

The Making of Us

Hum (HUMANITIES 101
COMMUNITY PROGRAMME)
DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE/SOUTH
& FACULTY OF ARTS, UBC

in the traditional, ancestral, unceded
territory of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ speaking
xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people

Hum

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Programme Description

“The Making of Us”

What makes Hum hum? The Humanities 101 Community Programme, fondly known as Hum, is unique because of the practices through which we make it, re-make it, unmake it and make it anew according to the situations we find and make ourselves in, and our practices of respect.¹ It’s through having respectful long-term community relationships with people and organizations in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside and Downtown South (DTES/South), at the University of British Columbia (UBC), in Musqueam, and beyond; through making relevant supports for Hum students taking university-level courses; through making “no carrots no sticks” learning practices in courses and public programmes that involve creativity and critique; through teaching Hum’s strong practices of consent and confidentiality—with which this book was made—and practices of self-representation with people living in “over-researched”² downtown communities; and by actively maintaining a cultural legacy that supports these practices. Hum is both situated and responsive, a magic dance. That’s how we make waves.

“All that you touch you change. All that you change, changes you.” —Octavia E. Butler

For us, with us, Octavia’s wise words drew deep reflection, clarity and appreciation for being together, for touching each other during two+ years (2020-21) of the global pandemic, during war, climate emergency, increased practices of violence, and also, possibilities for meaningful change. Touch changes the world and the toucher, and in online classes we sat side by side in “Hollywood Squares,” arm in arm with our sister programme at the University of Alberta in Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton), and in the traditional, ancestral, unceded territories of the x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Look what happens when everyone depends on everyone else

When speculations about “what if” materialize, when everything in the world shifts, during the pandemic when everyone depended on each other for support and to find new ways of being safe while mingling... Hum looked and listened to what was happening, closely. Overlooking each other’s masks, we looked more deeply into each others’ eyes and found that with some creative and technological modifications, we could not only stay together, but grow. Everyone became stars in the new world of video conferencing, every thumbnail image depending on its neighbours no matter how far away, with UBC souls sitting right next to University of Alberta souls in our collective Hum courses.

What if everything depends on everything else?

Hum is honey: it’s utterly specific, each and every time, for all involved; it depends. Like bees’ ways, like hummycombs, Hum’s a practice and an expression of interconnecting and interdepending, of reciprocal relationships that make their very own, situated, organic shapes. For Hum, the question “What if?” is about speculative fiction... and about making a living sweet spot where everything Hums, everything flows and mingles. And when everything in the world shifts, we hum along by finding safe ways to keep on depending.

Find freedom in the context you inherit

Hum is part of communities at UBC and in the DTES/South in the traditional, ancestral, unceded territories of the x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, across Canada and beyond. With tuition-free courses that are prerequisite-free, participants who join in freely, free Public Programmes downtown, and a Steering Committee perpetually open to all participants and alumni, Hum demonstrates that university can be “set free” of some of its

1 These practices have matured over many years, and have been presented to and ratified by the Humanities 101 Community Programme Steering Committee of students and alumni.

2 Button, Cat and Gerald Taylor Aitken. *Over Researched Places: Towards a Critical and Reflexive Approach*. Routledge, 2022, pp. 1–23.

precepts and remain intensive, empowering and enthusiastically-attended.

Hum word bound

Who is involved? Hum student participants live in the DTES/South and nearby areas, with diverse experience and knowledge: Indigenous people and people from around the world. They are working to overcome personally-felt oppressions and obstacles that are financial, institutional, educational, governmental, health-related and social, while experiencing intense gentrification and displacement in their home neighbourhoods. The Programme works closely with DTES/South communities and is sponsored by UBC's Faculty of Arts and private donations, largely from UBC alumni. Its dedication to being situated and responsive to both DTES/South residents and UBC communities means that Hum is always changing...

No carrots no sticks!

The Programme is committed to being responsible through respectful, long-term relationships based in learning. It runs four free, dedicated, university-level, Cultural Studies-style courses, which are grounded in relevant, interdisciplinary, critical and creative thinking practices: two are interdisciplinary courses strong in Critical Indigenous Studies, delving into 20+ disciplines/areas with many invited guest teachers over a full academic year (Hum101 and Hum201), and two are hands-on writing courses that touch on 13 genres in 13 weeks (Writing 101 and Writing 201). Classes are a lively mix of people coming together, sharing knowledge, expertise and humour, creating conversations that carry on for years.

Where there's walls there's holes

Prerequisite-free, and with many supportive practices to meet students' material and learning needs, Hum's courses value participants' own situated knowledges and desire to join in. Each year, courses have a different theme, such as Find freedom in the context you inherit (a quote from Stó:lō feminist writer Lee Maracle); Hum word bound; No carrots no sticks; Where there's walls there's holes; What are you in a perfect position to know + do, now?; Where we walk becomes the path; Look what happens when everyone depends on everyone else; "All that you touch you change. All that you change, changes you"; and this year The Making of Us. Participants do preparatory readings, engage in small group discussions and read their work aloud at the start of classes if they wish to, are famous for asking tough questions of experienced teachers, and complete assignments—poems, reflections, essays, artworks—that are gathered in publications.

What are you in a perfect position to know + do, still?

While classes are based at the UBC campus, Hum is as much a part of its downtown communities, also running weekly free Public Programmes at DTES/South community centres (Carnegie Centre, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, ná'ca?mat ct Strathcona Branch of the Vancouver Public Library, and the Gathering Place). These Programmes are initiated and led by alumni, volunteers and staff. Members of Hum's Steering Committee, which meets regularly in the DTES, stated "Hum takes us on an adventure of open-mindedness, possibilities, social participation and connectivity by unpacking preconceived ideas. Hum generates direction, community, knowledge, opportunity, possibilities and self-awareness through practices that distinguish our unity, creativity, knowledge, self-esteem, self-respect and self-determination."

Where we walk becomes the path

At 25, Hum is the first and largest programme of its kind in Canada, with 18 publications. To date, over 1350 students have graduated and there have been over 240 volunteer teachers and scores of supportive UBC student/alumni volunteers who assist the dedicated Programme faculty and staff. Many more people are enmeshed in the growing number of devoted sister programmes across Canada and similar courses elsewhere. Along with the current focus on support for Indigenous people's educational desires, responsible relationships between universities and communities, and international interest in freeing education, Hum is part of many movements...

Introduction

Picture a fire in a fire pit with outstretched hands warming round it. If you're holding this very book, your own hands are adding to these layers of warmth. If you gaze at the book's cover for a while, as one does at fires, these fingers might become the letters M and W and E, spelling ME and WE every which way; and the word Hum wrapped around the spine may begin to look right at home. All ME and WE figures are never generic but always specific, each and every time, depending on who, when, where, how they are situated, and who they are with.¹ Inside, this book glows with work made by people who gathered together in 2022/23 with the Humanities 101 Community Programme, fondly known as Hum. This book represents what we brought, what we did, and what we made of this year's Hum theme "The Making of Us" as we danced around weekly fires... called university courses. Through this theme, as you'll see, we considered our own informed local and worldly perspectives (here, near, dear, close and afar), our own experiences, knowledge, concerns and commitments, as we learned much from each other. At the end of the academic year, Hum student Candy T. wrote: "But this I can tell you, my heart now Hums better and louder in sync with the warmth and teaching of all guests, encounters with kind and mind enriching learners and our dear teachers." Join us now around this fire.

Just as all

ME

WE figures² are specific to their situation, all fires are situated. The remarkable photo on the cover was taken north of the Arctic Circle under the bright dancing lights of an aurora borealis by E. Zoe Walker.³ Zoe was leading visitors from around the world who shared a dream of experiencing the northern lights. We thank Zoe and her guests whose hands first warmed themselves around this blaze.

While sharing the experience of university education, the Hum community gathers in the Downtown Eastside and Downtown South (DTES/South) of Vancouver, and at the University of British Columbia in the traditional, ancestral, unceded territories of the x^mməθkwə'yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. At our graduation ceremony in Sty-Wet-Tan Hall at the Musqueam First Nations House of Learning at UBC, we were honoured when our Elder ʔəyətəq Larry Grant of the hənqəmihəm speaking Musqueam people warmly welcomed us to this place, and celebrated Hum students' accomplishments.

Humanities 101 Community Programme participants reside in the DTES/South, a community that has long been "over-researched"⁴ by nearby and international universities, a community that has contributed much to university learning and knowledge. Perhaps surprisingly, this situation can be reciprocal, with universities widening the circle to include them as students. That's what Hum has been doing for 25 years, with four free, supported, interdisciplinary, university-level courses, free public programmes at local community centres, and over 1350 graduates, so far. Long ago, Hum initiated a sister programme at UBC called "Science 101" and there's Musqueam 101, too. Our programme is the first and largest one in Canada, and there are sister programmes across the country and abroad. In fact, we're part of a bigger blaze!

1 Right now, this book is with... you! And, it sits alongside 13 of Hum's 17 other publications on humanities101. arts.ubc.ca/about_us/publications/ and margotleighbutler.ca.

2 This figuration, which I developed in my PhD, is good for thinking about the very specific relations between us and in communities, for starters. It can take a shape, like this mirroring hinged calligram, and be embodied, as in this book's cover. This ME WE is always contingent: we depend, we flow, we're implicated, enmeshed, entangled. See: Butler, Margot Leigh. *Epistemology, politics and subjectivity in artists' collective projects*. London: Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2000, pp. 165–166.

3 E. Zoe Walker is an educator, scientist, researcher and artist. zoewalker.ca (I am her proud auntie!)

4 Button, Cat and Gerald Taylor Aitken. *Over Researched Places: Towards a Critical and Reflexive Approach*. Routledge, 2022, pp. 1–23.

At Hum, people from the DTES/South and UBC kindle together. Guest teachers are invited from many disciplines in the Faculty of Arts, and sometimes elsewhere, and UBC students volunteer and work as student staff. Hum students are Indigenous and some are local, they are refugees and people from all around the world working to overcome personally-felt oppressions and obstacles that are financial, institutional, educational, governmental, health-related and social. In keeping, in this book you'll notice that the making of Hum's

ME

WE extends to many subjects and around the world. Written in solidarity with the "Woman Life Freedom" movement, with Iran her first home, here are the first stanzas of Hum mentor Shahla Masoumnejad's poem "Farewell." (p. 52)

It's cold and dark where I am,
listening to the sound of the march on the streets,
and imagining the hungry fists dancing in the air,
starving for freedom.

They caught me when my hair was floating,
and my scarf, burning in the fire.
They caught me when my hands were pushing them away,
and my feet were stopped from following them,
to their empty promises.

The making of us can take place across borders, as Chicana Hum student Maria Giron wrote about in her essay titled "Xings."

Once across the river we would be in the United States, where another coyote would meet us and take us to a safe house. It was there where we were discovered by immigration officers. We were arrested and sent to a detention center. We were crushed, and we were terrified... Our tears could have filled the Rio Grande. It was this sorrow, fear and desperation that I saw mirrored in the XICANX/Chicana exhibit [which our class attended]. I understood for the first time that my story was really a global story, a story of humanity. This understanding was further enhanced by our studies of colonization and oppression... When I learned about the racism and marginalization of Indigenous people, I finally had a way to explain the discrimination I myself experience upon my arrival in this country. (p. 59)

Colonization of this land displaced Indigenous people here since time immemorial, and settler governments weaponized education through Indian residential schools. In "The Making of Us: One Family's Experience in Intergenerational Trauma and Resilience," Hum student Charlene Marion (Amanda J. Greywolf, Cree/Ojibway) wrote:

For me, 'the making of us' speaks to the formation of our family, shaped by a legacy of intergenerational trauma that has resulted in profound tragedies. Yet, amidst these adversities, it has also instilled in me a profound admiration for the unwavering strength and resilience displayed by my family members and those in our midst. (p. 89)

In our midst, this spring the City of Vancouver ordered "sweeps" of DTES streets, where 400+ residents' belongings were thrown into dumpsters and residents pushed out, with virtually no space in already-strained shelters. In this passage written by Hum student Jian Liao, she proposes a wider version of "family" and a warmer making of us:

The street tents in the Downtown Eastside were a hundred and eighty in number in July 2022. The numbers increase every day. Each day, people in this city are evicted to the streets, their belongings and dignity packet into carts. Where is their home? What is a Canadian's basic need in 2023? Everyone deserves a quality life with affordable housing, medical care, and fresh, nutritious food. Even birds have nests, and animals live in caves. But where are the homes for the homeless...? The people of the Downtown Eastside need more than just a roof. They need a real home and a quality of life. A home with a warm kitchen to prepare nutritious foods. A home with a sweet bedroom. A home with a dining table for family dinners where the family members can support one another. We have a long way to go. (p. 102)

These passages written by Shahla, Maria, Charlene and Jian are just four of the many wise offerings made by contributors to this book. With 13 writing genres studied and practised in Writing 101 and Writing 201, and 23 academic Arts disciplines studied in Hum101 and Hum201, students' generous, deep thinking, risk-taking, articulate and enthusiastic scholarship lights up the sky.

In classes, we've made sparks, made scenes, made friction with fact and fiction; become writers of poetry, book reviews, comedy, songs, critical and creative fiction/non-fiction, autofiction, manifestos and more. We learned how to make this book with Hum's respectful, strong practices of consent and confidentiality in place. We've made our very selves WITH our current communities AND with Indigenous cultures and languages we've learned about and imagined together. We've pondered the making of a university and who a university makes; examined the situations we find and make ourselves in through art, geography, anthropology, philosophy, sociology, affect theory and environmental humanities, and learned about how knowing our legal rights make us strong. We approached activism, augmented reality, NFTs and our digital doubles, along with the cultural and personal advantages of (un)making sense. We made a different yield with informed and Indigenous subjectivities, and made our way with our culturally gendered, classed, racialized, always aging, inquiring, energized bodies. We visited the Writers' Festival, the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Chinatown Storytelling Centre, MOA (UBC Museum of Anthropology), and spent a cold clear winter evening (our hands wrapped around pocket handwarmers) on an exciting guided tour of the Vancouver Winter Arts Festival.

In short, we did otherwise, meeting Hum student Martin Hunt's wish: "I wish we could lose the idea that we can make things better by doing what we've always done." (p. 138) And we were reminded that what seem like small changes can propel momentous shifts in the making of us, as Hum mentor Claude Ranville (Métis) theorized in his book review:

Legend has it [that when their plane was snowbound in the USSR where their records were banned] The Beatles were restless so they appeared on the wing of the aircraft with their instruments and proceeded to perform a few of their biggest hits for their enduring young fans in Leningrad.... These young Soviet Beatles fans would grow up to take down the Berlin Wall. (p. 122)

I wonder, who could imagine that such a profound world-making change could hinge on a snowflake?

For me, it is such an honour to be the Academic Director of the world-making Humanities 101 Community Programme for 17 of my 35 years teaching at university. It's a joy to work so closely with my incandescent colleague Paul Woodhouse for 15 years; with Claire Matthews who has brought her fiery passion and commitment to Hum's Writing courses for a good year and a half; and with Hum alumnus Gilles Cyrenne whose five year grammar mini-course seduces the unsuspecting to learn "How to fall in love with sentences"!

It takes so many people to make Hum, and I extend hearty thanks to everybody who made this possible, who are ALL personally recognized later in this book: our students; class mentors (Hum graduates who returned to help make Hum new again); Hum alumni public programme curators and teachers; volunteers (students from UBC and elsewhere); Hum staff (Paul Woodhouse, Claire Matthews, Meghna Chatterjee and Jesse Carson); invited guest teachers; Hum’s Faculty Advisory Committee; and our long-time profound programme supporters Gerald Ma, Tom Kemple, Daniel Heath Justice, Gage Averill and the Dean of Arts Office team. Hum is also grateful to our friends and supporters in the DTES/South, across the country and abroad, and at UBC—especially our dear colleagues, friends and neighbours at the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies. We’re so grateful to be part of these communities. Without all of you, this year’s Hum would have been made less.

Hum is unique because of our practices through which we make it, re-make it, unmake it and make it anew according to the situations we find and make ourselves in. And there are two situations, two fire pits, that Hum graduates are always welcome to gather around: Hum’s Steering Committee of students and alumni which all alumni are invited to join; and free, open public programmes in the DTES/South initiated and led by alumni, staff and volunteers, with ground support from workers at community centres. To this year’s Hum graduates, congratulations on your accomplishments, and thank you for all you brought and all you shared!

