your work hosted on the journal site.*

This assignment mirrors an actual process of submitting to a progressive and interdisciplinary academic and arts-based journal. Other examples of journals such as this include: *Decolonization: Education, Indigeneity & Society* <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des> and *Abolition Journal* <https://abolitionjournal.org/>

This assignment consists of 4 iterative stages in which you will develop your submission to the journal starting at the abstract stage and ending with the final submission, including a process of peer review.

Abstracts (10%) – max 250 words – Due January 23rd 11:59pm ET

Popular Culture//Radical Imagination is seeking abstracts for our W2023 issue. This is the second issue of the journal and I encourage you to check out the first edition to get a sense of the types of work that you might consider.

This is a multi-format and multi-media journal and your submission can take multiple formats including:

- Long-form research essay (max 2,500 words)
- Graphic art analysis (max 1,500 words + art)
- Poetry/lyrical essay (1-2 poems + max 1,000 word analysis)
- Mini documentary video submission (max 10 minutes)
- Podcast segment (max 10 minutes)
- Narrative essay (max 2,500 words)
- Short Story (max 1,500 words)
- Literature Review (max 2,000 words)
- Other (as agreed upon with the Instructor/Editor)

You can explore examples of the types of submissions that were published in the first two issues of the journal here: ([Vol1](#)) ([Vol 2](#))

Your abstract proposal should be no more than 250 words. The abstract should include your name and the provisional title of the piece you plan to submit. It will describe the main themes

of your piece, the format you plan for it to take, and how you will go about conducting research on your subject matter. It will also explain why this particular topic is relevant to the journal and why you believe it contributes to our collective knowledge on popular culture and the radical imagination.

Note: *Abstracts are not meant to go into significant detail about what you are planning on submitting, but rather give the editors a sense of the major themes, concepts, and methods of your research. They will also give the editor a sense of what the finished product might look like and how your submission will be useful to the readership.*

Work-In-Progress (10%) – Due February 13th 11:59pm ET

Work-In-Progress (10%) / Office of Research Ethics (10%)

The Editor will promptly return all abstract to students who have submitted to the journal, they will use the feedback received to begin work on their submissions. If the Editor believes that your paper will need to undergo research ethics, you will skip this particular step and will be supported in submitting your research for ethics review at the University of Waterloo.

Research Ethics Submission: If the Editor flags your paper as requiring Ethics approval and believes that the work is feasible within the time of the course, then you will forego the above stage and will work with the Editor and other members of the class in your situation to develop and submit an application to the University of Waterloo Office of Research Ethics.

All Other Students: You will submit either a sample of the raw materials and/or brainstormed ideas that you have thus far worked on for your piece or a preliminary draft/skeleton of your work.

In the Work-In-Progress stage students may draft a skeleton and outline of their proposed submission, discuss particular source material for their work (i.e. relevant journal articles, interviews, news articles, pieces of art/music), and further explain how they plan on developing their submission. Students may also begin actually working on their piece and can submit a portion great or small to be assessed in this Work-In-Progress phase.

Here the goal is for students to submit their work in a further developed form in which they can receive guidance and direction of any gaps, problems of scale/scope, issues with their format, etc. This phase of the research requires a minimum of 500 words or evidence of significantly greater development of the project beyond the abstract stage.

Peer Review (20%) – Due March 26th 11:59pm ET

Students will receive a second round of feedback from the Editor of the journal after the Work-In-Progress stage and will then work towards completion of an initial first draft of the submission. This draft will include at least one round of edits by the author themselves.

10% of the grade will be assessed based on the student's prompt submission of their draft on **March 19th by 11:59pm ET** or their communication and negotiation of a satisfactory alternative with the instructor and their partner. The other 10% will be assessed back on the quality of the

feedback in the peer review.

You must submit either a final first draft and/or all of your work-in-progress materials (progressed since last review) by March 19th 11:59pm ET.

Each student will be allocated a peer reviewer from within the class by the Editor.

The Peer Reviewer will engage in a thorough and comprehensive review of the finished piece that will include the following:

Text Submissions

- Use track changes or some other form of online editing software to make suggested edits on spelling, grammar, sentence structure of the piece.
- Leave comments on the edited document with more substantive feedback related to specific areas of the document.
- Respond to the Peer Review questionnaire provided on LEARN

Audio/Video/Graphic Submissions

- Use track changes or some other form of online editing software to make suggested edits on spelling, grammar, sentence structure *if there is any accompanying text with the submission.*
- Respond to the Peer Review questionnaire provided on LEARN

Each student will review the submission of one other student. You will submit the following documents on LEARN:

- A copy of the submission that you peer reviewed
- Your Peer Review Questionnaire

The Editor of the journal will send you the copy of your peer reviewed submission and questionnaire.

