**GEOG 4010: Cultural Geography | Discard Culture**
Professor: Dr. Josh Lepawsky, SN 2008. Phone: 737-3098.
Class time & location: Mon/Wed: 9am-10:15am, SN 2000 (Summer’s Room)
Office hours: Wed: Noon -1pm.
For e-mail: jlepawsky [at] mun [dot] ca

**Course description**
Contemporary cultural geography is a highly diverse field where the very meaning of the phenomenon it purports to study – culture – is highly contested. This course takes seriously a claim made 20 years ago that cultural geographers should abandon the search for culture’s existential roots. In short: there is no such thing as culture. Instead, what there is are actions or practices of people and things that can be followed. The point in following the action is to determine where, when, by what or whom, and under what conditions sites and situations are deemed cultural (as opposed to say, economic, political, or otherwise) and why that matters. In this mode of analysis, culture is something we arrive at rather than something we depart from. To pursue this approach to culture this course focuses on one particularly rich area of habitual practice: discarding. In so doing, we let go of culture-as-thing and begin to see the relevance of thinking analytically about practices. When we follow practices we are in for continual surprises about where we find ourselves.

**Course materials**
Weekly readings Available electronically
Course websites http://discardculture.xyz/
                  https://online.mun.ca

**Course evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course evaluation</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Worth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Weekly CREW write-ups</td>
<td>Mondays</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Controversy map movements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Movements 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Wed Feb 10</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Movements 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Wed Mar 2</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Movement 5</td>
<td>Wed Mar 23</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Controversy map (final)</td>
<td>Mon Apr 4</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**Course policies**
All deadlines are firm. No assignments will be accepted after a deadline, unless documented extenuating circumstances exist.

No cell phones, instant messaging, Facebooking or the like. Turn off all cell phones before entering class.

Equity: This course draws on students from a variety of disciplines, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. This diversity is an asset. In order for this course to be a valuable
experience for all participants there is an expectation that dialogue will be collegial and respectful across disciplinary, cultural, and personal boundaries.

Academic integrity: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will have serious consequences for you. It is in your interest to familiarize yourself with Academic Regulation 4.11 [http://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=REGS-0748](http://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=REGS-0748).

**Course Grading**

A (80–100%) An **excellent** assignment in most respects: evidence of extensive knowledge and understanding; evidence of substantial reading and study beyond the course content; well organized, sharply focused and well balanced; contains good insights and some originality; comprehensive grasp of course material, breadth and depth of outside reading; consideration of almost all the salient points; very good ability to analyse, synthesize and evaluate the relevant material.

B (65-79%) A **good** assignment: well argued; evidence of reading beyond assigned class material, solid knowledge and understanding of relevant course material; covers most of the relevant points in satisfactory depth; demonstrates attention to the questions at hand; well-structured arguments; lacks the originality and insights of a first-class assignment.

C (55-64%) An **adequate** assignment: shows some knowledge and understanding of course content; little or no evidence of outside reading beyond assigned and required sources; contains errors or omissions; focus wanders from the questions at hand; weak use of examples and weak organization.

D (50-54%) A **weak** assignment: shows limited knowledge and understanding of the topic; may contain errors and omissions; attempts to answer the question but misses important points; poor use of examples and poor organization; may lack focus, be poorly written, short or incomplete; shows very little evidence of background reading; may seriously misinterpret or avoid the topics at hand.

F (<50 %) A **very poor** assignment: inadequate, possibly a very short assignment with little material of relevance to the topics covered and possibly also serious errors and omissions.
Course content and readings

Week 1 Jan 6. Topic: Course introduction

Assignments due:
• None :)

Learning Goals
• Understand key terms and concepts:
  ◦ controversy
  ◦ second-degree objectivity
• Get familiar with Scalar, the platform for completing the course project.

Reading & Materials
Assignment: mapping controversies: http://scalar.usc.edu/works/cultural-geography/assignment-mapping-controversies?t=1451473110429
Resources for Mapping Controversies: http://scalar.usc.edu/works/cultural-geography/resources-for-mapping-controversies?path=course

Workshop Wednesday: Controversy mapping example, What the Frack? Introduction to Scalar.

Week 2, Jan 11 & 13. Topic: Diving into Magma

Assignments due:
• Weekly CREW

Learning Goals
• Understand key terms and concepts:
  ◦ analysis
  ◦ a ‘good’ controversy
• Learn to use Zotero to collect and organize documents and data for your controversy map.