To widening circles,

Dr. Margot Leigh Butler
Academic Director, Hum
Associate, UBC Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies
Faculty of Arts, University of British Columbia
Unceded, ancestral, traditional land of the hən’q’əmin’əm’-speaking xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people

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Hum 101/201 Annotated Course Outline & Student Compositions

COURSE THEME:

The Making of Us

FACULTY: Dr. Margot Leigh Butler

MENTORS: Isaac White (Haida), Raul A. Castillo Rios, Shahla Masoumnejad, Cindy QT, Daniel Wilson

STAFF: Paul Woodhouse, MA Sociology (Programme Manager)
Meghna Chatterjee and Jesse Carson (WorkLearn Programme Assistants)

TERM 1: September 15 – December 8, 2022

TERM 2: January 12 – April 6, 2023

CLASSROOM: Buchanan D, Room 301

SCHEDULE: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. with additional field trips.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This two-term interdisciplinary course focuses on relevant, creative and critical thinking practices in Arts and Social Sciences disciplines, and on the connections between them. Each week we study a different discipline with a different teacher, with “grounding classes” that set the course contexts, preparatory readings, in-class discussions, written assignments and field trips. This course is not an introduction to nor survey of these disciplines, but follows an interdisciplinary, Indigenous-strong, Cultural Studies approach which enjoys and values participants’ own situated knowledge—of both areas participants live in, Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside/Downtown South and nearby, and their own life interests and experiences—as well as academic knowledge. The course is responsive to participants’ interests and changes in both theme and content each year.

The first 30 minutes of class involves facilitated small group discussions based on that night’s assigned reading, followed by a formal 90-minute class. Written work involves in-class writing, and four assignments which correspond to different disciplines and the links between them, including a reflective writing piece. While it’s preferable to take both Term 1 and Term 2 continuously, it is possible to graduate from Hum101 Term 1 or Term 2. Class readings are available a week in advance, both as photocopies and online.

PART ONE

*Living sweet spots where everything hums,
everything flows and mingles...*

SEPTEMBER 15

ORIENTATION: “WHERE ARE WE & HOW DO WE FIGURE?” WITH MARGOT LEIGH BUTLER, HUM AND ASSOCIATE, INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES, UBC, AND PAUL WOODHOUSE, HUM.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Gathering from around the world, through the Downtown Eastside and Downtown South (DTES/South), on this day we shared the campus air, starting where we are at UBC, within the unceded, ancestral, traditional territory of the *hən'q'əmin'əəm'* speaking *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam) people. After dining together at the Nest, Paul and Margot started the campus walking tour at the Musqueam house post carved by Brent Sparrow, which tells the story of the origin of the Musqueam First Nation's name: *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm*. Then to the UBC Bookstore, the *ᐱwiᐱwa* Library, the First Nations House of Learning and the fragrant Rose Garden. In the classroom, we learned about the meanings and protocols involved in Territorial Acknowledgements as a way to show respect to First Nations, discussed the perks of being a Hum student, classroom practices and etiquette, the course outline, and this year's theme: The Making of Us.



CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES: “FINDING FREEDOM IN THE CONTEXT YOU INHERIT,” WITH MARGOT LEIGH BUTLER, HUM AND ASSOCIATE, INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

This week’s class was titled “Finding freedom in the context you inherit,” a phrase inspired by the late Sto:lo writer, activist and our teacher Lee Maracle; it was once a Hum theme, too. To situate ourselves as guests in Musqueam land, Margot Leigh Butler showed us a short animation of 9,000 years of this delta (“Musqueam delta animation”) accompanied by a formal welcome by Musqueam Elder sʔəyəłəq Larry Grant to all UBC students: “I raise my hands in welcome to all of you here at UBC, on the traditional, ancestral, unceded lands of the hə́nqəmíhəm-speaking Musqueam people.” We learned more about Musqueam culture and the meaning and importance of these three words: “traditional” recognizes lands traditionally used and/or occupied by the Musqueam people or by other First Nations in other parts of the country; the word “ancestral” recognizes land that is handed down from generation to generation; and the word “unceded” refers to land that was never under treaty, given away, surrendered or won in war.

With the upcoming second annual “Every Child Matters Orange Shirt Day” and “National Day for Truth and Reconciliation,” in this class we focused on the contexts and outcomes of colonial practices in this place—long known as “Turtle Island.” We shared learning on colonization; Indian residential schools and the Sixties Scoop; the Truth and Reconciliation movement in Turtle Island; Indigenous resurgence; and referenced three key declarations of global rights and respect for Indigenous people which were later discussed in our Law class called “Making us Strong”: Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action (TRC), 2015; The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), 2019, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 2007. All are filled with recommendations we can urge and support the implementation of!

We listened carefully to how Indigenous peoples are remembering, looking for, finding and making freedoms in this inherited, changing context, and how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can support these changes, how we can embody an informed and heartfelt “making of us” now. We listened to a song written to help people to heal from losing their loved ones, performed in a music video called “Sky World” by Theresa Bear Fox (Akwesasne Mohawk), and sung by Teio Swathe (Mohawk Nation) with Apsáalooke (Crow) hip-hop artist Supaman powwow fancy-dancing. It was only last year that the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc confirmed the remains of 215 children who were students at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. Hum participant and DTES activist Marvin Delorme (Cree and Métis) generously shared his own childhood experiences, and his journey learning more about his Métis ancestry. Hum Mentor Issac White (Haida) invited us to all look at the wiki “List of Indigenous peoples” website to learn more from/about our own and others’ perspectives.

There was a wide range of different ways of being, learning and knowing represented in the reading package Margot made for us; because some may be difficult, she encouraged to take our time, read them in our own best way, and to take the message of the first author and our upcoming teacher, Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee), to “imagine otherwise”: “We are all, in various ways, the result of our ancestors’ imaginings beyond whatever they were experiencing”!

WHAT WE READ

Butler, Margot Leigh. “Find freedom in the context you inherit resource package.” 2022.

ART AND ACTIVISM: “WHAT ARE YOU IN A PERFECT POSITION TO KNOW + DO, NOW?”
INDIGENOUS MURALS WALKING TOUR, WITH VANCOUVER DETOURS’ PETE EDWARDS.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Hum loves a good ol’ walking tour. For the first walk of term, we made our way to Jonathan Rogers Park, where we embarked on an extensive walking tour of Mount Pleasant’s murals with our guide, Pete Edwards. 300+ murals have transformed the appearance of Mount Pleasant and other public spaces since the inaugural Vancouver Mural Festival in 2016. Bright, vibrant murals adorn walls, mailboxes, parking spots and sometimes entire buildings. These large-scale artworks make aim to spark curiosity and act as a catalyst for addressing many of Vancouver’s socio-cultural issues, such as First Nations reconciliation, Black Lives Matter, environmental policy, multiculturalism and culturally sustainable living practices.

Murals aim to reflect the community where they are installed. They invite conversation with the public, as well as direct intervention from other artists who sometimes embellish or tag the original works. For example, on top of one mural someone had painted a toilet and written: “The Vancouver Urinal Festival.” The more appreciable imagery of legal street art—often counterposed to illegal graffiti art—is often supported by businesses and community organizations, while some graffiti artists and activists claim that beautifying cities through corporate sponsored murals is a catalyst for gentrification. The argument that artists raise the price of property by making neighborhoods more attractive is nothing new—the mere presence of artists living in previously undesirable and therefore affordable neighbourhoods is often said to make those are more appealing places to live. However, a lot of artists struggle to make ends meet when trying to make a living through their creative practice. This left us with the question, is it fair to expect artists to turn down much-needed funding when other non-artist groups are not held to the same standard?



SOCIOLOGY: “THE MAKING OF OUR DIGITAL DOUBLES,” WITH PAUL WOODHOUSE, HUM.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Paul Woodhouse began the class by giving examples of how disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and the Internet of things have begun to service all aspects of our lives. Taking a closer look at these enchanting, cutting-edge technologies, we found them to engage with familiar concepts—knowledge, power, surveillance—while transforming their operations and effects in new, interesting and sometimes unscrupulous ways.

The process of turning traces of our lives into computer-readable format is called “datafication.” Paul explained that datafication is nothing new. For millennia, humans have created data by devising instruments to measure and record the world. For instance, the widespread adoption of Arabic numerals (rather than Roman), the invention of accounting (between the 12th and 14th centuries) and the use of nautical maps in the 19th century. So, what’s new with big data? Well, the yardstick has given way to new digital tools that mean more data can be collected (volume), more types (variety) and at far greater speeds (velocity). Platforms are increasingly being positioned to extract data from more and more spheres of life—for instance the environment (weather stations), production processes (autonomous vehicles) and workplaces (gig economy apps). On a personal level, an array of digital technologies track movements, moods, interactions, preferences, thoughts, desires and much more. But it’s not just the case that big data captures more varied information faster; it is used for purposes of classification and prediction. Every single tap on your phone, keyboard or bank card increases your digital footprint, and that datafied version of you—your digital double—is used to tell a story about who you are while conditioning the choices presented to you.

The massive amount of data amassed through platforms is also used to train AI. Paul emphasized that machines are already much better than humans in many areas. They can beat humans at our most complex games, like chess, Go and Jeopardy. They build things faster and more efficiently than humans, and they are much more productive and cheaper to employ. They fly aeroplanes and drive cars, write novels, have conversations with humans and do other cognitive work that up until recently was a step too far for machines. The major question concerning AI experts is what happens when the same machine can write a novel, fly an aeroplane and cook dinner. What are the implications when machines move from being good at a single task, a narrow intelligence, to a broad-based general-purpose intelligence.

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OCTOBER 13

CULTURAL STUDIES: “WHAT DOES HUM MEAN BY ‘NO CARROTS NO STICKS’ LEARNING?”
WITH MARGOT LEIGH BUTLER, HUM AND ASSOCIATE, INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL INDIGENOUS
STUDIES, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Back in the olden days, “culture” was considered a highbrow affair; not so in the youngish discipline of Cultural Studies. Margot Leigh Butler taught us that Hum’s interdisciplinary academic/activist method and heart beats in Cultural Studies, where our own, situated, ordinary Downtown Eastside/South and worldly cultural knowledge always matters!

In those same olden days (which linger on), what counted as “education” was often managed with carrots and sticks. Hum has tricks for removing them, with the help of lots of excellent folks who support this making of us: we thank them endlessly! Removing the university entrance requirements, tuition fees, grades, transportation costs, childcare costs and material costs takes away some of those sticks, enabling us to get together to collaborate for a year, a decade or more. And focusing on being part of a self-motivated, enthusiastic, intrinsic learning community might just offer better nutrition than institutional carrots 😊

Over the academic year, we focused on relevant, intermingling creative and critical practices in the many academic disciplines we worked between, with an awareness of how each conceptualizes PEOPLE, POWER, KNOWLEDGE, PLACE + TIME, our touchstones, to ground us. This active awareness embodies a term that Cultural Studies loves: “agency,” the power to act and to make meaning that is agential in “the making of us.” Practicing agency lets us see how Western ways of knowing are implicated in colonialism, for starters, and how they “normalize” socially-constructed power relations by making oppressions “make sense.” We learned that we can more confidently meet each academic discipline we’ve studied by asking “In this discipline, what counts as PEOPLE, POWER, KNOWLEDGE, PLACE + TIME?” With our touchstones that ground us, and our own situated knowledges valued, the stick might become a springboard to new understandings!

For this class we read Cultural Studies’ founding document, published by Raymond Williams in 1958, which argues that culture is a whole way of life, a process, and is always in flux. This means that that cultures express not one truth but many situated and important truths, and that we are all part of this flux. And guided by Hum’s commitment to Critical Indigenous Studies, through their own words and pictures we learned about Musqueam as a thousands-of-years-old living culture, seeing how Indigenous ways of knowing and being involve different perspectives, practices, land-based protocols and relationships that are increasingly influencing institutions like UBC and far beyond it.

A note on “carrots and sticks”: luckily, you can always count on a figure of speech to shape-shift! Hum participants often insist that there are “good carrots” in our programme and they don’t mind the odd stick... and while removing some sticks, Hum builds with others, sticking them together with a bit of juicy carrot!

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THE MAKING OF A PARLIAMENT OF OWLS

DAVID DEOCERA

The experience of attending classes at Humanities 101 is very enriching, enlightening and empowering. Why did I choose these three powerful words? Let me explain. First, how is Humanities 101 enriching? Through the human contact with the guest teachers and students that encourage real face time discussion, questions, analysis and interaction. These meetings enrich not just the intellect and the social need to gather in person, but also enrich the spirit and the soul. Next, how is Hum enlightening? Because all ideas are filtered with a common belief in reason, so they clarify cloudy and murky views. I see Hum as empowering because with reason and truth on your side, who will be against you?

The dedicated members of the Hum class remind me of the members of the Platonic Academy of the Renaissance or, even better, of a gathering of owls who are aptly called a “parliament of owls.” You see, owls are not the most intelligent or the best problem solvers in the animal world. But owls can see in the dark; they have the ability to see with clear vision in an obscure setting or environment. In many cultures, owls have become symbols of wisdom, learning, critical thinking, deep seeing beyond, vigilance, ancient knowledge, scholarship and even graduation from school. Owls play a very important part in the making of us.

Every time I attend Hum classes, I feel like an owl. First, because classes are held in the evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. During this time, I’m representing an owl who is thirsty and eager to learn something new, an owl who is adjusting his vision to see more clearly, an owl in an assembly of owls, a “parliament” of constant discussion—in fact, the French word *parlement* means to talk, and conversing implies not only talking but listening. See the intense looking and listening of this parliament of owls below. I started my love affair and fascination with owls when I was doing a graveyard shift as a security guard at the Anita Place tent camp for the displaced in 2019, and watched the owls protecting us. Hum classes, taught by authorities on their fields, are enriching, enlightening and empowering... and inclusive—we needn’t leave out any speakers, since we can all be wise owls!



Figure 1: Parliament of Owls (pixahive.com)

A MIND: WHAT IS IT?

MARTIN HUNT

For a long time my stance was to not talk about minds. I'm interested in how it's possible for people to have the mental capabilities we have and I found that talking about minds was short-circuiting my understanding.

We have mental capabilities because we have a thing we call a mind. I found it much more fruitful to say "I think" rather than "I have a mind." I found I could investigate the action of "I think" in quite a bit of detail even as a self-taught independent scholar.

I've learned a lot about how our neurons work and how when they are interconnected in certain sorts of networks the networks can learn. I've learned that you can construct similar networks out of wires or even software and those networks learn too. The network just learns. It doesn't have a mind that learns.

Not everything learns. People do. Dogs and cats do. I'm not sure if frogs learn and I don't really know where to draw the line. But it's plain that learning only emerges in nature when it gives an evolutionary advantage. Learning helps people but probably not frogs. And outside of biology what good would learning be? Why would a rock or a star need to learn?

When I learn something I remember a situation: what the state of affairs was and/or what happened. The things I learn coexist with other things I've learned. The set of things I have learned don't just lay there in a heap. They are a mutually reinforcing set of ideas that form a kind of mental structure that I call a structure of understanding. A structure of understanding is like an abstract ecosystem and not all the things we learn survive in that environment.

Raw sense data is meaningless; it needs to be interpreted which is what the neocortex does. It's wired as a neural network that takes in data at a low level and outputs meaning at a higher level. The meaning is presented to the structure of understanding which understands and acts. This of course is a continuous loop that continues for as long as we live.

Years ago I did a bit of a study of Merleau-Ponty. Wikipedia tells us that he wrote about the "foundational role that perception plays in the human experience of the world. Merleau-Ponty understands perception to be an ongoing dialogue between one's lived body and the world which it perceives, in which perceivers passively and actively strive to express the perceived world in concert with others..." ("Maurice Merleau-Ponty").

That is, reality provides us with raw data but what we experience is a world that is an interpretation of that data and this is a dynamic process that continues all our lives. From Daniel Dennett I learned that we experience that dynamic process as a narrative about what's going on around us. Traditionally that's called being conscious. That is, not only do we not experience "the thing in itself," when we see an apple, we barely perceive the apple in isolation. We perceive the apple as an element in the story about what's happening around us. And just to make things even more abstract each of us experiences a different story. Culture and society are the outcome of us all trying to experience mutually compatible stories.