Final Submission (20%) – Due April 7th 11:59pm ET

Using the accumulated feedback that you have received you will work towards completing your submission for the end of the term.

At this point you must ensure that the submission conforms to the Journal's style guidelines as found on LEARN and the submission must be within the appropriate length for your submission category stipulated in the guidelines in the abstract.

Practice Space (30%)

The course is set up each week to include a lecture of 1 hours and 20 minutes, a ten minute break, and then a one hour practice space run by a pod formed out of students in the class.

A practice space is a hands-on workshop that explores the theme of each week's course using a prompt (listed below).

A PRACTICE SPACE IS NOT A PRESENTATION. NOT A PRESENTATION. NOT A PRESENTATION.

The development of each practice space is a collective activity and students will self-select into pods of 2 students to participate in this part of the course.

The practice space requires significant planning, experimentation, and research in order to be successfully facilitated. Each pod is required to reach out to me for advice and guidance on how to develop your practice space around the prompt given.

The practice space will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The pod's ability to engage members of the class in an interactive exercise based on the prompt for their particular practice space
- Evidence of the pod's research and knowledge of the topic at hand
- A collective statement of no more than 500 words co-authored by the pod and detailing the various tasks and responsibilities of each member and/or including information on an extenuating circumstance that might have limited a specific pod members engagement in the preparation or performance of the practice space.

Practice Space Theme Prompts

Week 2 – We are Here: Graffiti, Glyphing & the Reclamation of Public Space

Prompt: Reading the Streets: A Photo Exhibition Practice Space

Students in the pod will develop a practice space related to this week's theme by engaging in one of the following activities:

1. Tour around your city and take photos of graffiti, posters, and public art that seems to be speaking to an issue of social justice – take photos to record each

instance

or

2. Search through Instagram for an account that archives political graffiti or forms of radical public art – screen shot (with citation of your Instagram source) pieces that stand out

Remember **the practice space is not a presentation**, but an opening site of engagement. The pod should identify between 3-5 pieces to bring to the practice space. You should then conduct deep research on the meanings/origins of these pieces. Are they connected with a specific movement? What is the meaning of the piece? Can you identify an artist? A history of the origins of the piece? A connection to a particular social movement? During your practice space your pod will develop a creative way in which you can get students in the course to work through these questions with you in a collective way.

You should draw on the readings for the week to help develop your practice space.

So rather than present your findings, you will develop an interactive activity that will help students conduct research to develop findings of their own based on the image prompts that your pod brings to class.

Week 3 – Join Us: The Art of Radical Poster, Media, and Zine Making

Prompt: DIY Zine Making Practice Space

Students in the pod will conduct research on radical zine culture and zine making processes. This could include one or more of the following options.

- a) Search for a digital or attend an in-person zine fair (i.e. Queer Zine Fair, etc), anarchist bookfair, or another print making exhibition.
<https://brokenpencil.com/zine-festivals-and-small-press-fairs/>

or

- b) Borrow and read through zines from my personal zine library.

or

- c) Visit in person or online a zine library (some examples include OCADU Zine Library, Toronto Zine Library, OPIRG Guelph Zine Library, OPIRG Infoshop Zine Library, etc.)

Remember **the practice space is not a presentation**, but an opening site of engagement. The pod should identify various themes, formats, trends, styles, and topics that are used in these zines and then brainstorm a particular topic or theme for the zine that you will help your

classmates create in the zine-making workshop. The pod should bring materials (i.e. magazines/newspapers or other found images, scissors, glue, tape, pens/pencils, etc.) that will help you to facilitate the creation of a collaborative zine amongst your peers in the class.

You should draw on the readings for the week when developing your practice space.

Week 4 – Utopia & Dystopia I: Get Out

Prompt: The Get Out Living Syllabus

Constructing a syllabus is a process in learning. To be able to teach about a topic, you need to develop a close and careful understanding of the subject. Constructing a syllabus is also a process in communicating. For the syllabus to be useful to your audience it has to be able to reach them where they are at and then take them on a journey that sustains their interest while they themselves unearth and explore the topic at hand with more depth than they had previously done.

Your pod will create a “living syllabus” that will engage with some scenes, markers, easter eggs, concepts, that need to be unpacked in the film *Get Out*. You can draw from your research notes while watching the film, from readings, online searches, blogs, etc. and can include interviews with the director, author, actors, artists involved in the process; art and images from the film, etc.

