

Schedule & Location

Wednesdays, 9am-11:50am, SN-2000

Instructor

Dr. Josh Lepawsky, email: D2L, phone: (709) 864-3098

Office: AA-5012

Office hours: Wednesdays 1-3pm or by appointment.

Course Description

Discard Studies covers the cultural, economic, and resource aspects of waste, pollution, and externalities. Topics include, but are not limited to, social justice, colonialism, toxicity, scale, spatialities and temporalities, economic development, and infrastructures as they relate to systems of waste. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are emphasized.

Evaluation

Daily CREW Write-Up	Each day	40%
Film Review	5 Feb	15%
Culture of Flushing	1 April	45%

Course Outline

Week	Theme: Resources
1 Resources, wastes, and discards	<p>Bridge, G. (2009). Resource. In D. Gregory, <i>The dictionary of human geography</i> (5th ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers. [online via MUN Libraries]</p> <p>99 Percent Invisible. "Reversal of Fortune." http://99percentinvisible.org/episode/episode-86-reversal-of-fortune/</p> <p>Keeling, Arn. (2005). Urban Waste Sinks as a Natural Resource: The case of the Fraser River. <i>Urban History Review/Revue D'histoire Urbaine</i>, 34(1), 58–70.</p>
2 Resources as valuation regimes	<p>RadioLab. Poop Train. Accessed July 29, 2014. http://www.radiolab.org/story/poop-train/?utm_source=sharedUrl&utm_media=metatag&utm_campaign=sharedUrl</p> <p>Gregson, Nicky and Mike Crang. (2015). "From Waste to Resource: The Trade in Wastes and Global Recycling Economies." <i>Annual Review of Environment and Resources</i>. Vol.40, p.151-176</p> <p>99 Percent Invisible. "National Sword" https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/national-sword/</p>
3 Valuation	Altman, R. (2016). The Toxic-Waste Drum Is Everywhere . <i>The Atlantic</i> .

regimes need infrastructure	<p>Kallianos, Y. (2018). Infrastructural disorder: The politics of disruption, contingency, and normalcy in waste infrastructures in Athens. <i>Environment and Planning D: Society and Space</i>. Vol.36(4), pp.758-775</p> <p>Liboiron, M. Against awareness, for scale: garbage is infrastructure, not behaviour. <i>Discard Studies</i>. https://discardstudies.com/2014/01/23/against-awareness-for-scale-garbage-is-infrastructure-not-behavior/</p>
4 Contesting waste as resource for colonialism & imperialism	<p>Liboiron, Max. (2018). How Plastic is a function of colonialism. <i>Teen Vogue</i>. https://www.teenvogue.com/story/how-plastic-is-a-function-of-colonialism</p> <p>Stemming the Tide (Foreword and Executive Summary, p. 3-10) https://oceanconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/full-report-stemming-the-tide.pdf</p> <p>Technical Critique of Stemming the Tide: https://www.no-burn.org/wp-content/uploads/Technical_critique_Stemming_the_Tide_report.pdf</p> <p>Open Letter to Ocean Conservancy regarding the Report “Stemming the Tide” https://www.no-burn.org/wp-content/uploads/Open_Letter_Stemming_the_Tide_Report_2_Oct_15.pdf</p> <p>Murphy, Michelle. (2017). "Alterlife and Decolonial Chemical Relations." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 32, no. 4: 494–503. https://doi.org/10.14506/ca32.4.02</p>
Week	Theme: Economy
5 Waste, value, and externalities	<p>Porter, Richard C. (2002). <i>The Economics of Waste</i>. Washington, DC: Resources for the Future. Chapter 1: Economics and Waste: An Introduction, p. 1-19 [online via MUN Libraries]</p> <p>Ackerman, Frank. (1997). Why Do We Recycle? Markets, Values, and Public Policy. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. Introduction (p. 1-6) and Ch. 3, 'More than the Market' (p. 45-60) [online via MUN Libraries]</p> <p>Liboiron, Max. (2013). "Modern Waste as Strategy." <i>Lo Squaderno: Explorations in Space and Society</i>, no. 29 (2013): 9–12 https://maxliboiron.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/liboiron-modern-waste-as-strategy-extracted.pdf</p>
6 Waste, value, and labour	<p>Gregson, Nicky, Mike Crang, Julie Botticello, Melania Calestani, and Anna Krzywoszynska. (2014). "Doing the 'Dirty Work' of the Green Economy: Resource Recovery and Migrant Labour in the EU." <i>European Urban and Regional Studies</i>. 23:4, 541-555.</p>