Reading & Materials


Workshop Wednesday: Overview of Google Search Operators with emphasis on “site:”, “link:” and “info:”; using Zotero to build a repository of source documents.
Week 3, Jan 18 & 20. Topic: *Superorganic culture*

**Assignments due:**
- Weekly CREW.

**Learning Goals**
- Understand key concepts and terms:
  - explicans and explicandum
  - superorganic theory of culture
- Getting familiar with Web of Science and Scopus.

**Reading & Materials**


Workshop Wednesday: using Web of Science and Scopus to characterize scientific and technical literature.

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Week 4, Jan 25 & 27. Topic: *The (non)existence of culture*

**Assignments due:**
- Weekly CREW.

**Learning Goals**
- Understand key concepts and terms:
  - infinite regress of culture
- Familiarization with ScienceScape and Google Trends.

**Reading & Materials**


Week 5, Feb 1 & 3. Topic *Wastescapes*

**Assignments due:**
- Weekly CREW

**Learning Goals**
- Understanding key terms
  - wastescapes, location, temporal & spatial

**Readings & Materials**


Lepawsky, Josh. *The Offworld Rubbish Project*: [http://scalar.usc.edu/works/the-offworld-waste-project/index](http://scalar.usc.edu/works/the-offworld-waste-project/index)


Workshop Wednesday: Overview of network visualization software examples: Lynks, Kumu, VIS, Gephi.

Week 6, Feb 8 & 10. Topic *Rethinking Waste*

**Assignments due:**
- Weekly CREW.
- Controversy map movements 1 & 2 due Wed Feb 10.

**Learning Goals**
- Understand key concepts and terms:
  - waste
  - modernity
- Familiarization with cartographic resources for controversy mapping.
Reading & Materials


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7, Feb 15 &amp; 17. Topic Waste/Value/Law</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assignments due:</strong></td>
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<td>• Weekly CREW.</td>
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Learning Goals
• Understand key concepts and terms
  ◦ modern waste and value
  ◦ property
  ◦ public-private boundary

Readings & Materials


Workshop Wednesday: Controversy map consultations: individual project questions and troubleshooting.

| Week 8, Feb 22 & 24 **** No class: Winter Break**** |
Week 9, Feb 29 & Mar 2. Topic *Recycling Reconsidered*

**Assignments due:**
- Weekly CREW.
- Controversy map movement 3 & 4 due Wed March 2.

**Learning Goals**
- Understand key concepts and terms:
  - busyness
  - Jevons’ Paradox
  - recycling trap
- Familiarization with timelines in Scalar.

**Readings & Materials**


Workshop Wednesday: Working with timelines in Scalar. Example: TimelineJS.

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Week 10, Mar 7 & 9

**Assignment due:** None :)

**Learning Goals:**
- Growing confidence with controversy mapping approach via individual consultations.

Workshop Monday & Wednesday: individual consultations.
Week 11, Mar 14 & 16. Topic Cleaners and Gleaners: working with what others discard

Assignments due:
- Weekly CREW.

Learning Goals
- Understanding key concepts and terms
  - working with waste
- Overcoming challenges for making your controversy map.

Readings & Materials


Workshop Wednesday: Controversy map consultation: individual project questions and troubleshooting.

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Week 12, Mar 21 & 23. Topic Waste as a thinking technology

Assignments due:
- Weekly CREW.
- Controversy map movement 5 due Wed March 23.

Learning Goals
- Understanding key concepts and terms
  - Anthropocene
  - intergenerational responsibility
  - waste futures
- Overcoming challenges for making your controversy map.

Readings & Materials


Workshop Wednesday: Controversy map consultation: individual project questions and troubleshooting.
Week 13, Mar 28 & 30. Topic *Visualizing industrial productivism and its effects*

**Learning Goals:**
- Understand key concepts and terms:
  - productivism
- Overcoming challenges for making your controversy map.

**Readings & Materials:**
In-class film: *Manufactured Landscapes*

Workshop Wednesday: Controversy map consultation: individual project questions and troubleshooting.

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Week 14 April 4 Topic: *Course De-briefing*

**Learning goals:**
- How students think the course could be improved for future versions of it.

**Assignment due:**
- Final controversy map due Monday April 4.