To create the living syllabus you will create an **creative experience** that draws on items, scenes, themes, and/or aesthetics of the film in which students in the class will interact with. You will then help to facilitate a 30 minute conversation with students on **themes of utopia and dystopia in the film**. This discussion can be facilitated in any way the pod chooses, but it should be engaging and the pod should be prepared and knowledgeable about the film.

Remember the **practice space is not a presentation**.

Week 5 – Utopia & Dystopia II: The Fifth Season

Prompt: The Fifth Season D&D Role Play

Your pod has been assigned the role of “dungeon master” for a special role playing event. You are tasked with creating a 30-45 minute role-playing mission featuring characters from NK Jemisin’s the 5th season. You should prepare between 5-8 character cards that will be distributed to student volunteers during the practice session. You will then also create a mission inspired by the book *The Fifth Season* that helps student draw on themes of utopia, dystopia, the Black radical imagination, and any other themes you feel relevant.

During the practice space one of your pod members will act as “dungeon master”/narrator and guide the players through a series of sequences and challenges until they reach the end of the

mission. The other pod member will either take on one of the roles in the cast and/or will help with set-up, props, and the discussion session following the end of the mission.

Remember the **practice space is not a presentation.**

Week 6 – We Gon’ See the Future First: Queer Black Futurists

Prompt: Afrofuturist Listening Party

Your pod has been asked to DJ a special “afrofuturist listening party” where you will draw on an album (or series of albums) from a specific artist and create a sonic experience that helps students reflect on themes of afrofuturism, Black queerness, black or queer futurities, and themes of science-fiction, popular culture, and the embodiment of blackness and/or queerness as a lived experience in social movements.

You may choose from the following artists/albums:

- 1) **Janelle Monáe** – The Archandroid (2010); The Electric Lady (2013); Dirty Computer (2018)
- 2) **Childish Gambino** – Because the Internet (2013); “Awaken My Love!” (2016); 3.15.20 (2020)
- 3) **Blood Orange** – Freetown Sound (2016); Negro Swan (2018); Angel Pulse (2019)
- 4) **Sudan Archives** – Athena (2019); Natural Brown Prom Queen (2022)

The pod should individually and/or collectively listen to the album(s) in full, taking notes on lyrics, key themes, social and political commentary. The pod will then research any album reviews, analysis on blogs and social media, and academic research published on the album. In particular the pod should focus on the concepts of “afrofuturity”, “queerness”, “black liberation”, and their relationship to past and current social movements.

The practice space for this theme is a “listening party” in which the pod members will select 3 or more tracks from the album to help students in the class work through some of the key themes listed above. **Remember the practice space is not a presentation, but an opening site of engagement.** Drawing on the extensive research and listening conducted by the pod, the practice space will help students engage with the music through a critical analytical lens.

Note: Please ensure that you have lyrics available in your practice space for students. You may use official music videos produced by the artist if they are relevant to your presentation.

You should draw on the readings for the week when developing your practice space.

Remember the **practice space is not a presentation.**

Week 7 – We Gon’ See the Future First: Animation Breaking Gender Binaries

Prompt: Breaking Binaries Gender Reveal Party

Your pod will select any animated series of your choosing that actively works to resist/subvert/transform our understanding of gender binaries. Your selections can be, but are not limited to:

- 1) Shera: the Princesses of Power
- 2) Adventure Time
- 3) Ouran High School Host Club

The pod should individually and/or collectively watch between 4-6 episodes of the series in full (you may want to research particular episodes that might engage specifically with gender/sexuality). Take notes on the way gender is constructed and portrayed among various characters in the show. Your pod should research articles, reviews, blog posts, and academic papers on the animated series. The pod will work together to identify specific clips and/or scenes that best exemplify the ways in which various characters in the show perform gender and in particular moments where the character either plays into typical gender roles or strays from them.

Remember the practice space is not a presentation, but an opening site of engagement.

The practice space for this theme is a “breaking the binary gender reveal party” – so you should think of ways to subvert the typical “gender reveal” themes in your decoration and/or props. The pod will lead students in a discussion with regards to how the animated series selected either strengthens or breaks from gender binaries and/or allows us to imagine other ways of being. ***You should draw on the readings for the week when developing your practice space.***

Remember the **practice space is not a presentation.**

Week 8 – Online to IRL I: Beauty, Influencers, Sexuality, Desire

Prompt: Hacking Influencer Culture

Your pod has been tasked with re-imagining the influencer video in ways that both bust the “beauty myths” perpetuated on social media and links to social justice movements promoting sex positive, body liberation, fat liberation, disability justice and/or queer liberation. You may use the form/style of influencer videos in your recreation – but what you produce must be interactive and engage members of the class. There can be a video component, but the practice space should offer opportunities for members of the class to participate in a learning experience.