My reluctance to use the concept of a mind was that I saw it as a thing that exists in some immaterial mental space that “I” had access to. But I’m thinking that the ideas I’m working with here like “structure of understanding” and “story we tell ourselves” are not material but can readily be linked to material reality: no mental space required so perhaps I can think of that as “a mind.”

I’m taking a cultural studies class this term called Humanities 101 (HUM) at UBC and recently we had a lecture about semiotics or the study of signs.¹ Signs are made of a signifier (i.e., apple) + the meaning signified (i.e., knowledge). The denotation of a sign is whatever makes it recognizable. The connotation of a sign is whatever it means to the person experiencing it.

HUM has a set of “touchstones”:

Place,
People,
Power,
Time and
Knowledge.

We can link signs to the touchstones pretty easily. The sign was put in a particular place by a person and is seen at a time. All of those form a context that interacts with the knowledge in the mind of the viewer. Power is the relation between the viewer of the sign and the maker of the sign.

Is a mind something that can be seen through the lens of the touchstones? A mind is pretty different from the sort of things we’ve been applying the touchstones to. The context of the touchstones seems to be the interactions among individuals and groups. I’ve learned to think of a mind as something like an ecosystem that evolves. It’s like a pond with lots of life in it, but I don’t think a fish is in a power relationship with the other lifeforms in the pond. And the pond is in a location, but without a mind a place is just a depression in the ground. It takes a mind to make the depression meaningful.

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¹ Visit my blog for more discussion of Humanities 101 course content and my other areas of interest: simulat.ca

SEMIOTICS IS USEFUL

VERNON LORENZ

My objective in this essay is to discuss how the discipline of semiotics can be used by humans to better understand ourselves and the world around us.

To the best of our knowledge, we are qualitatively different from other species. We live in our heads, whereas other species appear to live in the real world. This does not mean that other species are incapable of intelligent thought, emotions, or have unique personalities.

This idea of living in our heads can be illustrated by comparing humans to dogs. If a dog is beaten and abused by a person, it will remember them and growl—or show other aggressive or defensive behaviour—when it sees the person again. However, a dog will not lose a night's sleep plotting revenge against the abusive person; a human will.

Humans are constantly experiencing inputs and generating outputs. Semiotics is a method and system of dealing with information. In my view it is also a system with a purpose. Namely, to obtain a better understanding of a topic, and thereby helping someone to be more objective in detecting biases and prejudices that can detract from the truth.

The semiotic method is divided into two fundamental parts: denotation and connotation.

Denotation: this means the facts as we see them. This should always be open to correction and expansion as we obtain more information. To illustrate, a castle wall may appear as a single flat surface from a distance. However, as you approach the wall you are able to see that it's not flat at all. Every few meters along the top of the wall are gaps where once you saw a continuous flat surface. Large stones are absent, allowing soldiers to watch for and shoot people outside the castle perimeter.

Connotation: it appears our mind wishes to put information in a context. That's how we think, with rare exceptions like when playing Jeopardy—where only the fact (denotation) is relevant and not the context (connotation). Connotation, like denotation, is open to change and expansion as we receive more information and acquire knowledge. We call this human growth and development.

I will illustrate the usefulness of the semiotic method through an example from class, followed by an example using the government's response to COVID-19. However, I feel like the complexities of the semiotic method are beyond the scope of this essay.

With denotation it is important to always keep in mind how little we may know, and how easily we might be deceived. In class, our teacher Margot held up an apple and we were asked to describe the outside appearance without adding any meaning: colour, shape, size and weight (I was one of the few in the class who lifted the apple). We examined only a small portion of the apple: the skin. The majority of the apple, the meat and core, have very different characteristics from the skin. In addition, on a film set I have often seen artificial fruits and flowers that, without close observation and touch, I couldn't tell if they were real or fake. Many things may, or are intended to, appear as something they are not.

After describing the apple, the class was asked to add meaning, which is connotation. We only referred to dominant cultural images, such as Adam and Eve and the apple, or the student bringing the teacher

an apple. These are deeply ingrained parts of our cultural stories and myths. Connotations can run much deeper and be more varied for each person in the class. For instance, a person growing up in the Okanagan and seeing large apple orchards grow from bloom to fruit each year has a different connotation than someone growing up in Vancouver. Someone biting into an apple and then finding he has a worm in his mouth would have a particular connotation. Someone who, while in grade school, was hit in the head by an apple thrown by another student would have a different connotation. The connotations are endless, both the personal meanings as well as the culturally shared meanings. Next, I will use the issue of COVID-19 to illustrate how both denotation and connotation can be used and abused.

Denotation: if one chooses to only look at the correlation between vaccinated people who died of COVID-19 as well as the negative side effects people experienced from the vaccine, one could reasonably conclude that the vaccine was neither safe or effective. For instance, statistics about these relationships are published by health authorities. This particular piece of information ignores the mortality rate of the people vaccinated versus those unvaccinated, nor does it address the number of people vaccinated and the seriousness of their side effects. Without this additional information we only have a partial picture and can easily be misled.

Connotation: some people view the vaccine measures as a government conspiracy to control people. The state exercises control over its citizens in many ways, including through violence and taxes to name a few. But the issue is this: is the control justified in the name of the common good? We must consider purpose, in this case the purpose of the government's vaccine mandate. It's no good to simply say the government is controlling people through vaccines, like many people do. A deeper inquiry is needed to work out if the means justify the ends.

Semiotics is a valuable area of study and we should apply the method with humility: recognizing that what we know is very little and even what we think we know has a significant chance of being wrong. As Mark Twain said, "It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so." Life can be and often is confusing. We struggle with information overload, as Dr. Suzuki would say. How can we find some wisdom and sanity in this world? We can apply the semiotic method to creatively and critically engage with the world.

PART TWO

Where there's walls there's holes

OCTOBER 20

GEOGRAPHY AND GENDER STUDIES: “RE-DRAWING THE BOUNDARIES: WHO’S INCLUDED IN WHICH URBAN SPACES, HOW, WHEN AND WHY?” WITH TIFFANY MULLER MYRDAHL, URBAN STUDIES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY AND WOMEN’S STUDIES, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

In this first class in “Part 2: Where there’s walls there’s holes,” we got physical! With Tiffany Muller Myrdahl, not only did we consider walls and holes, we re-drew boundaries by considering who’s included in which urban spaces, how, when and why; why it’s harder for people in small communities to access the resources they need; and how our culturally gendered, classed, racialized bodies are made in spaces that are regulated, and sometimes, feel free. To do this, we practised what’s called “cultural mapping” of the Downtown Eastside. Our favourite cultural spaces included the Carnegie Centre library, a long-gone shower stall in a Carnegie women’s washroom, and relaxing and deep breathing in Oppenheimer Park, as well as having tea with loved ones...anywhere! Tiffany invited us to send her more of our favourite places for our very own online map. Cultural mapping is a way to collectively build knowledge, share our experiences in conversation with each other, empower our communities and support the formation of a community identity. That’s a lot! And with a lot of bodies in spaces! And while we may be unaware of our knowledge on an everyday level, we know all this simply by being embodied souls on our blue planet, Mother Earth. This telescoping sense of place is particular to the discipline of geography, where all scales are embedded together, where global phenomena meet us in our bodies and where our identities are shaped by and shape the places we inhabit.

Critical urban geography points out that the spaces we occupy do not emerge out of a void. The making of a city is derived from the existing political, economic or social values embedded in the urban fabric. All elements of cities as we witness them—their housing structure, urban planning, transit plans, etc.—are a result of the historical “needs” of those that live in the city; or specifically, of those in power. To approach this from a specific place, we focused on the research and community action project “Walk With Me,” set during the 2016 poisoned drug supply crisis which resulted in thousands and thousands of deaths. This project was done by two small communities in B.C. which were really feeling the effects of a lack of resources to provide much-needed social support; gaps in local, urban, municipal, provincial and federal funding allocations; hierarchies and inadequate access to contribute to relevant decision-making; and over-research and under-implementation of findings by universities. What can small communities do? One option is to follow the urgings of the second reading we did for this class, an essay on participatory action research and Indigenous theories of change, by Eve Tuck (Aleutian), who offers this paradigm: “No research without action, no action without research.”

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OCTOBER 27

PHILOSOPHY: “SITUATIONS WE FIND AND MAKE OURSELVES IN,” WITH CHRISTINA HENDRICKS, PHILOSOPHY AND CTLT (CENTRE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES), UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

One of Western philosophy’s preoccupations has to do with the question: Who am I? As a philosopher, Christina Hendricks told us that she was made in situations and power relations she only later understood the significance of, including growing up on Shoshone Nation land, and studying and teaching in the lands of many Indigenous peoples, now in the unceded, ancestral, traditional land of the hən’q’əmin’əm’-speaking x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) people.

In this class, Christina approached questions of people and power through the work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984) who wondered how we might make and re-make ourselves in resistance to power relations. Christina asked, “What does ‘hope’ have to do with our own resistance and re-making in education generally... and specifically in Hum?” Seeing how power is in all relationships—it affects what counts as truth and knowledge (remember that knowledge is one of our five Hum touchstones, along with place, people, power and time)—Foucault argues that power moves through people, power is relationships; in all relationships there is power, it’s something you do, it’s a verb like “resist” or “comply,” for starters, but the scope of resistance may be or seem delimited. So, in this approach, people have many ways of entering into power relations with ourselves and with others in which we find, make and re-make ourselves. Then we can ask, “Who are we?”

Indigenous cultures value balance and reciprocity, and both Indigenous and Western cultures value relationships. Foucault highlighted relationships that embody “stuck” structural and lived power imbalances in dominant perspectives which may appear as classism, sexism, racism, able-ism and more; these imbalances delegitimize some of us by supporting ideologically-loaded “common sense” embedded with dominant values that we are invited to carry through our lives. However, Foucault insists that resistance to power is always possible, stating in his book *The Subject and Power* (1982), “[T]here is no relationship of power without the means of escape or possible flight... It would not be possible for power relations to exist without points of insubordination which, by definition, are means of escape” (208).

Seeking to learn more about power relations and identity—a wider approach to the questions “Who am I? Who are we?”—Christina turned to the work of Black feminist sociologist and activist Patricia Hill Collins’ “Black Feminist Thought” (1990) to learn about what Black women have done to resist intersecting and interdependent oppressions that focus on *race*, gender, class, sexuality, dis/ability and more (sometimes called “intersectionality”), asking what communities and actions have moved the dial? Since all relations of power are different, they can’t just be added together... so your resistance, your activism, your hopes are going to look different! In this context, is Hum a school of life that supports alternative standpoints, counter-knowledges, collective resistance, radical hope and movement toward justice?

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ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES AND CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES: “WRITING WITH THE WORLD AROUND US,” WITH REUBEN JENTINK, EDUCATION GRADUATE PROGRAM, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

We make and are made by place, just as its unmaking is our own. Places are about meaning-making, not simply what’s around: buildings, shrubbery, lampposts. These elements are imbued with cultural, historical and shared meanings. From any location, Reuben Jentink emphasized that what we see is always only a partial perspective. For instance, if you gather a group of people at a single spot on a hill and ask them to look across the landscape, they will identify the same elements—a single row of houses, fields full of animals, train tracks, a gas station. But from that single perspective on the hill many partial perspectives exist. Different people have different associations with the elements they see. Reuben said the very act of identifying a place presupposes our presence, and we must account from where we are seeing because there is a politics of place in everything we see.

Environmental Humanities grapples with these politics. Environmental humanities is located in environmental sciences, humanities and social sciences. It questions what it means to be human in an era of global ecological change. It questions how concepts regarding nature and the environment need to change in the face of the present climatic situation.

Reuben asked the class what sorts of ideas, concepts and pictures come to mind when you think of what counts as nature? Trees, fences, cows, green, farming, forests, to name a few. Labels like “wilderness,” “untouched” and “pristine” get attached to particular images of the natural world and not others, forming one aspect of what we regard as the environmental. Next, thinking about the making of Hum, we were invited to talk about the places that make the program: The Delly, 99 B-Line, Buchanan E270, the Downtown Eastside, lampposts, UBC’s libraries, Carnegie Centre.... And it’s all put together through presentations at intake sessions, PowerPoint lectures, yearbooks and year-long conversations. There are so many ways to tell stories about the land, our place in the land and the things that are made there. These stories change across people and geographies, they differ through time and take place within specific cultures and histories.

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CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES: “MAKING A DIFFERENT YIELD WITH INFORMED SUBJECTIVITIES,” WITH DANIEL HEATH JUSTICE, INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES AND ENGLISH, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Daniel Heath Justice started off the class by situating Hum as one of the best intellectual communities he has the privilege of being part of because we understand why we're here, and because we all come with knowledge and want to have complicated conversations as a community of collaboration, of shared experiences marked with struggle. Daniel told us that he sees what happens in Hum as amongst the most important work in the university.

In the context of “the making of us,” Daniel spoke about the turbulent history of his own Cherokee Nation: its three governments; the “Trail of Tears” (1838–39)—when most Cherokees were forcibly removed in an act of ethnic cleansing from their homelands in Southwestern US to what is now Oklahoma; and the privatization of collectively-held Indigenous lands where their 20 million acres were reduced to less than one million. Daniel asked: How do we reconcile the gap fostered by generations of violence? How do we find those stories that form the connective tissue between generations? How do we maintain a sense of being “people?” Literature is one way of doing that, though not the only one. Stories help keep us together. We are storied creatures, and stories both make and break us.

Indigenous literature extends beyond the traditional literary forms that Western cultures uphold. Literature can be material, including Indigenous cultural belongings that are forms of communication, even passed hand to hand. At this point, Daniel brought out his teaching “Two-Row” Wampum, a beaded fringed belt patterned with alternating rows of white and purple quahog beads which represent a living treaty that began in the 17th century, and signifies a respectful relationship between Haudenosaunee and the Dutch: for their people to live together in peace, and for their nations to respect the rights and ways of the other as they meet to discuss solutions to the issues they face. “Together we will travel in Friendship and in Peace Forever; as long as the grass is green, as long as the water runs downhill, as long as the sun rises in the East and sets in the West, and as long as our Mother Earth will last.” Centuries later, holding and passing the heavy teaching belt, we felt the wampum as a dynamic text, filled with relations, designed to be alive and in living relationship. Indeed, wampum belts are a form of literature, communicating stories and histories that bind cultures together.

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AFFECT THEORY: “WHAT IF EVERYTHING YOU NEED IS ALREADY INSIDE YOU?” WITH MATHEW ARTHUR, GENDER, SEXUALITY AND WOMEN’S STUDIES, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY, PHD CANDIDATE.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Mathew Arthur explained that affect studies looks at the world through bodies and feelings, as opposed to words and symbols. Through sensation and movement, rather than semiotics, the discipline focuses on all the things that bodies do but without privileging language and symbols. By starting with feeling instead of intention, ideology or language, we can include more than just humans into our considerations of subjectivity and agency.

Affective relationships can exist between humans, animals, objects, the weather, nature etc. For example, all objects in a room are always performing—a chair is sized to fit a certain body, the table is designed to allow a human on the chair to slide underneath it. The capacity to take action is not necessarily a matter of individual agency. No matter how skilled, strong or worthy a person is, what can be done always depends on the available tools and environment. For example, rainy weather can affect people differently. Our senses dictate how we think about the world around us. For example, body odour, which is completely natural, is often indicative of personal or moral hygiene (or lack thereof), and invites criticism toward one’s ability to take care of themselves, be clean or even their financial status.

In her book *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), Sarah Ahmed writes about how shared emotions affect our political opinions. Patriotism and nationalism are not just national ideas, they are the feeling of tears welling up when we sing the national anthem. Crowds also play an important role in shaping affect. This is especially evident in protest marches and religious congregations. Crowds and bodies move, orienting physical and emotional states, orientating how we act or even how we come to believe.

In 1995, Canadian Brian Massumi published his influential paper, *Autonomy of Affect*, where he argued that affect is used to shape political opinion. He illustrates how former U.S. President Ronald Reagan used his charisma, posture and tone of voice, as opposed to proper political prowess or intellect, to garner public approval and rise in power. More recently, Mat said that B.C. health minister Bonnie Hendry was trained to use ASMR techniques to deliver her daily COVID-19 reports in a soothing, reassuring tone.