	<p>Rosengren, Cole. (2019). "High risk, hidden workforce." <i>Waste Dive</i>. https://www.wastedive.com/news/recycling-labor-mrf-high-risk-hidden-workforce/568550/</p> <p>Neilson, Susan. (2019). "On the line in California." <i>Waste Dive</i>. https://www.wastedive.com/news/recycling-labor-mrf-on-the-line-in-california/568552/</p> <p>Pyzyk, Katie. (2019). "Robots move in." <i>Waste Dive</i>. https://www.wastedive.com/news/recycling-labor-mrf-robots-move-in/568554/</p> <p>In class viewing: Arrangoiz, Esteban. "A Moment in Mexico: The Diver." <i>The New York Times</i>. Accessed December 18, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000006232522/mexico-city-sewer-diver.html.</p>
7 Waste, value, and material cycling	<p>CBC The Current, "Your recycling could become trash: The 'golden age' of recycling is coming to an end" see: http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/thecurrent-for-december-27-2017-1.4458631/december-27-2017-full-episode-transcript-1.4465729#segment1</p> <p>MacBride, Samantha. <i>Recycling Reconsidered: The Present Failure and Future Promise of Environmental Action in the United States</i>. MIT Press, 2012, 'Introduction' p. 1-22 [online via MUN libraries]</p> <p>Gregson, Nicky, and Mike Crang. "Made in China and the New World of Secondary Resource Recovery." <i>Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space</i>, August 12, 2018, 0308518X18791175. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X18791175.</p> <p>Schlossberg, Tala, and Nayeema Raza. "Opinion The Great Recycling Con." <i>The New York Times</i>, December 9, 2019, sec. Opinion. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/09/opinion/recycling-myths.html.</p> <p>Crunden, E. A. and Rosengren, Cole. (2019). "How many curbside recycling programs have actually been cut?" <i>Waste Dive</i>. https://www.wastedive.com/news/curbside-recycling-cancellation-tracker/569250/</p>
8 Trading toxicants	<p>Liboiron, Max. (2017). "Toxins or toxicants? Why the difference matters." <i>Discard Studies</i>. https://discardstudies.com/2017/09/11/toxins-or-toxicants-why-the-difference-matters/</p> <p>Wynne, Brian. "The Toxic Waste Trade: International Regulatory Issues and Options." <i>Third World Quarterly</i> 11, no. 3 (1989): 120–46.</p>

	<p>Lepawsky, Josh. "Are We Living in a Post-Basel World?" <i>Area</i> 47, no. 1 (March 1, 2015): 7–15. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12144.</p> <p>Gregson, N., Mike Crang, Sara Fuller & Helen Holmes (2015). "Interrogating the circular economy: the moral economy of resource recovery in the EU," <i>Economy and Society</i>, 44:2, 218-243</p>
Week	Theme: Culture
9 Culture and waste, waste as culture	<p>Duncan, James S. (1980) "The Superorganic in American Cultural Geography." <i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i> 70, no. 2: 181–98.</p> <p>Mitchell, Don. (1995). "There's No Such Thing as Culture: Towards a Reconceptualization of the Idea of Culture in Geography." <i>Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers</i> 20: 102–16.</p> <p>Shanks, Michael, David Platt, and William L. Rathje. (2004) "The Perfume of Garbage: Modernity and the Archaeological." <i>Modernism/Modernity</i> 11, no. 1: 61–83.</p>
10 Purity, dirt, and danger	<p>Douglas, Mary. <i>Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo</i>. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1966. Chapter 2, 'Secular Defilement' [online via MUN Libraries]</p> <p>Liboiron, Max. (2019). "Waste is not matter out of place." <i>Discard Studies</i>. https://discardstudies.com/2019/09/09/waste-is-not-matter-out-of-place/</p>
11 Weird shit	<p>Clark, Nigel, and Myra J. Hird. "Deep Shit." <i>O-Zone: A Journal of Object -Oriented Studies</i>, no. 1 (2013): 44–52. [online via D2L]</p> <p>99% Invisible. "Ten Thousand Years." 99% Invisible. Episode and blog: https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/ten-thousand-years/</p> <p>Gorman, Alice. "Culture on the Moon: Bodies in Time and Space." <i>Archaeologies</i> 12, no. 1 (April 2016): 110–28. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11759-015-9286-7</p> <p>99 Percent Invisible. "Space Trash, Space Treasure" https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/space-trash-space-treasure/</p>
12 Where there is system, there is dirt	<p>Radio Lab "Post No Evil" https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/post-no-evil</p> <p>Lepawsky, Josh. (2019). "No insides on the outsides". <i>Discard Studies</i>. https://discardstudies.com/2019/09/23/no-insides-on-the-outsides/</p> <p>In class viewing: <i>The Cleaners</i> [documentary]</p>