Remember the practice space is not a presentation, but an opening site of engagement.

This practice space should draw from Daphne B's *Made Up: a true story of beauty culture under late capitalism*. It may also pull inspiration from the comedic work of artist like Bo Burnham or the dystopian sci-fi of shows like Black Mirror.

Week 9 – Online to IRL I: Settlers of the Game World

Prompt: Board Game Hacking

The pod will spend time learning how to play a world building and/or settlement style board game of their choice (either a version of the game owned by one of the pod members or a version provided by the instructor – inquire for details).

Examples of such games include:

1. Catan (formerly Settlers of Catan)
2. Smallworld
3. Risk

Once the pod has an understanding of the purpose of the game and its gameplay, you will research the historical origins of its creation, any reviews or academic articles about the game, and any other relevant information. Drawing on the readings and your notes, your pod will assess how the game promotes or furthers myths around colonization, continues to secure the structure of settler colonialism, and relates to the concept of *terra nullis*. The pod will then brainstorm ways to “hack” the game in a way that seeks to unsettle it. What would this look like? How would you go about playing a game with these unsettling or decolonizing new rules?

Remember the practice space is not a presentation, but an opening site of engagement.

The practice space for this theme will be an exhibition play of the hacked game in class, where the pod will explain to other students (live in-game) what the original rules are and why the hacks that you've tried to institute seek to disrupt the settler colonial logics of the game.

You should draw on the readings for the week when developing your practice space.

Week 10 – Abolitionist Futures – Theory that Shapes Culture

Prompt: Mapping the Roots of Resistance

Your pod is taking a deep dive into either adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy* or the concept of police abolition as explained by Mariame Kaba, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, and Angela Y. Davis. In your practice space, you will engage students in the class in a community mapping exercise using large scale paper (I can access it for you) and markers. Your goal is to develop a strong understanding of how either the concept of “Emergent Strategy” or “Abolition” weaves its way into popular culture. You should study these concepts, the cities where the theorists you've chosen live, contemporary culture in film, sport, music, art, etc. to think of ways that you

might be able to develop your mapping exercise.

Remember the practice space is not a presentation, but an opening site of engagement.

Think closely about how you might visualize and represent the spread of culture in a certain moment, following a specific event, or over a long period of time. How will the class follow along with you? Contribute to that process?

Week 11 – Abolitionist Futures – Culture that Shapes Theory

Prompt: Dreaming Into Being

Your pod will select a specific moment, event, action, artistic piece, sporting event, athlete or artist as the centrepiece of your practice space. Once you've made your selection you will create an interactive intervention that seeks to bring the class **"into the world"** of your selection. How might the piece/person/movement selected change the way we think, behave, engage, or see the world? How might that be represented in the classroom. If the piece/person/movement selected were to be fully transformative what would the world inside the classroom look like? Feel like? Smell like? How would we treat each other? How would it function?

Remember the practice space is not a presentation, but an opening site of engagement.

This practice space challenges you to delve deep into the radical imagination and open a crack in history within the classroom where dreams come into being.

Participation (5% each for the first and second half of the course = 10%)

The course will involve discussions, group work, individual work, activities, and lectures. I believe in interactive teaching and that means that I expect each student to be prepared for the class, but also for us to work collaboratively as a classroom to support each other's learning. Not in competition with each other, but as a team. As such we help each other keep up with the readings and engaging in respectful discussion in the class – while actively listening to their peers.

Participation includes both listening and speaking. Students will receive a grade for class participation for comments that reflect careful listening to and consideration of others' points of view, that are thoughtful and in-depth, that demonstrate a willingness and ability to rethink one's own ideas, that are pertinent to the course material and issues being discussed, and that reflect critical thinking and humility.

Active listening is a key component of participation that often goes unrecognized. It means that you must not only contribute to the discussion but know when it is appropriate for you to listen, to hear someone else out, and recognize who is speaking/who is not speaking and why. As the

instructor, I hope to help the class to develop strategies to become better listeners and I expect that you hold me accountable to this principle as well.