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SOCIOLOGY: “WHAT IF EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON EVERYTHING ELSE?” WITH TOM KEMPLE, SOCIOLOGY, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Tom Kemple started this class by making apparent his relationships with us: “I’m a stranger to some of you, but not all of you.” This immediately set a tone of inquiry, transparency and curiosity... with those of us who already knew him wondering how well we knew him... and those who didn’t know him suddenly experiencing a “stranger” guest teacher in our own familiar classroom! Being alerted to this paradigm was just what we needed to be receptive to the work of the German Jewish sociologist Georg Simmel, who experienced and creatively theorized this oscillation between the stranger, the wanderer (for example, Hum guest teachers) and the one who stays. Simmel (1864–1918) was unjustly spurned from proper academic positions because of prejudice, yet his brilliant insights situated from this position have brought a great deal to many academic disciplines. Simmel’s shared self-awareness highlights both the separateness and connectedness that contribute to the making of us and the world.

Both Simmel and Tom enjoy thinking with the figures of the door and the bridge which connect and separate. Doors provide a link between the space of human beings and everything that remains outside it, and bridges connect humans and other beings through interactions and associations. Indeed, the discipline of sociology turns on the social relationships between interaction and association. Simmel wrote: “We are at any moment those who separate the connected or connect the separated” (“Bridge and Door” 171). Stated more formally, Georg Simmel saw doors and bridges as physical manifestations of the articulated character of all social life. They can be embodied where “strangers” find and make holes in walls, as the African American gay author James Baldwin wrote about in the essay we read for this class called “Stranger in the Village” (1955) that focuses on his experiences of racialization in a small Swiss village, and elsewhere.

A scholar of Simmel’s work, Tom is also a creative visual and spatial thinker (qualities often found in installation artists and architects, for starters) and in his very long career as a Hum guest teacher, he has taught us through images and diagrams that show relationships between connections and separations. Our first slide of a door, complete with perspective and hinges, represented this favourite Simmel quote, “The wall is mute but the door speaks.” Another slide demonstrated that there are two dimensions to any social experience, time and space/distance, and declared that we’re actually in interconnecting social circles where everyone depends on everyone else, but not in the same way and not equally. His figure of interconnecting social circles lets us see how we are interdependent, and, perhaps, what we can do from t/here.

Indeed, *the making of us* as both separate and connected beings was a wonderful premise for us to consider and put into play while we were apart over the break, and to talk about when we were back studying together in the new year.

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DECEMBER 8

HUM: “MAKING HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES!” END OF TERM CELEBRATION FOR ALL HUM AND WRITING PARTICIPANTS!

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Hum loves a good ol’ partie. We shared food, mingled, played games and laughed a lot. This year’s end-of-term party took place in a basement, where all the fun stuff happens! Thanks to Hum’s fabulous long-term volunteer Delanie Austin, this year’s party was hosted in Sprouts Café, where Delanie also volunteers—talk about a committed volunteer!

Sprouts is a student-run organization that address food insecurity. They make lives better by nurturing bellies and minds with local B.C. foods—lots of which is quality food donated by supermarkets before it becomes food waste. To support the drastic number of students who need support accessing affordable, healthy foods, Sprouts has crafted a number of innovative food initiatives: seasonal, organic B.C. produce for sale at whatever price the buyer can afford; a free community fridge; a meal distribution initiative in solidarity with the DTES; and 30 free lunches a day, plus free Friday lunches at their rad café.

THE PATH TO MAKE MY BIG DREAM COME TRUE

YANDIRA FELIZ

First term's winding path: I have many paths that have brought me to university. I want to go way back in time to when I was 20 years old. I was pregnant with my first child. I was working at Harry Rosen part time and attending the University of Toronto. The workload got too much for me, and the doctor put me on bedrest. I was left to raise a beautiful child on my own. At that point I was left with the urge to return back to university one day.

A lot of the jobs that I was applying for required me to have university degree or some university experience. I ended up settling for whatever job I could get at the grocery store, telemarketing or any retail outlet. I ended up getting a chance to work in a hotel. I went on to work in hospitality for ten years and within that time I learned to be a server, front desk agent, reservations agent, and went on to be a reservations manager. Although this gave me lots of experience and real-life education, I still had the urge to return back to school.

I didn't have childcare to attend school during this time. I also did not have the means to go back to university and complete any type of course. I started taking small computer courses and such, but nothing was very fulfilling for me.

Born in the Dominican Republic and immigrating to Canada when I was ten, I lived in Ontario most of my life. About a year ago I decided to move to Vancouver and start a new life. When I first arrived in Vancouver, I was directed to go to the Downtown Eastside for assistance in navigating throughout Vancouver. I was sent to the YWCA Crabtree Corner. This is where I saw the posting for the HUM class. It seemed almost too good to be true. I attended the information session. I was able to apply to be a part of one of the courses.

Attending this HUM course has been one of the best decisions I have ever made. I have made a great group of friends, and have been able to learn an array of information from first account elders that I would otherwise not be able to have access to. Each week, I look forward to the learning and engaging through the HUM program. UBC has facilitated something that I wouldn't otherwise have access to, taking away the regular obstacles of food security, tuition payment, childcare costs, and the traditional application process.

Currently, we are finishing off the first semester. So far we are having an expert come in every class, and so are able to get a real-life hands-on experience shared with us by the different guest speakers. We also had a class trip. We went to where we explored murals in Mt. Pleasant and their meanings. It brings me so much joy to be able to fulfil my dream to return to university. It gives me confidence and pride to be having this opportunity. I am also now able to share my learnt experiences with my daughter. I can understand Indigenous people's experiences, cultures, and values a little better and am able to respond more appropriately. Being able to put this experience on my resume also makes me more employable. An overall unique and wonderful experience.

Second term's forming path: I have accomplished a "Big Dream" of mine, to pursue higher education. The concept of "Big Dreams" is a fascinating one, since it captures so much of what I aspire to achieve in my life. My "Big Dream" is no longer just a vague hope or longing but has now become a concrete vision of what I want to accomplish and how I want to impact the community around me.

One of the key elements of big dreams is that they often require a significant amount of effort and determination to bring to fruition. It's not enough to simply desire something. One must have a willingness to step out of our comfort zones and take on new challenges, as well as a commitment to personal growth and development. Putting in the hard work and persistence necessary to make it a reality. This can be a challenging and daunting task, but for those who are truly committed to their dreams, the rewards can be enormous.

Another important aspect of pursuing a higher education is that it is linked to my core values and beliefs. Values like integrity, social justice, creativity, and innovation. By pursuing higher education in Indigenous Studies that aligns with these values, as we have done in this HUM course, I have been able to connect with my passion for writing and connecting with the community around me. Helping me find meaning and purpose in my life.

Of course, pursuing a higher education has also had its challenges and obstacles. There have been setbacks, failures, and disappointments along the way, but being truly committed to my dreams, I have been able to persevere and overcome these obstacles. It is often said that the most successful people are those who have failed the most times, but who have kept going despite their setbacks.

One way that has helped ensure success in pursuing my education has been having a clear and well-defined plan in place. This includes goal setting, breaking down the course into smaller, more manageable steps, and creating timelines for achieving those steps. It has also been important to have a strong support network of family, friends, and mentors who have offered encouragement, guidance, and advice along the way.

Ultimately, the pursuit of education has been deeply personal and meaningful for me. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of a program that not only provides education but also allows me to connect with people who share similar experiences and aspirations. By embracing the challenges and opportunities that have come with pursuing a higher education, I have been able to live a more fulfilling and meaningful life. In the future, I intend to use my abilities and knowledge to give back to the neighbourhood.

IT IS ALL ABOUT OPEN-MINDEDNESS

CINDY QT

Humans have built walls to keep others out, or in, for so many years in history. Ancient walls like the Great Wall in China were for defense, while our modern walls are for discrimination physically and mentally. We also build walls to take control of access to resources and for power, like we build our own municipalities, communities, neighborhoods and families, etc. All these mental walls are called social concepts that separate people while also linking individuals together for support. While in our history we have had many of these social concepts, some separations have bad influences more than good, like residential schools in Canada that separated Indigenous kids from their families and communities. Although these schools linked the different communities through the colonial culture and the English language, the separations were harmful and did not work as support because they were created by white settlers and based on the idea of white superiority.

The anthropologist Ashley Montagu points out that race is a social concept with no genetic basis (Montagu 46). Similarly, Richard Charles Lewontin, a pioneer of molecular evolution who campaigned against biological racism, wrote in a landmark paper in 1972 that most genetic variation within human populations (80–85%) is found *within* local geographic groups, and that differences attributed to traditional “race” groups are a minor part of human genetic variability (1–15%) (Lewontin 397). Lewontin and his collaborators revealed how natural selection acts to shape variation, exploring its effect on genes, groups, and individuals, and showing how race is not a scientifically justifiable way to divide people.

So, if racial groups do not have scientific basis, and racism is a wall between people used to justify harmful practices like residential schools, we may ask why we still talk about these kinds of social groups. Why don’t we treat people only as individuals if group affiliations can reinforce racism and stereotypes? Taylor H. Cox, a former associate professor from the University of Michigan, gives us a good answer in his book *Cultural Diversity in Organizations*. Talking about the importance of group identities, Cox states:

First, social identity theory informs us that individual identity—the self-concept in psychological terms—is partly *defined* by various group affiliations (Tajfel, 1978; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). For example, in responding to the question ‘Who am I?’ an individual might say: (1) ‘I am an inquisitive person’ (individual trait) and (2) ‘I am a Christian’ (a group identity) ...

A second reason that group identities must be recognized is that for some, the recognition and preservation of these identities is a matter of personal pride and self-esteem. For example, many American Indians turn down lucrative job opportunities elsewhere in order to remain on reservations. Such decisions are made partly out of a sense of responsibility for, and identification with, the educational and economic challenges faced by other members of their tribes. Thus to ignore these identities is to undermine something of great significance to individuals themselves (Cox 156–157).

So Indigenous people in Canada, like Musqueam people and other First Nations, Inuit, or Métis are social concepts, group identities, and important parts of individual identity. Simmel makes the point that, “things must first be separated from one another in order to be together” (Simmel 171). So we can see that, even if group identities separate us like a wall, in the end the point is not the walls

we have created or are going to create. The point is how we think of them. If we are open-minded and aware of these barriers, they can bring us together as well. Simmel also writes that “the door represents in a more decisive manner how separating and connecting are only two sides of precisely the same act” (Simmel 172). Communication and interaction are so natural and essential for us, if we are open-minded, we will focus on the linkage doors, not the separation walls.

In conclusion, we separate people for a wide variety of reasons like safety, a desire for control, or discrimination. The social concepts and group identities we use separate people, but also link individuals for better support together. With open-mindedness and advocate movements like anti-racism and feminism we can turn these walls to doors and create a more equitable and just society where everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources. By recognizing the importance of our thoughts with open-mindedness and focusing on our linkages to support each other we can have a more open and inclusive world. We are humans, as social animals we were created to support each other. That is what Stoics believed, and I believe it as well (Delaney).

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THE WORLD IS MOVED BY WAR

RAUL A. CASTILLO RIOS

Puerto Colombia is a coastal city located in the Atlantic Department of Colombia, and its strategic location makes it an important gateway to the country. The city has a long history of international trade, and its port has played a significant role in the development of the Colombian economy. The port accepts a wide range of cargo, including containers and bulk products, vehicles, petroleum products, tobacco, quinine, and coffee skins. The Puerto Colombia dock was built at the end of the 19th century to improve the loading and unloading capacity of merchandise. The construction of the dock was directed by the British company The Colombia Railways Limited which also built the railway that connected Puerto Colombia with Barranquilla and other cities. The railway was built in stages between 1870 and 1890. To build the railway, 5,000 feet of wood was brought from Canada and 2,000 feet of steel from Belgium (Daccarett and Arango).

When I was a child in Puerto Colombia, my grandfather used to tell me about ship berthing. It is the process of bringing a ship to a designated port or dock. Before a ship docks, the crew must contact the port authorities. The ship's captain must also consider factors such as weather, tides, and currents. When he is near the dock, the crew will use various equipment such as ropes, cables and fenders to secure the ship. After the ship is secured, the crew usually begins the unloading processes.

The world is moved by war. Before the beginning of the First World War, German ships were forewarned that if the war began, they would have to look for neutral ports. In the summer of 1914 the Great War began, and the decision to travel to Colombia was made. The ship managed to reach its destination and spent most of the war near Puerto Colombia. However, in 1918 the crew was ordered by the German government to sink the ship to keep it from falling into the hands of the enemy. The crew sprayed it with fuel and the steamship burned, that was the decision.

Many meters from the coast of the municipality of Puerto Colombia, northwest of the country, the luxurious German cruise ship Prinz August Wilhelm was consumed in flames. On the night of April 22, 1918, abandoned adrift, with the valves open to accelerate the sinking and with the cabin on fire, the cruise ship moved away from the coast and disappeared under the sea. According to experts, this episode was the most significant in which Colombia was involved in the First World War. (Daccarett and Arango).

Puerto Colombia and its dock was the entrance to modernization in Colombia. Many people in Colombia do not want to recognize the importance of history, of our municipality, and some other Colombians do not even know the history. I know that I was born in that town and I feel proud to be part of this history. I have met German ships destroyed by the sea, I have seen the pier, and I have heard the stories that the grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents tell. Today I live in Canada and tell the story of how my municipality Puerto Colombia was an open door that I walked through to be somewhere else. Now I live and learn in Canada as a citizen.

“You are rich when your brain explores something new” — Raul

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PART THREE

It only takes a spark

JANUARY 12

ANTHROPOLOGY: “IT ONLY TAKES A SPARK... OR A LEAK...OR A TREMBLE! MAKING MUSEUMS RESILIENT,” WITH SUSAN ROWLEY, MOA (MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY) AND ANTHROPOLOGY, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

MOA is 75 years old. Our guide Sue Rowley said that from the very beginning Musqueam has asked the museum: Who are you? Why are you here? And why do you do the funny things you do? Over time, the museum has increasingly involved its host Musqueam Nation in decision-making about the museum’s collection and exhibits. MOA displays works of art and belongings from cultures around the world, with a particular focus on the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest.

On the tour, we first stopped on the ramp leading down to the famous Great Hall, where iconic Totem Poles reach into the tall, concrete frame. We admired some woven blankets made by Musqueam weaver Debra Sparrow $\theta\acute{a}li\chi^w\acute{a}l^w\acute{a}t$ (Thelliawhatlwit) and her daughter. Weaving is an age-old tradition among local First Nations, and it’s currently experiencing a resurgence. Sue explained that the wool from which the blankets are made traditionally came from two sources: mountain goats and a unique breed of dog native to the Gulf Islands off the coast of Vancouver. These dogs grew lush white hair perfect for weaving. When settlers arrived, the dogs were brought to the mainland and bred with other dogs, but a recessive gene meant the dogs were bred out of existence, and along with it a key source of raw material for blanket making.

Not all of the museum’s artifacts are made from premium materials. *Born Box*, by Haida artist Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, is an installation made from local, reclaimed wood. Twelve painted panels tell a unique story about Vancouver through the theme of Indigenous erasure. For instance, in one panel is a painting of Vancouver’s famous mountains The Lions, which are known as Ch’ich’iyúy Elxwíkn (Twin Sisters) to the local Squamish First Nations. Using the semiotic method to analyze another panel, we identified a ship, provincial flags, floating lumber, a peculiar looking character wearing a top hat and a burning chimney—together we took these to symbolize colonial resource extraction.

From the Great Hall, we were veered into the “multiversity” gallery, a permanent exhibit modeled on the Seven Seas. 108 display cases and 500 drawers display belongings from all parts of the world. A new installation, *Ghost Net*, uses found oceans nets that entangled sea creatures to create sculptures of that very same marine life. Hanging from the museum’s rafters, shark and tortoise sculptures reminded us that the ocean is all connected, and what happens in one part of the ocean (commercial fishing), affects the rest (entangled sea life).

The *Xicanx* exhibit was our final stop. *Xicanx* explores the theme of national borders through works by artists of American-Mexican heritage. There, two Hum students spoke of their own journey and struggles navigating border crossings on their way to Canada.