Assignments

Daily CREW

This course is premised on a seminar style of active participation by students. A major goal of each seminar is to collectively develop the breadth and depth of understanding of key concepts and terms. In order to productively participate, each student needs to be familiar with course material before attending the seminar.

Being familiar does not mean having full understanding. Instead familiarity means that students have made a first attempt at analysis of course material. Analysis is not the same as explanation. Analysis is the detailed and methodical examination through observation and description of the elements of some phenomenon, typically as a basis for discussion and interpretation. Explanation--determining the cause(s) of a phenomenon--might be a goal of analysis, but it need not necessarily be so.

Participating in the seminar helps to move from familiarity to proficiency. An initial step in analysis of course material involves identifying the structure of arguments, evaluating their claims, and being able to assess their evidence and warrants.

Honing the skills that help make the move from familiarity to proficiency takes practice. One way to practice these skills is to create a matrix of the claims, reasons, evidence, and warrants (CREW) associated with a given instance of course material (e.g., an article or podcast). A CREW matrix helps you find your way through the structure of course material while avoiding becoming lost in its details. The skills associated with generating a CREW matrix carry over to many applications and situations, including in your own research and writing.

Instructions:

1. Download or copy/paste this template into a new file.
2. Include a full citation to the corresponding reading/podcast/etc for a given seminar day.
3. Fill in your new file corresponding to the appropriate reading for a given day [one CREW template for each reading/podcast/etc].
4. [Save as a pdf](#) and upload to the appropriate Dropbox folder on D2L.

Student Name:

Citation:

Claims	Reasons	Evidence	Warrant*
Primary claim			

Secondary claim			
Tertiary claim			
Other claim(s) you wish to highlight			

List Key places	List Key events/dates	List Key people or actors

What was the most important thing you learned in this week's GEOG 4010 seminars?

*A warrant is a principle that enables a logical connection between a given claim and its reasons and/or evidence. See Chapter 7 of Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, especially p. 117:

<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/lib/mun/reader.action?ppg=136&docID=4785166&tm=1513686176751>

Assignment: Film Review of *Manufactured Landscapes*

'Manufactured Landscapes' is available to view for free via MUN Libraries National Film Board [NFB] subscription.

Submission Requirements

1. Submit your review *in PDF format* to the D2L Dropbox.
2. Your review should be no more than 2,000 words in length.

Objectives

- To develop your viewing, writing, and analytical skills through an application of CREW.
- To practice assessing the relationships between different genres by translating audiovisual material into analytical text.
- To practice developing your own voice as a writer.

Guidelines for how to write a good film review:

- Consult the following link for advice on writing film reviews of scholarly quality:
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/filmstudies/filmreviewsintro.html>
- Keep in mind that you will need to watch the film more than once, so plan your time accordingly. As you watch, keep notes that will help you answer some basic questions that will be important later when you write your review:
 - Who is the director and what is the director's background?
 - What motivated the director to make this film?
 - Who is the intended audience for the film?
 - What claims is the film making via the director's cinematography and editing choices? What sorts of evidence does the director offer to support claims made in the film? Does that evidence offer sufficient reasons to warrant this or that claim?
 - What cinematographic techniques does the director use to accomplish the film (e.g., what types of shots are used? How are the visual aspects of the film set up? How is audio used? What effects do the cinematographic choices have on your viewing of the film?)
- When it comes to drafting your review, introduce the film in such a way that a reader who is knowledgeable but who has not seen the film can get a sense from your review about what the film's purpose or goal is and what the director set out to accomplish by making the film.
- Discuss the main issues, ideas, events, people, questions, and/or topics that the film is concerned with. Offer some relevant analysis to your reader. Remember: you are trying to convey what is good and bad about the film and why you think this or that about it, so you must provide evidence to substantiate your judgements.
- Give an evaluation of the film -- why should someone bother (or not) to watch the film? What did you like and/or dislike about the film? Again, you must provide evidence to substantiate your judgements.