Participation involves collectively creating a supportive learning environment. A supportive learning environment requires all of us to act on an awareness of our responsibilities to others in the class (particularly related to group and team work), our social location, and of the dynamics of group discussion (i.e., only one person speaks at a time, interrupting another speaker most often makes respectful discussion difficult, silence and reflection are necessary parts of learning and as important as speaking, all students should have somewhat equal “air time,” students have different styles of communication, etc.).

You will be evaluated at the end of the first half of the course (Week 6) and in the final week of the course (Week 12).

Course Readings Schedule

Week 1 – Jan 10 - Introduction: Popular Culture ↔ Radical Imagination

The first week covers the nuts and bolts of the course, assignments, grading, course policies, expectations. Then we will discuss the overall concept for the course. How does popular culture shift and change the way in which we imagine radical futures? How do radical social spaces work themselves into mainstream popular culture? How does popular culture shape the emergent strategy of social movements?

Readings:

Kelley, Robin D.G. (2002). “When History Sleeps: A Beginning”, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (pp.1-12). Boston: Beacon Press. **PDF on LEARN.**

Brown, Adrienne Marie. (2017). “Introduction”, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, (pp.1-39). Oakland: AK Press. **REQUIRED TEXT.**

Week 2 – Jan 17 - We Are Here: Graffiti, Glyphing & The Reclamation of Public Space

This second week focuses on street art as a means of reclaiming or renaming public space. It focuses most clearly on the emergence of graffiti culture in the US and its political purposes in various places throughout the world. It then moves towards the study of Glyphing/(re) naming that emerges as radical political projects by Indigenous artists/land defenders/etc.

Readings:

Recollet, Karyn (2015). Glyphing decolonial love through urban flash mobbing and *Walking with our Sisters*. *Curriculum Inquiry* 45(1):129-145. **PDF on LEARN.**

Fortier, Craig (2022). The Humber is a Haunting: Settler Deathscapes, Indigenous Spectres, and the Memorialisation of a Canadian Heritage River. *Antipode* 54(1): 259-283. **PDF on LEARN.**

Week 3 – Jan 24 - Join Us: The Art of Radical Poster, Media, and Zine Making

This third week focuses on tactile media production (i.e. zines, posters, graphic novels, art) and their use as interventions in radical social spaces. Drawing on the work of notable artists like Emory Douglas, Dara Greenwald of the Just Seeds Collective, Joe Sacco, Jillian & Mariko Tamaki and thousands of other poster/zine/and art makers we investigate how social movements share imagery, techniques, strategies of distribution, and political aspirations across time and space.

Readings:

Hayes, Ryan (2015). Dynamic Collectivity: Ryan Hayes traces the history of Toronto's Punchclock Printing Collective. *Signal: A Journal of International Political Graphics & Culture* 4: (142-171). **PDF on LEARN.**

Barraza, Jesus (2018). Signs of Solidarity: The Work of Dignidad Rebelde. *ASAP/Journal* 3(2): 208-216. **PDF on LEARN.**

Week 4 – Jan 31 – Utopias & Dystopias I: Get Out

The fourth week explores concepts of utopia and dystopia within the Black radical imagination. Students will be assigned to watch the film *Get Out* prior to class/in conjunction with the lecture materials. The core focus here is recognition that our current historical context is a form of dystopian world for people who were formerly enslaved and now live/survive in a society that is anti-Black and seeks the death, disappearance, and suffering of Black people through structural racism, carcerality, appropriation.

It will also begin a conversation that will continue into the following week showing how Black joy is an audacious resistance to these conditions – and the organization of Black pleasure and joy is itself a form of enacting utopianism through the cracks in history.

Readings & Screenings

Peele, Jordan (2017). *Get Out*. United States: Universal Pictures. **Currently available on Netflix, UW Library (via WLU Library) and for rent via YouTube.**

Hartman, Saidiya (2019). "The Terrible Beauty of the Slum," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, 3-10. New York: Norton. **Required Text.**

Jolly, Jallicia (2016). The Audacity of Black Pleasure. *Abolition: A Journal of Insurgent Politics Blog*, August 22, 2016. **Available via Hyperlink on LEARN.**

Week 5 – Feb 7 – Utopias & Dystopias 2: The Fifth Season

This fifth week further develops the concepts of utopia/dystopia in the Black radical imagination. This week we are introduced to the concept of afrofuturism as a political concept that drives Black radical projects. Engaging with real-time social movements (past and present) we can see the foundations of the utopian projects of afro-futurism in organizing but also in literary theory. This week we focus on the work NK Jemisin and her Broken Earth Trilogy. Using the book "the Fifth Season" we begin to unpack the way Jemisin creates both a dystopian worldscape and afrofuturist possibilities within The Fifth Season.