CULTURAL STUDIES AND ACTIVISM: “SHIMMERING SEMIOTICS: JUST FOLLOW THE SIGNS!”
WITH MARGOT LEIGH BUTLER, HUM AND ASSOCIATE, INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL INDIGENOUS
STUDIES, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

It quickly emerged that this classroom was full of semioticians, so quickly and deeply adept were participants at learning and practising semiotics! All they needed for future creative and critical work was a reminder of the processes and concepts... so here they are, for all time!

Semiotic practice in six easy steps

- 1) Noticing or finding a cultural SIGN that interests you (an apple, a wave, a feather...).
- 2) Perceiving it carefully, freshly, through DENOTATION (literal description) as though you've never seen it before. *Do this by holding meaning back while describing **only** what you see, aloud.*
- 3) Understanding the SIGN'S shared cultural meanings through CONNOTATION.
- 4) Researching it, finding out what worlds are packed into that SIGN.
- 5) Putting the SIGN in different contexts: put the history, politics, economics, etc., *back in!*
- 6) Using known SIGNS to make new SIGNS and making new meanings for existing SIGNS.

Key concepts and terms in semiotics

- **Semiotics:** the study of systems of SIGNS. **SIGNS** are made of a signifier (i.e. apple) + the meaning signified (i.e. knowledge) **Denotation:** saying what you see, without interpreting the meanings. **Connotation:** culturally shared meanings.
- **Representation:** the use of languages to make meanings... which are not *fixed* but *always negotiated and changing*. **Genre:** a type, kind or style of representation (graphic novel, sci-fi film, poetry, punk rock...). **Image-text relations:** meanings made through relationships between images and texts/words. **Narrative:** a story and how it is told.
- **Agency:** the power we build together to act and make meaning. In semiotics, humans and non-humans are seen as engaged in constructing cultures, not as passive inheritors. **Détournement:** detouring or hijacking the meaning of signs to make new ones! AdBusters!
- **Culture:** Culture is the production and exchange of meanings, the giving and taking of meaning, between members of a society or group. It's a set of processes or **practices** through which individuals and groups come to **make sense** of those things. Cultural Studies scholar Raymond Williams described culture as “**a whole way of life**” (culture in the anthropological sense, synonymous with everyday life), and as the **forms of signification** that circulate within a society, like books, films, advertising, television, internet, music, dance, protest cultures, etc. Meaning inhabits and cultivates cultural forms and practices, and semiotics approaches them as SIGNS which can be analyzed through semiotic denotation, connotation, etc. and made anew by us. They're ours! Cultural Studies values highly our own “**situated knowledges.**”
- **Identity and Subjectivity:** identity is about how we're constructed in societies' discourses and institutions, like gender, sexuality, race, class, religion, nationality which all inhabit specific relations with power. Our subjectivity is our own experience of our identity, it's *who we take ourselves to be*.
- **Dualisms:** thinking in twos, binaries, opposites—white/black, strong/weak—which makes power imbalances seem fixed, natural or “normal,” and gets rid of greys and relational inbetweens.... Western cultures are drenched in dualistic thinking—shake it off with semiotics!

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ART AND CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES: “WHEN SPARKS IGNITE A CREATIVE FIRE THAT LIVES WITHIN US” FIELD TRIP TO THE VANCOUVER ART GALLERY.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Provincial Structures by Carmen Papalia and “co-conspirators,” aka collaborators, explores disability culture and disability justice through the works of non-visual artists. Papalia, who is a non-visual artist living with chronic pain, considers how material structures like art galleries, or other public spaces, can be arranged to better accommodate disabled, sick and chronically ill people. The exhibit itself creates its own intervention in the gallery structure by ensuring the exhibit is disability centred, which means time, space and resources are dedicated to create accessible spaces. One of the tour guides, Tara, emphasized accessibility means making information, activities and/or environments sensible, meaningful and usable for as many people as possible—to which one Hum participant added, “beautiful.” Papalia draws attention to government neglect and medical ableism throughout his works. One piece especially pertinent to Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside was the hundreds of semi-deflated black balloons scattered around the gallery, which represented the number of people who will die of drug overdoses over the duration of the exhibit. A second consisted of a presentation area where dialogue from a disability filibuster in opposition to Bill C-7 is projected. A recent change to Bill C-7 means medical assistance in dying has extended to people whose natural death is not reasonably foreseeable, a change that has the potential to result in people living with mental health conditions being euthanized by medical practitioners—what Papalia described as cultural eugenics.

Guud San Glans Robert Davidson: A Line That Bends But Does Not Break displays paintings and prints from Haida artist Robert Davidson. The exhibit was arranged in chronological sequence, starting with Davidson’s earlier, more traditional Haida prints and drawings, through to his more experimental innovations with Haida form. While looking at his earlier more traditional works, our tour guides taught us some key principles of Haida art practice, such as how formlines are drawn, how positive and negative space is used, and the importance of shapes like the ovoid and tri-negs in Haida art. In his earlier works, Davidson followed Haida convention through his representation of Haida’s mythological creatures and animals of significance, whereas his later pieces, such as *The World is as Sharp as the Edge of a Knife* (1992), drew on abstraction and modernism to give the viewer licence to interpret the meaning. This artwork inspired the question for this term’s first assignment: When in your life has the bending of a line that did not break been the making of you, the making of us?

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FIRST NATIONS AND ENDANGERED LANGUAGES AND SEMIOTICS: “HUM AS A NEXUS IN WORLD MAKING,” WITH DR. BERNARD PERLEY (MALISEET FROM NEGOOT-GOOK [TOBIQUE] FIRST NATION), INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Language experts estimate that anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of languages will be extinct by the end of the century (Baldwin et al 207). But what does it mean when linguists decide a language is endangered or extinct? Dr. Bernard Perley argues that the concept of extinction, which means gone forever, is a foreign concept for Aboriginal people, and applying this metaphor to language can hinder rather than help language revitalization efforts. When a language is endangered, the typical response of expert linguists is to capture and document the language before the last speakers are gone.

For Dr. Perley, language is about social relations—it is about relationships—so you may be able to document the language, but the relationships are lost, and it’s the relationships that really matter. The focus needs to shift from “saving the language,” to “saving the relationships.” If the relationships are alive and well then the language has life, and the language users continue to make the world, to build the world, through their stories.

What if linguists are wrong to think about languages as extinct? What if languages are not extinct, but are in fact asleep? This was a question posed by Daryl Baldwin, the co-author of the class reading. If a language is asleep, it can be awoken. This semantic shift ignited a spark in Dr. Perley and his colleagues. It challenged the conventional way of thinking about language, by transforming the emphasis on death and dying to language life and vitality.

Dr. Perley emphasized his points through a world-building activity. Each of the four groups of students, volunteers and staff were given cards from a deck of Maya Tarot cards. Each card was printed with unique characters, scenes and symbols. Every group was asked to arrange the cards on the table with the following prompts in mind:

1. What do you call your community?
2. What is the social organization of the community?
3. Create an origin story for the community.

This fun, challenging, world-making activity produced some vivid, creative stories, which were written down on pieces of paper and presented to the class. Dr. Perley then took the four stories, stood at the front of the room, and without saying a word, he ripped three of the stories in half. Gasps echoed around the room. If we continue with the “expert” discourse and say languages are extinct, Dr. Perley said, then the contributions of these languages and their users are no longer contributing to the story of the world. If we didn’t hear the groups creative stories before they were destroyed, their contribution to making the world would be gone.

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A LINE THAT BENDS BUT DOES NOT BREAK

DAN WILSON

I've learned to cope living my life travelling down a river without any steering. It has revealed strengths. I've learned compassion rather than anger. I've learned wisdom rather than mindlessness.

Life does become overwhelming living in the city, especially the DTES, and it can break a person. Bending the line and learning from it builds strength.

At the Vancouver Art Gallery we were given a guided tour of the exhibit, *Guud San Glans Robert Davidson: A line that bends but does not break*. In Davidson's artworks there are no breakable lines. All his artwork flows in a continuous line with many bends along the way. If we use Davidson's art as a metaphor for life, there are no breaking points, just lines and curves and new patterns at every turn. Nobody's life is mapped out ahead of time. There are always unforeseen twists and bends that have the potential to break a person.

I see Davidson as a trickster, a popular First Nations character associated with being mischievous. Our guide recalled how Davidson would sometimes take his artworks off the gallery wall and turn it on its side or upside down in order to trick the public. He messes with the tradition. I feel like when the art is turned a different story is revealed. From birth to death is one continuous flow. It doesn't need to follow a simple straight path.

In Davidson's art he uses both the positive and negative space, and various shapes, including ovoids, tri-negs, U-forms and form lines. Davidson emphasizes the *balance* of positive and negative space in his designs (Vancouver Art Gallery 36). All Haida children should learn this so it would become second nature. As an adult it's harder to learn and practice. It's important for children to recognize their culture through art so they can make art, appreciate it, and find their path in life.

I feel like life is a continuous flow. Like when someone dies it's not the end of the world. You have to find a way to get on with it by taking a new turn. Having lived in the Downtown Eastside for 20 plus years and having lost many friends and a dear loved one, I could break and become bitter and disillusioned. Instead, I bend. I learn to become a Stoic. I try to cope with my emotions using critical thinking.

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WE ARE GOD'S SEEDS

ANGELINA ANTHONY

I climb under, over, and around the lines that life unexpectedly throws at me. These lines are my obstacles that are all connected with each other to make a net. I feel like a fish in a net. Being defined by courage, I want to be that person who, no matter what happens, just gets back up and keeps going. I want to be that person who is loyal to people and loyal to God. We are God's seeds. He planted us so we can grow, and grow in His image, and be fruitful.

I don't believe in coincidence. There is a divine order to the magnificence of our lives. I deeply believe when you want something all the universe conspires in helping you achieve it. I believe before you embrace any quest, you must first articulate your vision, set your course.

You must remove the roadblock by believing in yourself, with persistent practice and discipline. Your only limits are the ones you set. Don't just break the ceiling, reach for the sky. Everyone is entitled to miracles. And when miracles are not occurring something has gone very wrong. We have the capacity to earn money, we have the capacity to live a far greater life, but we must make that decision. You must exercise your free will and make a conscious choice to see differently.

Optimism is like music that grows stronger with use. When you want to build a house, you've got to keep using it. That's how you must be. I'm an eternal optimist and so I can find those little silver linings, those little moral victories. It takes courage to believe the best is yet to come.

Right now, I am doing this assignment. I want to continue my learning journey, but I have unstable living conditions. I am determined to be creative, yet I have to overcome obstacles on a daily basis. I am making a choice to compensate for life's losses.

My unique way to thrive is by occupying myself with exciting, creative ideas. Sharing experiences and knowledge gives you joy. It may sound simple to yearn for a greater circle of knowledge, but for me this intention leads to establishing pathways and tactics to survive. Sometimes it feels impossible to be a student in my situation. I have no family connections. I have no permanent home. I also volunteer and work. For me the present is a thin line that keeps on expanding like Guud san glans Robert Davidson's work.

I cry sometimes. This is an example of bending but not breaking from the exhaustion of living. The turning point that keeps me on the tightrope without falling is the broadening of my circle of knowledge. I do this through dance, meditation, and yoga. Extending the line arises from my need for physical activity. I welcome discomfort to stay engaged.

By watching others be very committed with their activities, it inspires me. We inspire each other in several ways by watching, talking, sharing, body language, and so on. We can do anything—together we can move the sky. The first step is already taken, and all the rest will follow. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

WE MAY BEND, BUT WE ALWAYS FIND OUR WAY BACK TO A PLACE OF STRENGTH

NICKY JOHN

In life's darkest moments, it is often said that we must "bend, not break." We must find the strength to keep going and work through the hardships. In the painting, *A Line That Bends But Does Not Break*, the artist reflects on the resilience of people, and how they strive forward despite the difficulties they face. The title speaks of a power greater than our own and serves as a reminder that there is a light at the end of each storm.

Our society has been challenged by many unexpected events in the past year. Since the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, we have witnessed a shift in the way we interact with each other, as well as how we work, learn, and live our everyday lives. Despite the struggles that have come with this rapid change, we have also been presented with unique opportunities to rethink our pre-COVID ways of life. For example, many of us have embraced remote working and learning as preferable alternatives to traditional office spaces and classrooms.

When life throws us a curveball, we can either crumble under the weight or take it in stride and find the strength to carry on. We can learn how to navigate difficult times and be resilient, never losing sight of our goals. This is the philosophy that guides *A Line That Bends But Does Not Break*.

The sky is full of dark clouds, and our world is facing hardships and troubles. But, in the midst of this tribulation, we have hope for a brighter future. We must strive to stay true to our ideals, no matter how hard times may be—as this will help us to create a better tomorrow for ourselves and for those we care about. Although our lives may be different and there are bumps in the road, we must remember to never forget our moral values and pursue them with all of our hearts.

The saying "a line that bends but does not break" is an apt description of human resilience and the ability to withstand adversity. Often times when we are faced with situations that seem insurmountable, we find a way to not only survive but thrive. We can take comfort in knowing that no matter how hard something may seem, it will not break us. We may bend, but we always find our way back to a place of strength.

BORN FREE OR NOT BORN FREE?

SIMEON TONG

Here, I write about my feelings and experiences expressed through metaphors with nature. I see nature as a line that bends but does not break.

At the very beginning—when I land in Toronto in 1993—I am as free as a new born eagle in the sky.

One year later, back in my homeland of Hong Kong, the line breaks. I am back in the cage again.

Then, when I get to B.C. in 2002, I find myself not as free as before, but more stable and calm. I am salmon swimming up the river.

Then I engage myself in the Hum class in 2017. I re-educate and re-assess myself, explore the inner depths of my soul. My writing DNA inside me sprouts! Every time I write I start to energize my brain which stirs up a hurricane!!

When I write, surfing on the paper, I am the bending line.

Hence, I recognize the enjoyment of my daily living, no matter if it is with sweetness or bitterness. The diamond and rust in my 40-year-old life. Now resting, my eagle feathers facing the wind, I feel comfy.

When I am sailing a small boat, I am not only sailing downwind. Also, I sail heading into the storm, tossed by the waves, to my destination. A boat was not made to stay in its moorings but to sail as part of the rough sea. After all, a calm sea never makes a strong sailor.

Before the beginning, as a young man, I am a sailing instructor who loves bending the sailboat's line. It inspires my confidence in living. You could say it was the making of me. Now I join other eagles, salmon, DNA, hurricanes, students, surfers, diamonds and rust, winds, boats, storms, waves and sailors... in the making of us. I have capsized boats and righted boats. These days I prefer to write them!

PART FOUR

“Keep a fire”: the tending of us

FEBRUARY 9

LAW: “MAKING US STRONG: FIGHTING FOR, KNOWING AND TENDING OUR RIGHTS!” WITH MARGOT YOUNG, ALLARD SCHOOL OF LAW, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Think about the game Monopoly, Margot Young said, you get \$200 dollars when you pass “Go,” or you go to jail when you land on the “Go to Jail” tile. These are the rules that govern the game of Monopoly; the terms that players must follow. We can think of the Canadian Constitution as the rule book which the Canadian government plays by. It is the master plan that dictates the rules by which the government can govern—the law of laws. When playing a game of Monopoly, it becomes impossible to play if one person holds onto the dice, or continually changes the rules of the game. That’s why the constitution, the master rule book, is so entrenched and difficult to change. The constitution solidifies foundational rules or laws that protect citizens’ fundamental rights and freedoms, including fundamental freedoms like freedom of expression, democratic rights, mobility rights, legal rights, language rights and equality rights. The master plan keeps government accountable to the rules and prevents them from creating unconstitutional laws that go against citizens’ rights and freedoms.

Aboriginal Peoples of Canada—First Nations, Métis and Inuit—were not consulted in the making of the rules. The constitution is a settler rule book, it is not coming out of Indigenous knowledge systems. In the early 1980s, when constitutional powers transferred from Britain to Canada, the rule book was redrafted. Aboriginal Peoples were concerned this would lead to further assimilation policies, and they fought to have their existing rights enshrined and protected in the document. These rights include various political, economic and cultural rights, like land-based rights, the right to fish and to practice their own cultural traditions to name a few. After much campaigning and negotiation, Section 35 of the Constitution Act was created to recognize Aboriginal rights. Although the constitution recognizes existing rights, it does not revive historic, extinguished rights that were relinquished through colonial settlement.