You can, of course, lookup reviews of the film, but it should go without saying that the work you submit must be your own.

1. When grading your film reviews I will ask myself the following questions:
2. Is the review more than simply a summary of the film?
3. Is the review free from long stretches of quotations and summaries (paraphrasing) that exist only for their own sakes and remain unanalyzed?
4. Does the review get beyond description and achieve analysis through discussion and evaluation?
5. Does the review address appropriate topics?
6. Are the sentences complete and the review mostly free from basic factual, grammatical, formatting errors, and/or citational errors?

If the answer to one or two of these questions is 'no', the review will receive a grade in the C range (55-64%). If the answer to most of these questions is 'no', the grade will be lower.

If the review emerges from the above questions successfully, I add the following questions:

1. How thoughtful is the review? Does it show real originality?
2. How adequate is the review? Does it respond to the film in a full and interesting way? Does it have an appropriate degree of complexity?
3. How well organized is the review? Does it stick to the point? Does every paragraph contain a clear topic sentence? If not, is another kind of organizing principle at work? Are the transitions well made? Does it have a real conclusion, not simply a stopping place?
4. Is the style efficient, not wordy or unclear?
5. Most importantly, can I hear a lively, intelligent, interesting human voice speaking to the audience?

Depending on my answers to such questions, the review will receive a grade in the A (80-100%) or B (65-79%) range.

A Cultural Geography of Flushing



Source: <http://dailyhive.com/vancouver/montreal-sewage-dump-st-lawrence-river/>

Your task is to creatively answer the following question:

“How has a culture of flushing been instituted in St. John’s, Newfoundland?”

Begin by reading the following to provide you with some geohistorical context:

Benidickson, Jamie. *The Culture of Flushing: A Social and Legal History of Sewage*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007. Introduction (p. 1-10) and Ch. 5 (p. 98-127) [online via MUN library]

Note that there are different ways that research question stated above might be interpreted for the purposes of this assignment:

- *Geohistorical*: What assemblage of geographies (e.g., municipal, provincial, national, other), what timeline of events, and what collection of actors lead to the creation of the current sewage system for the City of St. John’s? Why are these geographies, events, and actors significant (as opposed to others)? How is this geohistory situated within broader cultural geographies of flushing within Canada?
- *Anti-colonial*: Wells (2002) writing about the need for sewage treatment for the City of St. John’s claims that the harbour is, “the commercial, social, and cultural heart of the St. John’s urban region and has been since the discovery of the province in 1497.” How might the infrastructure of waste management, in this case sewage, also be tangled up with settler occupation and Indigenous exclusion? What might a decolonized culture of flushing look like?

- Political-economic: What economic models or assumptions were used to justify the various options for sewage treatment for the City of St. John's? What were the various options for a sewage system that were articulated? How were/are implicit and explicit notions of culture used by relevant actors to build a case for the contemporary sewage system built for St. John's?
- Nonhuman/more-than-human: How is nonhuman agency at work in generating a culture of flushing in St. John's? For example, how do nonhuman life forms (e.g., bacteria) and environments (a North Atlantic tidal harbour) enable/constrain/continue/interrupt the flow of action necessary to achieve a culture of flushing? How do various materials (e.g., metals, plastics) enable/constrain/continue/interrupt the flow of action necessary to achieve a culture of flushing?
- Evaluative: How well or badly does the Riverhead Wastewater Treatment Facility (RHWTF) institute a culture of flushing in St. John's? According to what criteria? What geographic and other types of assumptions do the criteria make? How did/does the framing of sewage as a particular kind of problem shape what options were/are on the table for sewage treatment for the city?

The above interpretations of the central question of this assignment are neither exhaustive (i.e., there are other ways to interpret it), nor mutually exclusive (i.e., various interpretations can be combined). You need to give some thought as to how you want to interpret the question so as balance your interests and the requirements of the assignment.