Readings:

Jemisin, NK (2015). *The Fifth Season (The Broken Earth Trilogy #1)*. London: Orbit. **Required Text.**

Week 6 – Feb 14 - We Gon' See The Future First: Queer Black Futurities

This sixth week builds on the analysis of Black queer futurity by analyzing the ways in which the music industry has worked to profit off of Black people's talent and creativity. Focusing on Frank Ocean's work to free himself of this exploitative relationship we dig deeper into the narrative and political meaning of his seminal album *Blonde*. This work is historicized in relation to Black queer struggles for freedom and self-sufficiency through Hartman's analysis of Harlem chorus dancers in the 1920s.

Readings & Listenings:

Ocean, Frank (2016). *Blonde*. United States: Self-Released.

Muñoz, José Esteban (2009). *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, "Introduction" (pp. 1-18). **PDF on LEARN.**

Hartman, Saidiya (2019). "The Beauty of the Chorus," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, 297-343. New York: Norton. **Required Text.**

Brown, Adrienne Maree (2017). *Emergent Strategy*, “Elements of Emergent Strategy” (pp. 43-150). **Required Text.**

OFF WEEK – Feb 21 - REST AS RADICAL PRACTICE

(No Readings)

Week 7 – Feb 28 – We Gon’ See the Future First II: Animation Breaking Gender Binaries

This seventh week focuses on the ways in which gender is conceived, performed and understood within animated series and the relationship between radical assertions of non-binary gender identities and contemporary social movements. Using the animated series *Steven Universe*, created by Rebecca Sugar, as a case study, we explore the interconnection between queer futurities, radical trans* movements, and the gender non-binary characters of this animated series.

Bradley, Mads (2018). Living in the Liminal: Representation of Transgender and Nonbinary Identity in *Steven Universe*. Unpublished Honors’ Paper, Ursinus College Department of Media and Communication Studies, April 22, 2018. **PDF on LEARN.**

Zielke, Julia (2021). A queer space rock of color punches out a racist pig: Revising the Paradox of Fiction and Reshaping Narrative Empathy and Activism Through the Case of Children’s TV Show *Steven Universe*. *Intersect* 15(1): 1-17. **PDF on LEARN.**

Week 8 – Mar 6 - Online to IRL I: Beauty, Influencers, Sexuality, Desire

This eighth week focuses on the ways in which we come to understand beauty, sexuality, and desire through the lens of online influencers. Drawing on the book *Made Up* by Daphne B., Bo Burnham’s *Inside*, and the work of radical influencers like Mimi Zhu we further explore the pitfalls, potentials, and possibilities of online culture.

B. Daphné (2021). *Made-Up: a true story of beauty culture under late capitalism*. Toronto: Coach House Press. **Required Text.**

Week 9 – Mar 13 - Online to IRL II: Settlers of the Game World

This ninth week focuses on the game world (both board games and video games) to explore the ways that settler colonialism and white supremacy underlie the themes of some of the most dominant games of our time. We think about why that is and explore various alternatives or

hacks to this game format, including the collaborative effort to create the video game *Never Alone* and the board game *Bloc-to-Bloc*.

Veracini, Lorenzo (2013). *Settlers of Catan*. *Settler Colonial Studies* 3(1): 131-133.

Schlag, Juliane (2017). A Walkthrough in Virtual Historical Trauma: Analysis Postcolonial Trauma in the context focused Indi Game *Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna)*. *British Association of American Studies* – Honourable Mention Award Essay, 1-36.

Week 10 – Mar 20 - Abolitionist Futures – Theory that Shapes Culture

In this tenth week of our course – we dig deeper into the way that radical theory that emerges from social justice movements seeps into popular culture. Drawing on the work of Mariame Kaba, Ruth Wilson Gilmore and adrienne maree brown we explore the interesections between grassroots movements, radical theory, pop culture, and political practice.

Kaba, Mariame (2020). Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police. [New York Times, June 12, 2020. Link on LEARN.](#)

Brown, Adrienne Maree (2017). “Elements of Emergent Strategy” in *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, (pp. 43-165). Oakland: AK Press. **Required Text.**

Week 11 – Mar 27 - Abolitionist Futures – Culture that Shapes Theory

In this eleventh and final week of the course we will flip the analysis and dig deeper into how popular culture opens the possibilities for new ways of thinking about revolutionary struggle. How does our experience with art, online spaces, sports, community, and culture shape the way we come to think about, practice, and transform political struggle?