In class, we watched scenes from *Dancing Around the Table*, a documentary that filmed the negotiation process between then Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, provincial first ministers, and representatives from First Nations, Inuit and Métis. The film captures the visible contempt and disregard Canada’s politicians had for Aboriginal leaders in their quest for sovereignty and the right to self-determination.

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UBC First Nations Studies Program. “Constitution Act, 1982 Section 35.” *indigenousfoundations*, https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/constitution_act_1982_section_35.

FEBRUARY 16

WRITING AND PUBLISHING: “BINDING US TOGETHER” ON PRODUCING HUM’S ANNUAL PUBLICATION, WITH PAUL WOODHOUSE AND MARGOT LEIGH BUTLER, HUM, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

With 17 years’ worth of bright, bold and often unconventional-looking Hum yearbooks scattered around the room, an immediate question that comes to mind is: why do they all look so different? A broadsheet newspaper, a huge 12x12 inch book replicating a wooden box with no text in sight; a pocket size book with a map of the world on the cover; a 9x9 square covered in bees, and another mimicking a Zoom interface where dozens of people hold up artwork in their Hollywood squares. Every edition of the Hum yearbook responds to the course theme, content and participants’ collective personality—which is different year on year.

In this class, we talked about the making of the Hum yearbook, a collective endeavour with contributions from Hum’s diverse participants: students, staff, teachers, discussion facilitators and writing tutors. We discussed the books’ core elements, such as the style and content, and then we moved into the writing and editing process. We learned about different styles of essays, the basics of essay structure, the flow of an argument—which dictates most of the body of an essay—and how it is wrapped within an introduction and a conclusion.

Hum’s strength comes from the diverse histories and biographies of its student body, the radically different paths that brought us to UBC. These histories and experiences come through in our writing, and the goal of the book is to represent the uniqueness of every participant. Almost anything we read, whether it be a book, zine, newspaper or a website goes through an editing process before publication. To support the writing process, every student is paired up with a staff editor who provides written feedback on writing submitted, and over two or three in-person meetings feedback is explained and integrated. We talked about why writing multiple drafts and taking onboard feedback is important. It’s not to say what people initially produce is not fantastic, only to say that having a second set of eyes looking over the writing is invaluable. We hope that you, the reader of this book, enjoy the fruits of our collective labour.

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FEBRUARY 23

URBAN GEOGRAPHY: “VANCOUVER WINTER ARTS FESTIVAL,” WITH VANCOUVER DETOURS
FOUNDER ALASDAIR BUTCHER.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

During UBC’s term two Reading Week, we made our way downtown for a guided tour of the Vancouver Winter Arts festival. Downtown Vancouver turns into an open-air gallery with augmented reality (AR) installations, light shows, sculptures, murals, and a digital art gallery full of non-fungible artworks—the future has arrived! These physical artworks live in the boundary between the digital and physical. Following gallery convention the artworks hang on walls, but the contents inside the frames are made from pixels rather than pencil or paint.

Vancouver is fast becoming a technological innovation centre. AR is like the sibling to virtual reality (VR), but rather than wearing a fully immersive headset to enter a digital world—such as the metaverse—AR superimposes graphics onto the material environment through a phone or other computational device. Scanning QR codes and using our phones like binoculars, the northern lights brightened the cloudy night sky, giant ladybugs strolled along the promenade and the wall of Canada Place turned into an ocean awash with orcas—a fully charged phone was essential to handle all that processing power.

One of the artworks our guide Alasdair Butcher introduced us to was Shephard Fairey’s 20-storey “Earth Justice” mural. The mural addresses the tensions involved in protecting the ecosystem in the face of economic development. Vancouver is a very environmentally conscious city—Greenpeace was founded here, for starters—but the area where the mural is installed is also the headquarters for hundreds of resource extracting mining companies.



MARCH 2

PHILOSOPHY: “MAKING OURSELVES, MAKING COMMUNITY,” WITH SYLVIA BERRYMAN, PHILOSOPHY AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP SEMINAR IN GUATEMALA, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

“Some things are up to us and some things are not up to us” is the opening line of the *Encheiridion*. The *Encheiridion*, which was written almost 2000 years ago, is a handbook to guide us in everyday life. Epictetus was born into slavery and educated with his master’s permission. He later set up a school when he was given his freedom. *Encheiridion* was written by one of Epictetus’ students. The handbook is meant to help you with your problems, whether they arise in relation to being a slave, or being isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Epictetus was concerned with how we can make distinctions between what is up to us, and what is not up to us. This means training ourselves to act in certain ways, to prepare ourselves for what may happen... and to keep our cool! Don’t get distracted by the little stings: stay engaged... but don’t get distracted.

Sylvia Berryman invited everyone to choose one of the handbook’s 54 passages and we discussed what was being asked. For instance, passage four says: “if you are going for a bath, put before your mind what happens at baths—there are people who splash, people who jostle, people who are insulting, people who steal... .If something happens that interferes with your bathing you will be ready” (324). Epictetus is asking us to be prepared for things not to go your way when visiting a swimming pool, that way you will not be angry or frustrated when someone splashes water in your eyes. Being splashed is something that happens at the pool and you cannot control the event, but if you follow the stoic way you will take stock of your emotions and respond to the situation in an appropriate manner.

Some of Epictetus’ life lessons are easier than others to get behind. For instance, passage 20 says: “Remember that what is insulting is not the person who abuses you or hits you, but the judgement about them that they *are* insulting... Try not to be carried away by appearance, since if you once again take the time and delay you will control yourself more easily” (324). We discussed how difficult it can be to disengage in a given moment, to take that time to compose oneself. One student said this quote could be dangerous. We may need to attend to what our emotions are telling us and let them be our guide to action. Sylvia said that sometimes stoicism is interpreted in ways that people are encouraged not to respond, to not seek justice. But this is not the case. Epictetus is just saying do this from a certain place; a place which does not expect things to be a particular way.

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MARCH 9

CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES: “ ‘CULTURAL BURNS’: ON DECHINTA BUSH UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND LEARNING (YELLOWKNIVES DENE FIRST NATIONS, DENENDEH [NORTHWEST TERRITORIES]) AND THE NATIVE ALLIANCE FOR RED POWER (FORMED BY INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN VANCOUVER IN 1967),” WITH GLEN COULTHARD, INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES AND DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

This class focused on the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning, a 13-year-old Indigenous-led, grassroots, land-based, post-secondary program on traditional territories in Denendeh (Northwest Territories). The Centre is a response to the colonial pressures on Indigenous peoples to enter into resource extraction work because of the barriers they face accessing university education. Some of these barriers are cultural—for instance, overcoming the alienation felt by people who return to the remote communities after studying in places far away (there are no universities in Yellowknife). Or, how to create a family-inclusive atmosphere that allows parents with children to study in place alongside their children—approximately 95 percent of Dechinta’s alumni are women.

“Dechinta” means “in the bush.” By reinvigorating a non-extractive “bush economy,” Dechinta is an alternative to conventional Western universities because it is based in traditional Indigenous land-based cultural knowledge practices. With Dene First Nation Elders as teachers, land-based practices are taught to students, and feelings of shame for not being in touch with traditional ways of being can be alleviated. To facilitate critical thinking in the context of the land, Glen—with his colleagues Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Lianne Marie Leda Charlie, and many Elders, traditional knowledge holders and staff—connect land-based practices and experiences to ideas about Indigenous rights and sovereignty. Glen gave an example of picking spruce bows. Spruce bows are used to insulate the floor of a tent, and they also give off an anti-anxiety aroma. The traditional teaching says, only pick spruce bows when the tree is ready to give itself. This lesson of the land can be connected to a lesson in consent. When the tree is ready, it consents to giving itself, on its own terms, not when somebody else feels like they can simply take what is not theirs to take.

WHAT WE READ

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MARCH 16

MUSIC: “THE MAKING OF A UNIVERSITY, AND WHO A UNIVERSITY MAKES,” WITH GAGE AVERILL, MUSIC AND PROVOST/VICE PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC), UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

The modern university has been 1000+ years in the making. Looking at an image of a 1350’s classroom in Bologna University, a quick denotation showed us that not much has changed: raked seating, a teacher with a lectern standing at the front of a room, a student sleeping, some talking and front row keeners gazing at the teacher. Despite these similarities to modern-day classrooms, Gage Averill emphasized that the structure of the university has shifted considerably.

From the outset, a study of the liberal arts was central to universities’ mandate. Universities started out as theological endeavours that focused on God and divinity. Student enrollment was small and consisted of students from privileged backgrounds—only in 1920 did Oxford University first have female graduates. Over the centuries, universities moved to a humanistic approach and God gradually gave way to humans as the primary centre of inquiry. At the heart of this movement was the idea of critique: critical thinking. In recent decades, the Humanities and liberal arts have made way for science to take centre stage. An increasing number of university seats are given to STEM subjects: Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics.

Gage explained that the reduction in liberal arts seats can partly be explained by the diversity of students participating in university. University is no longer seen as a “finishing school” for the privileged classes. People from less privileged backgrounds cannot afford to do the humanities, and a university education has taken off with its utility value in mind. This idea of utility extends to the university’s perspective itself, where a logic of business principles—such as efficiency and profits—dominates in the context of the neo-liberal academy. Universities compete in a global marketplace for students and pursue high university ranking to attract the best students, faculty and staff.

Where does Hum fit into this? Throughout the history of the academy, visions of intellectual life as a contemplative removal from mundane activities (the Ivory Tower) have competed uncomfortably with visions of the activist, the engaged or public intellectual. “Land-grant universities” and “The Wisconsin idea” are initiatives that focused on bridging university with communities to help solve societal problems, develop social policy and effect social change. Other alternative models like the “open university” have reduced barriers to education for students. Pre-digital age, course materials were mailed to people and lectures delivered over radio. Now content is delivered over the Internet—but all open university courses suffer from high attrition rates, which Gage puts down to the lack of peer support. We determined that Hum is unique. There is nothing quite like us. Now in the making for 25 years, one student said we should no longer be perceived as a small plant—a small program—but a blossoming tree.

WHAT WE READ

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MARCH 23

ANTHROPOLOGY AND AFFECT THEORY: “(UN)MAKING SENSE,” WITH LESLIE ROBERTSON, ANTHROPOLOGY, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Experiences and relationships make and re-make us, but sometimes, unanticipated events can be the un-making of us. When the familiar becomes strange, we can be un-made. After a car accident left Leslie Robertson with a severe concussion, she was unable to continue reading, writing and doing the regular cognitive work required for her academic life. Embracing the murkiness of her strange new world, Leslie turned to making art as a way to express her feelings and experiences.

Memoir was central to Leslie’s restoration. Memoir is a work of memory and creativity that typically involves writing from a personal perspective. Yet, Leslie said, there is a trend to get away from text and make knowledge accessible in different ways to different audiences. With writing not being an option, Leslie embraced multi-modal expression to paint her memoirs and feelings in the form of graphic memoir.

Leslie paints her memories and dreams onto rocks—lots and lots of rocks, a few of which we got to see and touch in class. The rocks remind Leslie of Latin American *Milagros* which are pre-colonial religious folk charms traditionally used for healing purposes. One of our classmates talked about his fondness for *anting-anting* folk charms in his native Philippines. Although banned by a colonial Christian state, they continue to be sold on the streets, normally outside of Catholic churches. These charms, like Leslie’s art, are magical. They embrace our sixth sense, which is embodied and internal, tougher to place and explain through rational means.

Every society has a hierarchy of senses. They are learned and they are social. They are also racialized and gendered. Western culture places less value on embodied senses. It is ocular centric: seeing is the most important sense. It’s embedded in our language: “worldview,” “the gaze,” “spectacle.” We say things like “worldview,” but not “worldtaste,” “worldsound,” “worldbreath” or “worldodour.” There are ways we know things through our bodies, and the majority of the class said they believe in their sixth sense. Throughout history people have sought ways to cope with and express their feelings, and the irrational things in that happen in our lives. This is where surrealism was born—art that features monsters and dreams to get at the subconscious. Leslie follows this tradition by painting her dreamscapes on rocks and canvas—surreal scenes that make sense of her disorientating injury.

WHAT WE READ

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APRIL 30

CULTURAL STUDIES AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISM: “MY VANCOUVER INCLUDES THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE,” STUDENT-LED WALKING TOUR OF DTES PLACES OF PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE WITH PAUL WOODHOUSE, HUM.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Buoyed by the warm spring weather and fragrant blossoms we embarked on a walking tour of DTES places of personal significance, the area of Vancouver many of us call home. With the end of term looming, the tour offered an opportunity to learn a little more about each other and the neighbourhood through our collective memories. A quick count of hands revealed nobody in the group was born in Vancouver, plenty between 10–30 years, and a few newbies had been living in the city for less than one year. These eager listeners were treated to some captivating stories.

Starting at Cathedral Square, a park sitting above B.C. Hydro’s downtown substation, we took in the “Blanketing the City” murals installed by xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) artist Debra Sparrow, Skwx-wú7mesh (Squamish) artist Chief Janice George and səlilwətał (Tsleil Waututh) artist Angela George, and then set out on a leisurely two kilometer stroll, pausing to listen to students and staff tell stories about the history of Vancouver’s neon lights (beauty or blight?); the long-standing affordable housing units at the Del Mar Inn and the owner’s refusal to sell the land to developers—“Unlimited Growth Increases the Divide” is written in large copper letters above the doorway, a public artwork by Kathryn Walter (1990); the DTES lamp posts responsible for Hum’s existence as the bearers of thousands of Hum posters inviting community members to course application sessions and events; the warm feelings of “home” found around Gastown’s famous steam clock; favourite nooks to catch some peace and quiet along the railway tracks; the toppled “Gassy Jack” statue; an unlicensed jazz bar where those in the know would order their coffee “dark”; Chinatown’s ornate Millennial Gate; the world’s narrowest building; Sun Yat-Sen Gardens; and the ever familiar Carnegie Centre.

Listening to stories about the DTES, from the perspective of people who live and work in the area, offered a wonderful counterpoint to the stories often told about the DTES by people looking in from the outside. Whereas the area is often portrayed as an undesirable place to live, the stories we shared demonstrated why the DTES is in fact a desirable place to be.

WHAT WE READ

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INDIGENOUS STUDIES, ART, MUSIC AND MEDIA STUDIES: “AROUND THE FIRE: INDIGENOUS SURVIVANCE AND FUTURISMS,” WITH MARGOT LEIGH BUTLER, HUM AND ASSOCIATE, INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

For Lipan Apache writer and scientist Darcie Little Badger, “Futurisms speaks to our experiences, our souls. It is a celebration that we were, we are, and we will be.” Indigenous Futurisms encompass Indigenous perspectives on science fiction, speculative storytelling and world-building through literary, cinematic and other artistic forms—they are ways to articulate and represent what are sometimes elusive “touches,” to manifest them. Margot Leigh Butler taught us that Indigenous Futurisms emphasize both the colonial role of science and technology *and* its decolonial uses in affirming Indigenous sovereignty and creativity.

We began our last class of the year watching an interview with Anishinaabe scholar, activist and professor Grace Dillon, who coined the term “Indigenous Futurisms” in her 2012 ground-breaking book, and stresses futurisms, plural, to reflect the richness of Indigenous communities globally. In this class, we worked with the five categories that came to Grace Dillon from the authors’ own voices and what was available at the time: contact, Native slipstream, Indigenous science and sustainability, Native apocalypse, and biskaabiiyang, which means “Returning to Ourselves.”

Just in case you’d like to see them again, here’s a listing of them to follow up on! In “Contact,” we saw a print by Inuit artist Pudlo Pudlat called *Imposed Migration* (1986). In Native slipstream, where space and time are flowing together like currents in the same navigable stream, an artwork by Elizabeth LePensee (Anishinaabe, Métis) called *Manoominike Mazina’ang*, the Wild Ricing Constellation, plus two music videos by Inuit style throat singing/electronic music duo PIQSIQ from Nunavut’s Kitikmeot and Kivalliq Regions. In Indigenous science and sustainability, we saw an Inupiat video game called *Never Alone* and watched a short film called *The 6th World* by Dine filmmaker Nanobah Becker. In Native apocalypse, we recalled the award winning novel *The Marrow Thieves*, written by Georgian Bay Métis writer Cherie Dimaline, and focused in on the undertone of the whole class, the Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor’s notion of “survivance” defined as Indigenous self-expression in any medium that tells a story about an active Native presence in the world now. Survivance is more than mere survival; it is a way of life that nourishes Indigenous ways of knowing. Grace Dillon adds: “[T]he hope that underlines the reality of Native apocalypse [is that] you lived through it, so you may know how to pull together as an Indigenous community through any kind of crisis.”