Assignment Requirements:

- An explicit theorization of culture relevant to the way(s) you choose to interpret and answer the main question. Your theorization should demonstrate awareness of different approaches and criticisms of the theory(ies) you select.
- Relevant map(s), data, and multimedia material(s).
- Proper in-text citations of all sources and a bibliography/works cited.
- A maximum of 5,000 words.
- Your choice of 'traditional' research paper/essay format or use of a digital platform such as Scalar or Story Maps.
- Submit your completed assignment either as a digital document [PDF please] or web link to your Scalar, Story Map, or other digital platform.

Some potential starting places:

Castree, N., Kitchin, R., & Rogers, A.(2013). more-than-human. In A Dictionary of Human Geography. : Oxford University Press. Retrieved 3 Jan. 2018, from <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001.0001/acref-9780199599868-e-1216>.

City of St. John's. *What Not To Flush*. Accessed January 3, 2018.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=78&v=FvL_qha15uE.

Clark, N. (2011) *Inhuman nature : sociable life on a dynamic planet*. Sage: Los Angeles.

“Culture” and “Cultural geography” in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Gregory, Derek, Ron Johnson, Geraldine Pratt, and Sarah J. Whatmore (eds) [via MUN Library]

Benidickson, Jamie. *The Culture of Flushing: A Social and Legal History of Sewage*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007 [available online via MUN Libraries].

Keeling, Arn. “Urban Waste Sinks as a Natural Resource: The Case of the Fraser River. *Urban History Review/Revue d’Histoire Urbaine* 34, (2005) pp. 58-701.”

Liboiron, Max. “The Politics of Measurement: Per Capita Waste and Previous Sewage Contamination.” *Discard Studies* (blog), April 22, 2013.
<http://discardstudies.com/2013/04/22/the-politics-of-measurement-per-capita-waste-and-previous-sewage-contamination/>.

Liboiron, Max. “Pollution Is Colonialism.” *Discard Studies* (blog), September 1, 2017.
<https://discardstudies.com/2017/09/01/pollution-is-colonialism/>.

Mitchell, Don. “There’s No Such Thing as Culture: Towards a Reconceptualization of the Idea of Culture in Geography.” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20 (1995): 102–16.

nlarchaeology. “Under the Street:’ Archaeology and the Harbour Interceptor Sewer Project.” *INSIDE NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ARCHAEOLOGY* (blog), April 15, 2011.
<https://nlarchaeology.wordpress.com/2011/04/15/under-the-street-archaeology-and-the-harbour-interceptor-sewer-project/>.

Smith, Kyle. “Bursting ‘the bubble’ : a historical geographic account of sewerage and sewage treatment in St. John’s, Newfoundland, 1888-2009” (2010), BA Honours dissertation, Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University.

Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor.” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (August 9, 2012).
<http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/view/18630>.

Vowel, Chelsea. *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada*. Portage & Main Press, 2017.

Wells, Andy. “St John’s: Our Harbour Is a National Disgrace, Says Mayor Wells.” *The Hill Times*, July 22, 2002.

Grading

Ground Floor Grading Criteria [if “no” to one or two of the following criteria, then assignment may receive “C”, 55-64% or lower]	Yes	Partially	No
Does the assignment have an appropriate title?			

Does the assignment contain an appropriate amount of relevant text?			
Does the assignment contain an appropriate amount of relevant map(s)?			
Does the assignment contain an appropriate amount of relevant data?			
Does the assignment contain an appropriate amount of relevant multimedia material?			
Does the assignment demonstrate sufficient research?			
Does the assignment possess a logical flow?			
Does the assignment get beyond mere recapitulation of sources and provide original interpretation and storytelling?			
Does the assignment provide a sufficiently compelling analytical narrative?			
Is the assignment largely free of basic spelling and grammatical errors?			
Are sources acknowledged and properly cited in a bibliography?			

If an assignment meets or exceeds the criteria above, then it may be considered for a grade of "A" or "B" as follows:

"A" [80-100%] indicates excellent performance with clear evidence of:

- comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter and principles treated in the course
- a high degree of originality and independence of thought
- a superior ability to organize and analyse ideas, and
- an outstanding ability to communicate.

"B" [65-79%] indicates good performance with evidence of:

- substantial knowledge of the subject matter
- a moderate degree of originality and independence of thought
- a good ability to organize and analyse ideas, and
- an ability to communicate clearly and fluently.