Hartman, Saidiya (2019). “The Anarchy of Colored Girls Assembled in a Riotous Manner” *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*, (pp. 229-256). New York: Norton. **Required Text.**

Maynard, Robyn and Leanne Betasomasake Simpson (2022). “One Hundred Forms of Homespace.” *Rehearsals for Living*, (pp. 149-199). **PDF on LEARN.**

Week 12 – Apr 3 – NO CLASS

No Reading.

Rejecting Late Marks as a Good Education Tool

We live in a world ruled by capitalist logics. This course rejects the role of academia in creating a docile and subservient working class. That doesn't mean that we are creating a system free of responsibilities, instead, I'm asking you to be both relational and accountable to me with regards to your educational needs and capacities. I will in turn work to be relational and accountable to you in terms of getting your grades back on time, responding to emails, and asking for more time if I need it too!

We've been living through heavy times. So many of us are going to school and juggling full-time work, childcare, parent care, and various mental and physical health issues. We've been struggling to make time for joy and social events, for organizing in community, and taking time for rest – those are all important parts of our lives and we can't relinquish them because we are in school.

I don't believe lateness means a lack of effort, laziness, or inability to manage one's time properly – those are myths perpetrated to create the uber productive pressure we all suffer from. I tend to believe that the best learning outcomes are ones where students feel supported and have a structure and relationship with the course and instructor that is healthy and accountable. I have created deadlines as a means of facilitating your work over the term, but I can adjust them for folks within reason – to better facilitate your learning. For that reason, I ask that you communicate your needs with me, and I'll try to be open and up front about my needs/capacities with you and the class in general. We'll weave through this together.

Late Policies (with communication):

- If you require more time on an assignment, **please reach out to me before the deadline** and we'll negotiate an extension that works for both you and the teaching team.
- If you are feeling overwhelmed by the workload in this course, **please reach out to me** and we'll try to negotiate something that is more manageable for you and ensures that you complete critical parts of the course.
- **I do not require doctors' notes (and also believe they are a form of disciplining the workforce).**

- I also **don't need you to disclose the reasons** you need extra time and/or support – but I'm happy to listen if it's helpful to you. Sometimes it's just good to express what's happening in your life and I understand that.
- Please contact me **before the deadline** to arrange alternatives to the syllabus!

Late Policies (without communication):

To try to maintain a culture of respect and relationality, if I don't hear from you before an assignment deadline and/or after I've reached out to you with a check-in email, we will follow the late assignment policies suggested by the university:

In this case late assignments will be accepted up to a week beyond the deadline at a penalty of 2% per day. After the fifth day late assignments will not be accepted for any reason except those outlined in the UW calendar (e.g. medical or family emergencies, or some other such event) and will receive a grade of 0. If an extension is granted, students are expected to submit their assignment at the agreed upon time and date, with the appropriate documentation. Please review the UW policy regarding accommodation for illness for unforeseen circumstances.

http://www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/students/accom_illness.html

Electronic Device Policy

Electronic devices are permitted in class. Please be respectful when using them. If you are planning on using your device for non-class related activities, please ask the permission of the students seated within range of your device. Please turn off all sounds and notifications when you enter the classroom and be mindful of how your use of electronic devices changes the learning environment. If someone requests that you refrain from using your device, please turn it off or continue outside of the classroom.

Attendance Policy

I seek to develop a culture of respect and accountability in the classroom. To do so I will maintain respect for you as individuals and as a class – to understand that you all live in differing life circumstances and that we participate in this class in a collective fashion. I expect each student to come to class with the same respect for other students and for me. This includes being accountable in your attendance, participation, and punctuality. This does not mean you can't be late or leave early, but you should negotiate this in a respectful way with me or other students as needed.

Attendance is not mandatory, but your participation in the course will be based in part on the regularity and consistency of your attendance. You are all free to make the choices that best suit your lived realities, however, chronic and unaccountable absences from class may have a deleterious effect on your grade.

Students are expected to prepare for class by reading the required materials and reflecting on this material in relation to their own experiences. Participation in all class activities is also important. In class, students are expected to contribute to group learning by being present and engaged in the discussion and by sharing their ideas, reflections, questions, and experiences in a manner that is respectful of others.