And in Biskaabiiyang, meaning “Returning to Ourselves,” we experienced the music video “Mehcinut” by Jeremy Dutcher, Two-Spirit musician and activist of the Wolastoq First Nation in New Brunswick, in which he fuses classical compositions and electronic music with traditional Wolastoqiyik melodies and voices—in this song, his voice is paired with a recording made over 110 years ago of a speech by Wolastoqiyik ancestor Jim Paul, about death and what comes after.

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SEASONS: THE MAKING OF US

ZAID ALTOBAL

When I came to this country for the first time it was cold and rainy.
That dark autumn evening felt gloomy.
Yet I arrived with only joy, hope and love.
The air was fragrant, new aromas tickled my senses.

At the airport I saw people from all over the world.
With a sense of wonder and excitement I said to myself, “Ah, Vancouver... my new home.”
The next day was dry, the air crisp, the sky blue.
The leaves on the trees a vibrant mix of yellows, greens, reds and orange.

In just a few days, the autumn changed to winter. *Fast.*
Bright white snowflakes fell to the ground.
The cotton floral fabrics that I’m used to seeing people wear
turned into dark parkas, fleece, thick raincoats and fake furs.

I love watching people and I love nature.
I especially love seeing people in nature.
In winter, everything turns black and white, like a beautiful old photograph.
I hesitate to walk on the snow, but people do not understand my reasons.

I love the simple things in life.
A mute tree sitting in a field full of snow.
A still flower rising out from a vase.
The crackling laughter of children.

The blustery cold winter is no reason to be angry or sad.
Time moves on, spring is already knocking on the window.
Flowers in the yard show off their buds.
Droplets of water stream down the glass window to awaken steamy elements.

Suddenly, a battle in the sky begins.
The old man winter refuses to let go.
The dark sky stubbornly fights to stay longer.
The struggle between the winter and spring is obvious.

But the youthful spring inevitably wins.
The lush green forest is noisy and jubilant.
The old man winter is very angry.
Let me run to a child in a meadow full of spring flowers.

Soon the summer will come, leaving no time to hide in the bunker.
Time to meet friends and bring out the picnic basket.
Lakes, streams, shores, rivers, waterfalls.
Countless wonders of the world to see and experience.

The mighty sun gives generously.
Clouds float like cotton.
The bright blue sky looks as if it is painted by the masters.
What a sight to behold.

There is so much beauty in nature.
Four seasons paint distinct pictures.
Nothing is permanent.
Change is constant.

All that remains is joy, love and hope:
The making of me,
The making of you,
The making of us.

FAREWELL

SHAHLA MASOUMNEJAD

It's cold and dark where I am,
listening to the sound of the march on the streets,
and imagining the hungry fists dancing in the air,
starving for freedom.

They caught me when my hair was floating,
and my scarf, burning in the fire.
They caught me when my hands were pushing them away,
and my feet were stopped from following them,
to their empty promises.

I am a girl,
and I am sixteen.
They caught me on my birthday,
took me to the court room,
and decided that I am violent,
and dangerous,
and atheist,
and not worth living,
and they decided, they really decided.

Words are empty and so, so far from meaning,
until they become names,
and titles,
and then they get sharp and cut into your flesh,
and burn,
and bleed, and kill,
even before they enact their decision.

On my 16th birthday,
words were invited,
not by me, by them,
and when words arrived,
I was sick in my cell, alone,
waiting for the morning prayer call,
and the call for execution.

My prayer was a farewell song,
farewell mother,
farewell father,
farewell friends,
farewell life, life, yes you, my short, longing life.

It's cold and dark down here,
and I am not able to float my hair anymore,
but I can hear the march,
and the dance,
and the songs of freedom,
and the lullaby of the future,
that gently sings into my ears:
darkness is not eternal.

THE MAKING OF US

MARTIN HUNT



THIS IS MY WAY

XIMENA GABRIELA GARCIA SANTILLAN

I don't want to be repetitive, but now in my life everything is about my immigration process. In this piece I will talk about one of the most difficult parts about immigrating to this country: the weather! While we feel invigorated by the new weather, newcomers may need to learn a new way to live in relation with the weather, with how it makes you feel and how it can affect you when you are trying to learn something, anything, everything!

I arrived from Mexico a couple of years ago in summertime. I was dazzled by everything in this beautiful place which has mountains, sea, forest and city all in the same place, and these aspects work together with the people, Indigenous and settlers, to create the place that it is. (This is the first line which appears softly with a light curve).

I was so excited to be here, to breathe this fresh air, to see all the beautiful landscapes and, of course, all those fancy high-rise buildings, and my mind was focused on how to extend my stay here. As all of us know, summertime has that "good vibe" all the time, people are happy, so nice and kind, and of course, I fell in love with Vancouver. But nothing lasts forever... and summer ends. The days start to be shorter, with less sun and more rain. I was alone in a big place, and the clouds, rain and darkness, in combination with loneliness, and the isolation of a global pandemic may cause weird reactions at the beginning. (The next line start to appear but this one is a bit sharper).

My first birthday in Canada arrived in September, at the beginning of the autumn, without family, friends or any plans to celebrate it. I started to feel a bit blue, everything was so quiet and I didn't feel like doing anything, even thinking. And I was still learning English and didn't feel confident communicating. Then, winter arrived. I had to leave the place where I was living and look for another one. What a big experience that was, my first move all by myself with every little thing that you have to care about. I felt so happy when I saw the snow for the first time, my very very first winter with cold weather, long nights, no sun, no natural vitamin D on my Mexican skin, just cold and grey days. At the time my English level was improving so some days I felt like a Canadian, but other days I was so Mexican.

I talked to my teacher Margot about it, and she told me "This rainy weather is the natural place for trees, and here they shine in damp green beauty." I cannot find other words to express myself better than those, which still hug my mind and became a way to admire the beautiful Vancouver nature.

Until this point, I have tried to explain how the weather made me feel "good or not so good." How the sun changes my mind and the way that I see life, since "good and not so good" moods come and go every day.

As I mentioned before, I arrived a couple of years ago and my English was in terrible condition. Since then, I have been looking for different strategies for being in a state of constant learning! This involves giving my maximum effort, while at the same time being patient with myself because this learning is tiring, sometimes overwhelming, and I am not available to learn or pay enough attention to learning English every minute of every single day. I found that when I am in good mood I'm more open to learning and understanding, and I learn more easily. I cannot let the weather make me feel downhearted about learning English: I am stronger than that, and the main thing is that I need to be able to communicate in many everyday contexts. This is my goal. (So the process of the circle begins.)

Changing my mindset so that I am happy and in a good mood no matter what happens, appreciating what I have, this is my way to feel complete with all that I currently have, because we are so lucky to be alive enjoying every little thing that happens around us, “good or not so good.” So this is my bending line. Curves, sharp, straight, thinner, thicker but always a constant line. I wondered, how can I visually represent in an artwork this line which changes with me, with every step of my immigration?



In my artwork, my bending line is a circle (a shape), a cycle (dawn, day, dusk, night), a life (every day is a birth, middle age, old age, *la vida despues de la muerte* [life after death]... repeating), a clock (12, 3, 6, 9) and each and every one has to do with the seasons. Here’s how: in my view, the spring is similar to 12 noon, this hour is a sunny time but is not the highest peak of the sun (too hot for some and too cool for others); 3 pm could be the peak of the sun like in summer, a happy time to take a sun shower: 6 pm is the beginning of the cooler air, nature starts to die and darkness is coming like autumn: and at 9 pm the end of the day is coming, the darkness arrived, so it is similar to the winter. Now... take a minute to think about how every hour of the day and the position of the sun makes you feel!

I chose to base my drawing on the ancient Aztec Sun Stone¹, firstly because it is part of my Mexican culture and roots—and I am part of it—and secondly because the original piece from 1479, pre-contact, is based on the adoration of the Sun. I DO adore the sun, every single morning, and value it even more in my new rainforest home! The sun comes and goes, the good mood comes and goes, and you can choose how you want to feel. (The circle is complete, and ready to spiral again.)

Artwork legend: blue represents plentiful rain, serenity, stability, inspiration and wisdom.

In the centre you will find the Mexican God Tonatiuh, representing humans, representing me/myself. Around this face a ring of green represents nature, life and hope. I added symbols at each of the four cardinal points which represent my classmates and teachers: wisdom (a book), the strength and endurance of humans being (the hands upheld); the love in friendship (heart); and the music and talent of everyone (musical notes).

¹ “Piedra del Sol (calendario solar)” is housed in the Instituto nacional de pueblos indígenas, <https://lolomercadito.com/blogs/news/la-piedra-del-sol-history-and-meaning-of-the-aztec-calendar>.

XINGS

MARIA GIRON



One day, our class went to an art exhibition at MOA called *XICANX: Dreamers + Changemakers / Soñadores + creadores del cambio*¹. I learned that XICANX is pronounced chi-can-x, and is the gender neutral word for chicano or chicana. I am a chicana, here seen standing proudly with my chicana classmate Yandira Feliz.

The XICANX/Chicana exhibit was beautiful. Breathtaking actually. The walls were filled with colour and vibrance. The people in the paintings and

photographs looked like me and my family.



Figure 1: Carlos Fresquex. *Salon de los Ilegales*².

I saw images of people walking, in migration, over trails, through bushes and puddles, wading through the waters of what looked like the Rio Grande. As I walked further through this exhibit, I was transported to a time long in my past when I was a little girl travelling amongst these people, tired, hungry and always on guard for the unexpected.

The most remarkable thing to me was that it seemed that other people had documented my own experience.

I was nine years old when I said goodbye to all my cousins in Guatemala and began the journey to join my parents in the United States. They had left me with extended family two years earlier to prepare for the arrival of my grandmother, my brother and me. They had gone ahead to prepare our “American Dream.” To reach that dream though, many dangers would be encountered as we travelled into the unknown. Guided by a coyote, we walked for days and days, with little food or water. We travelled on foot, through woods and canyons by day, and by car when darkness fell. As a child, unaware of the many dangers that faced us, my own fears were of snakes and other wild animals. We finally arrived at a river, where we waited for the tide to go down so we would be able to swim across. We were all scared we would drown.



Figure 2: Carlos Fresquex. *Salon de los Ilegales*.

Once across the river we would be in the United States, where another coyote would meet us and take us to a safe house. It was there where we were discovered by immigration officers. We were arrested and sent to a detention center. We were crushed, and we were terrified. After investing so much hope into this journey, we were now without any hope at all. Our tears could have filled the Rio Grande. It was this sorrow, fear and desperation that I saw mirrored in the XICANX/Chicana exhibit. I understood for the first time that my story was really a global story, a story of humanity. This understanding was further enhanced by our studies of colonization and oppression.



Figure 3: Julio César Morales. *Undocumented Interventions #1*³.

Prior to my immigration I had no experience with either. When I learned about the racism and marginalization of Indigenous people, I finally had a way to explain the discrimination I myself experienced upon my arrival in this country. I had no understanding of the impacts and outcomes of traumas experienced earlier in my life. By learning about the abuse suffered by Indigenous survivors of Indian residential schools in Canada, I came to a greater understanding of my own trauma responses from the abuse I had endured. As a result, I am able to reflect on my own struggles with greater compassion, and extend that compassion to others.

I have arrived at a place in my life where I'm able to share my life experience with others, and to feel grateful, to feel humble for all the learnings that my experiences have brought me.

1 XICANX: *Dreamers + Changemakers / Soñadores + creadores del cambio* <https://moa.ubc.ca/exhibition/xicanx/>

2 Figures 1 and 2: Carlos Fresquex. *Salon de los Ilegales*. 2005—present.

“I see each of my thrift-store found landscapes as ‘readymades.’ I have painted a silhouetted running family—a readymade added from the yellow highway caution signs—into these found landscapes. These caution signs once appeared on the US Mexico border, placed there to warn drivers to watch for Mexican families running or crossing the roads. The landscapes presented here display a range of the U.S. soils painted by unknown individuals, from the Midwest to the Southwest desert.... I ‘illegally’ place a representation of the Mexican into their Utopia. Therefore, by placing the running family into these landscapes, I am documenting the undocumented.”

3 Figure 3: Julio César Morales. *Undocumented Interventions #1*. 2005.

“This ongoing Undocumented Interventions series highlights the harrowing conditions migrants endure for clandestine passage into the United States. These works possess a beauty and ephemerality that belie the horrors they illustrate: men, women, and children tucked inside customized piñatas, suitcases, and vehicle dashboards that have been modified to accommodate and conceal living bodies. Ironically, while the interventions employed by migrants underscore a sense of despair and distress, they also highlight immigrants’ ingenuity, determination and dedication—qualities the United States purports to seek and prize.”

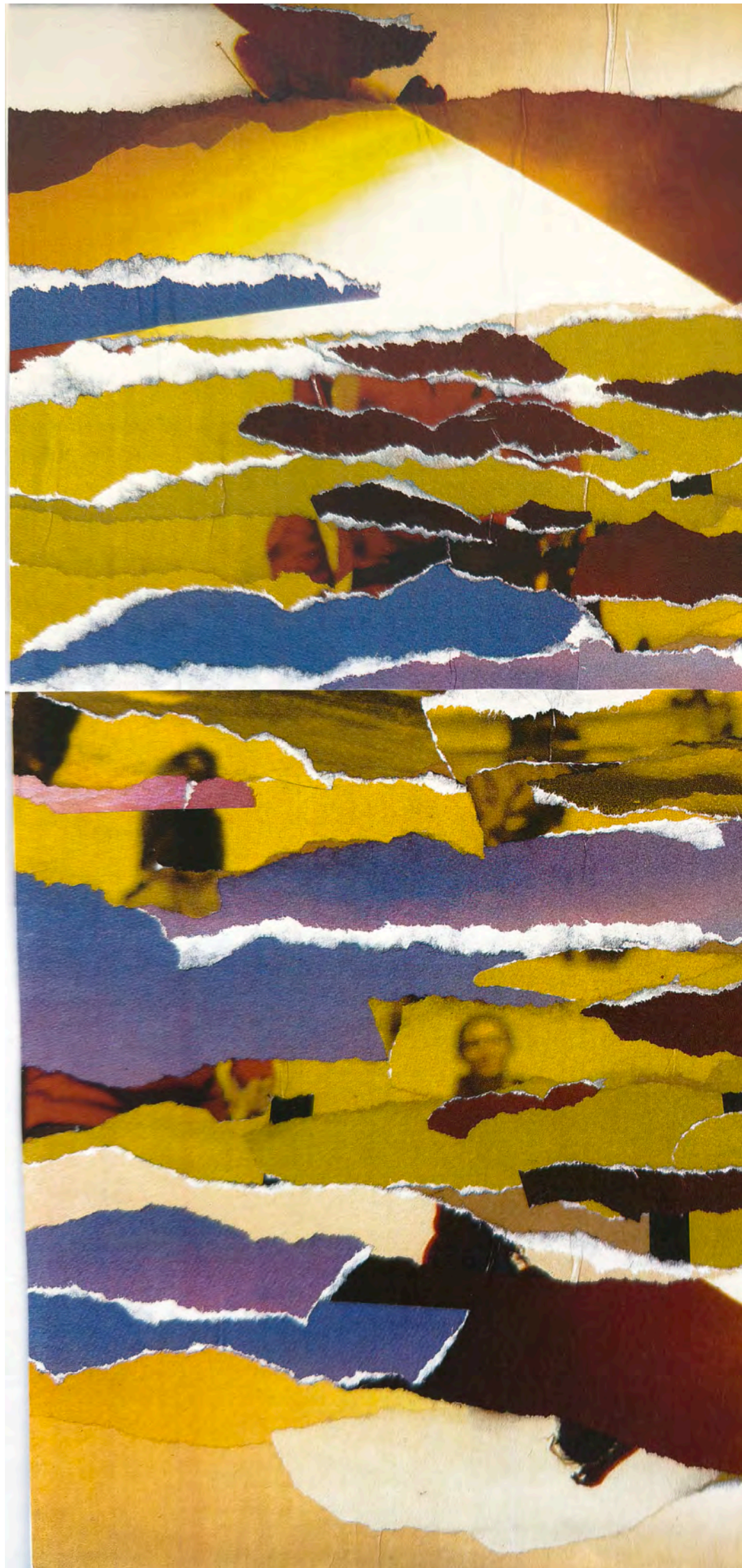
I've been here
before, that's why I
know where I am. I
recognize my view. I
see where I've come
from; I see it as a map
laid out in front of me
because it is the past.