Mandatory University Policies

Policy on Plagiarism

“Policy 71’s glossary defines plagiarism, in part, as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others (whether attributed or anonymous) as one’s own in any work submitted whether or not for grading purposes”...The Vice-President Academic and Dean has the authority to assess instances of plagiarism and the resultant penalties that are raised by an instructor. An instructor can propose a grade penalty to the Vice-President Academic and Dean, who will decide whether to accept the penalty or initiate a formal inquiry.” For additional information on how plagiarism is dealt with at Renison, review the policy from where the above text is copied: [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). Students should also be aware that copyright laws in Canada prohibit reproducing more than 10% of any work without permission from its author, publisher, or other copyright holder. Waterloo’s policy on Fair Dealing is available at uwaterloo.ca/copyright-guidelines/fair-dealing-advisory. Violation of Canada’s Copyright Act is a punishable academic offence under Policy 71 – Student Discipline.

Communication Policy

Email, using the uWaterloo provided email address, is the approved method of communication for Renison. The Office 365 email that you use to login using your WatIAM login and password is secure and confidential. Take caution when forwarding your WatIAM email to an external email service as confidential information forwarded to a third-party provider could be a data security breach and violation of FIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) under which all students, staff, and faculty are bound by law.

Final Examination Policy

For **Winter 2023**, the established examination period is **April 13-28**. The schedule is available now. Students should be aware that student travel plans are not acceptable grounds for granting an alternative final examination time. See the [Final Examination Schedule at uwaterloo.ca/registrar/final-examinations](#)

Accommodation for Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances

The instructor follows the practices of the University of Waterloo in accommodating students who have documented reasons for missing quizzes or exams. See www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/students/accom_illness.html

Academic Integrity, Grievance, Discipline, Appeals and Note for Students with Disabilities

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage at uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity and the Arts Academic Integrity webpage at uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/ethical-behaviour for more information.

Renison University College is committed to the view that when a problem or disagreement arises between a faculty member and a student every effort should be made to resolve the problem through mutual and respectful negotiation. Most issues are resolved by a student/faculty meeting to discuss differences of opinion. It is only after this stage, when a common understanding or agreement is not obtained that further actions listed below could be taken.

Discipline: Every student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their own actions. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity website at uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration, should seek guidance from the course professor or academic advisor. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties are imposed under the University of Waterloo Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the Department’s administrative assistant, or Academic Advisor, who will provide further assistance.

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 they have a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): The website can be found at uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

[AccessAbility Services](#) is located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, and collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Students are encouraged to register with AccessAbility Services (AAS) at the start of each term if they require accommodations due to a disability. However, some students not connected to AAS may require accommodations later in the term. In that case, you should immediately consult with your instructor and/or your Academic Advisor.

Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor, which can include:

- lecture handouts and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slides)
- lecture content, both spoken and written (and any audio or video recording thereof)
- questions from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams)
- work protected by copyright (i.e., any work authored by the instructor)

Making available the intellectual property of instructors without their express written consent (e.g., uploading lecture notes or assignments to an online repository) is considered theft of intellectual property and subject to disciplinary sanctions as described in Policy 71 – Student Discipline. Students who become aware of the availability of what may be their instructor’s intellectual property in online repositories are encouraged to alert the instructor.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4096
- MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- Health Services – Student Medical Clinic: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off Campus, 24/7

- Good2Talk: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Empower Me: Confidential, multilingual, culturally sensitive, faith inclusive mental health and wellness service.
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 844-437-3247
- Here 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- OK2BME: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning teens in Waterloo. Email: ok2bme@kwcounselling.com Phone: 519-884-0000

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

A Respectful Living and Learning Environment for All

Everyone living, learning, and working at Renison University College is expected to contribute to creating a respectful environment free from harassment and discrimination.

Harassment is unwanted attention in the form of disrespectful comments, unwanted text messages or images, degrading jokes, rude gestures, unwanted touching, or other behaviours meant to intimidate.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, discrimination means unequal or different treatment causing harm, whether intentional or not, because of race, disability, citizenship, ethnic origin, colour, age, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, or other personal characteristic.

If you feel that you are experiencing the above from any member of the Renison community (students, staff, or faculty), you may contact Melissa Knox, Renison’s external anti-harassment and anti-discrimination officer, by email (mnknox@uwaterloo.ca) or by phone or text (226-753-5669). Melissa is an employment and human rights lawyer and part-time Assistant Crown Attorney for the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. Melissa is experienced in case management, discipline and complaints processes, and works with organizations across

Canada to foster safe, respectful, and inclusive work and learning environments through policy development, educational workshops, conflict mediation and dispute resolution, and organizational culture audits.

For additional information see Renison's Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse policy.