Here gives me the
vantage point. I am at
the precipice. One final
step. My illusion of
being safe but I am
aware I am not steady
on my feet. It's like the
wind blew; threw my
balance and made me
wary of my perch.

I've been here before.

It's a dangerous place
to stop and rest;
potential to fall or to
go back. But my wish is
to continue. I must
continue what I've
started.

Can I will myself to do
it? Will my will allow
me? I question my will.
Why do you confuse
and deter me from my
way?





Will can justify anything, can't it? As if Will is a creature like you or me with the abilities to choose and reason, but not for my greater interests, against.

Be mindful; Will only wants what it wants. Hisses my lizard brain.

Nope. I snap back.

In peripheral sight I see the light beyond. What's in front? The brightness. This is the path I am on.

I am glad I stopped to contemplate my relationship to the edge and how close I am. Gives me a new awareness.

I will continue on the path where the sun illuminates my future and where I am going.

I can see.

PERSISTENT FORCES: REFLECTIONS FROM THE EDGE

LARA M^cQUAY

from









Humanities
 Free university-level courses at the UBC campus for people who are living with homelessness around the Downtown Eastside and Cowiwan Valley.

Are you interested in a three-week introductory course? Each week a different teacher will cover a new genre of creative fiction & non-fiction, poetry, hip-hop, spoken word, song writing, comedy, book reviews and more.

- Writing 101 and Writing 201 begin every January/February
- These 13-week courses take place at the UBC campus, on Tuesdays from 6:30 - 9:30 pm
- Participants receive school supplies, student union tickets to get to and from class, meals & transportation if needed.

Information and applications available at:

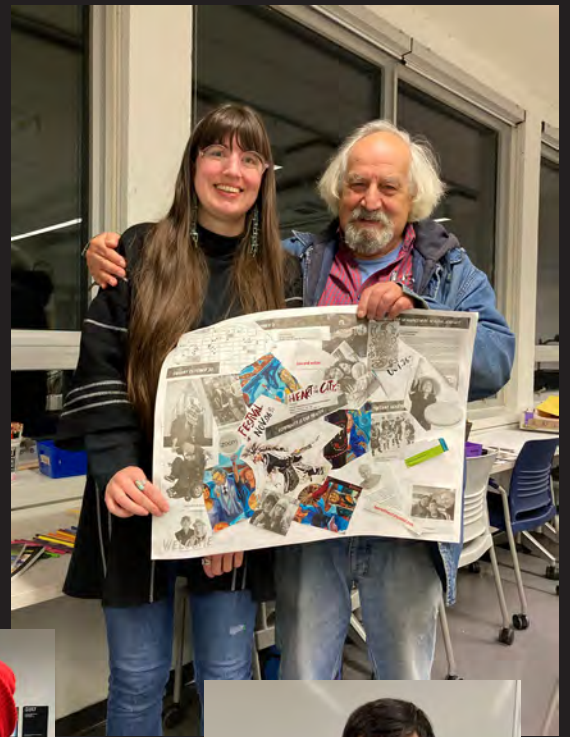
- The Gathering Place, 609 Helix St., Vancouver (Saturday November 19th at 11:00 a.m.)
- Carnegie Centre, Main and Hastings St., West Van (Saturday November 19th at 2:00 p.m.)
- The Vancouver Recovery Club, 2175 Sleggs St., Coquitlam (Tuesday November 20th at 12:30 p.m.)
- Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, 302 Columbia St., Vancouver (Wednesday November 21st at 1:30 p.m.)
- Vancouver Public Library, 730 E. Hastings St., Van (Wednesday November 21st at 6:00 p.m.)

604-822-0028 | h.u.m@ubc.ca | humanities@ubc.ca

For 24 years, Hum has offered free university-level courses at UBC & here education is the DTEC's top priority. A Steering Committee of Hum students and graduates meets regularly and guides all aspects of the program.







ESCAPE

VIVIAN BOMBERRY

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER, SOUTHERN ONTARIO

As a student of the HUM programme, I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time in the UBC library and took the time to riffle through the arts section. I studied a lot of artists and artistic genres and became very interested in one medium: cyanotype.

Indigo blue has been my favourite colour through the ages. Since the time I was a child I would look up at the sky just before total darkness, and it would be a beautiful, what I called then navy blue. I loved it.

So, this cyanotype genre really rocked my artistic world, and I dove into the research to find out how those beautiful blues are achieved.

Cyanotypes were first introduced by the astronomer, scientist and botanist John Herschel in 1842, Slough, Buckinghamshire, England. He accidentally discovered the process through a series of experiments while he was looking for different and better ways of reproducing his notes and drawings.

Being a chemist, he looked at different chemicals and focused on a solvent known as hyposulfite of soda and realized that it would fix an image once it was used on paper. The fix was to be known as “photography,” dubbed by him in 1839. There would not be many changes of chemicals over the years; now it is slightly more complicated to mix and use two non-toxic chemicals: potassium ferricyanide and ferric ammonium citrate. Both of these chemicals are light sensitive and the process has to be started in a dimly lit area or using tungsten light; ultra-violet (UV) light will ruin the process.

The chemical is painted on the paper and left to dry in a dark place for several hours. It is then taken out and one can use large negatives or objects on the paper and either place it in direct sunlight or under strong UV light. The timing depends on what one is using or how bright the sun is. There are different types of additives that you can use—for instance, soap bubbles, but this takes hours and a lot of patience.

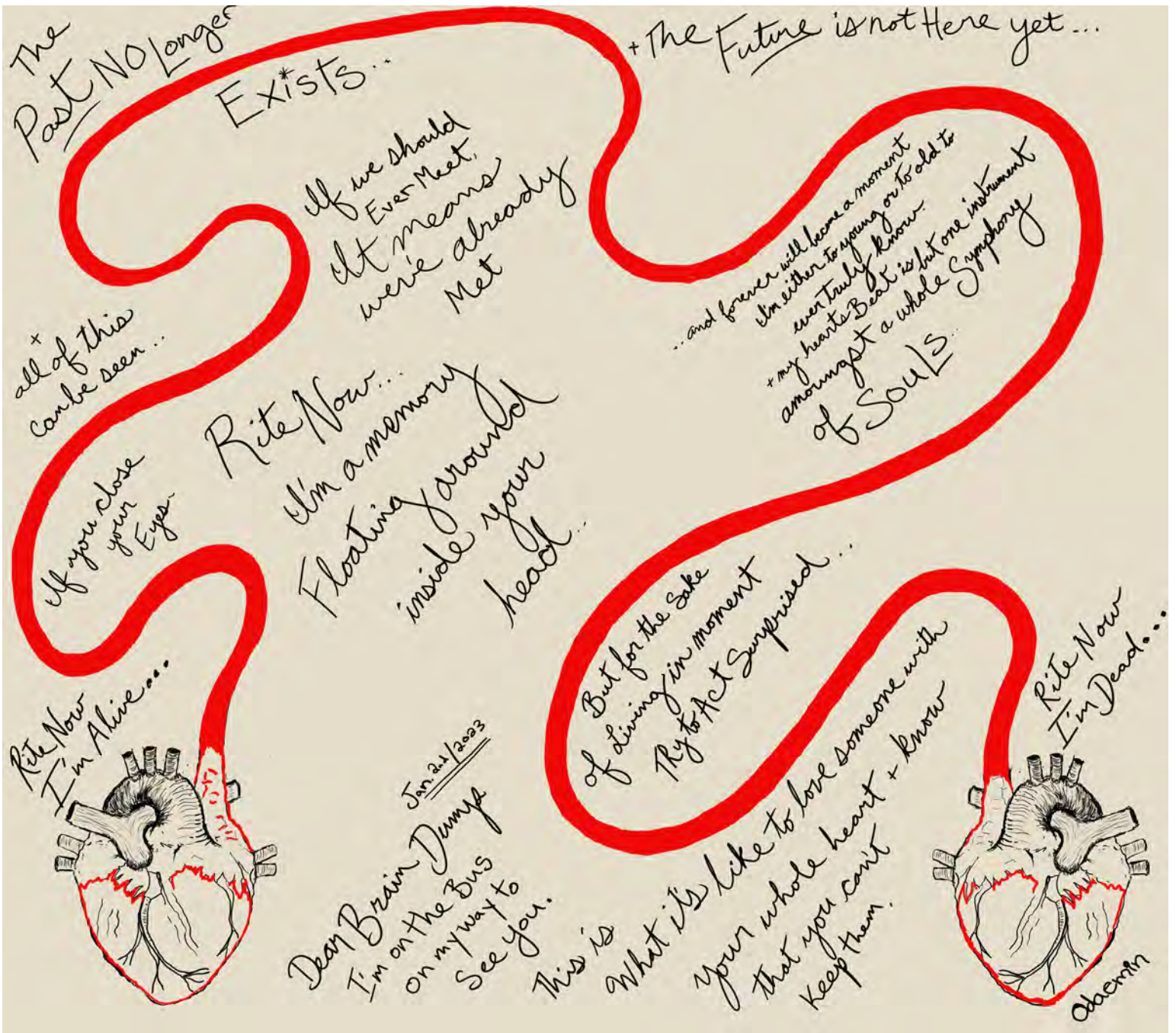
Another method I use is to take large negatives from photographs and place it over the paper and leave it for anytime between five and twenty minutes. There should be a few experiments before the actual image is made.

After timing, it needs to be rinsed with water for a period of about three to five minutes and this is where you see the final results. Dark blue, light blue, white spots, shady areas—it is always surprising and each piece is different.



TWO HEARTS

BONNIE BUCHART



Writing 101/201 Annotated Course Outline & Student Compositions

COURSE THEME:

The Making of Us

WRITING 101/201 COORDINATOR: Claire Matthews, MFA Creative Writing

MENTORS: Vivian Bomberry, Claude F. Ranville and Kimberley Hurrell

HUM ACADEMIC DIRECTOR: Dr. Margot Leigh Butler

PROGRAMME MANAGER: Paul Woodhouse, MA Sociology

WORKLEARN PROGRAMME ASSISTANTS: Meghna Chatterjee and Jesse Carson

CLASSROOM LOCATION: Buchanan D, Room 317

DAY & TIME: Tuesdays, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

FALL TERM: September 13 – December 08, 2022.

SPRING TERM: January 10 – April 4, 2023

LEARNING NEW KINDS OF WRITING

In Writing 101 and Writing 201, we learn about and practise writing in many different forms, styles, and genres—some will be familiar and others may be new to you! Every evening, a different teacher will present a different form, style, or genre of writing and there will be many opportunities throughout the semester for you to pick up your pens and try that kind of writing for yourselves.

DEVELOPING A WRITING PRACTICE

In this course, you will have the chance to build a writing practice—either a fresh writing practice, or maybe you will nurture an existing one! Classes will be linked—they connect with one another—through weekly writing sessions that are focused on the night's topic. You'll be able to take your piece of writing home to work on further, if you like. We'll be studying a different style of writing each week, which means that you'll be experiencing what it's like to write in a variety of styles, including creative non-fiction, poetry and many others.

SUPPORTS & REQUIREMENTS

In the Writing course, there are a number of ways to receive support and feedback. Writing tutoring is available for you to work further on your class writing in a collaborative and supportive environment. During the first 30 minutes of class, there's an opportunity for you to read aloud your writing from the previous class's groundwork or the in-class writing exercise and to receive constructive comments from classmates, staff and volunteers. Frequently, during the remainder of the class, there's time for you to share your in-class writing with your classmates and teacher.

Every evening there will be a short, in-class writing session. In order to graduate from the course, you need to submit at least three of these written pieces. You'll receive feedback on the pieces that you turn in.

SEPTEMBER 13 + JANUARY 10

ORIENTATION: WITH CLAIRE MATTHEWS, PAUL WOODHOUSE AND MARGOT LEIGH BUTLER, HUM.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Gathering from around the world, through the Downtown Eastside and Downtown South (DTES/ South), on this day we shared the campus air, starting where we are at UBC, within the unceded, ancestral, traditional territory of the hən'q'əmin'əm' speaking Musqueam people. After dining together at the Nest, Paul and Margot started the campus walking tour at the Musqueam house post carved by Brent Sparrow, which tells the story of the origin of the Musqueam First Nation's name: x^wməθk^wəy'əm. Then to the UBC bookstore, the ɁwiɁwa Library, the First Nations House of Learning and the fragrant Rose Garden. In class we discussed the perks of being a Hum student, the course outline, classroom practices and etiquette, assignments and activities, and to end, Claire introduced a writing exercise focused on the ways we make ourselves.

Fall 2022 Writing 101/201 class



Spring Writing 101/201 class



MY BUS RIDE TO ATTEND HUM'S WRITING COURSE

TERESA WONG

It was a special Tuesday afternoon. I set off to attend my first session of the Writing 101 Course at UBC with a mind set on enhancing my writing skills. The autumn sun peeped occasionally behind the smoggy clouds, encouraging me to head on for a new educational experience.

I took the No.4 bus from downtown. I waited about 10 minutes before I boarded the fairly crowded bus. A young man offered me his seat, for which I thanked him. Wearing glasses, tall, carrying a backpack loaded with books, he looked like a student who was demonstrating an act of kindness and consideration that is, unfortunately, not often found in the public these days. The bus was carrying people of all nationalities (spirit of Canada) from different walks of life, backgrounds and age groups. I found myself amid passengers who boarded and alighted at each bus stop to make way for the baby strollers, wheelchairs and walkers. This reflects human life. Thousands come into this world and thousands depart every day.

One young lady stepped onto the bus. Her hands were full, carrying a small, cute handbag and a big box of freshly baked pizza. Immediately, the smell of food, particularly cheese, filled the air. I was instantly attracted by the aroma that tickled my gastronomic senses. Food nourishes our body and mind.

Somebody shouted “back door please” a couple of times and eventually the door of the bus opened. A big, heavily built man hurriedly stepped out, wearing a disgusted look on his hardened face. The driver could not hear well because a baby was crying and his mom was trying to calm him whilst other people on board were chatting, if not busy with their cell phones.

As the bus moved on to the latter section of 4th Avenue, there were fewer passengers, mostly students and, seemingly, residents of the UBC neighbourhood where a few stores adorned this lush area. The bus started to pick up speed as I looked out of the window, enjoying the greenery and the last rose of summer while a few yellow leaves dropped on the roadside. This area looks very different from downtown.

The bus finally reached the bus loop after about 50 minutes of driving. I got off and found my way to “The Nest.” The golden sun greeted me across from the Flagpole Plaza upon my arrival as my iPod was playing “Some Enchanted Evening,” by Richard Rogers: “Some enchanted evening... you may see a stranger... someone may be laughing...”

Oh, what a beautiful afternoon!

CREATIVE WRITING: ON KEEPING A NOTEBOOK: “THE MAKING OF WRITERS,” WITH CLAIRE MATTHEWS, HUM, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

For our first proper class together, Claire Matthews started the night inviting us to reflect on two questions: what do you like about your writing? and what do you like about your writing process? People come into the Writing course with different writing practices, and for those of us who have not put pen to paper for some time, it might have been a while since these questions were contemplated. We wrote our reflections in our new notebooks, setting off a term-long practice of starting class with a writing exercise. We learned about the many ways writers use a notebook and how a writer’s notebook differs from journaling or keeping a diary. A writer’s notebook can be a “junkyard of the mind,” where all the “detritus” we will use to make our stories, poems and songs is collected. Whether it’s plot points, scenes, dialogue or images, notebooks gather our writing in one place. They are a dedicated place for our writing projects, much like an artist’s sketchbook. Our writing practise does not have to be something we do every day for a certain period of time; we should take whatever time we can carve out. Our notebooks can be used to (re)start our writing practice, jot down class notes, pen our groundwork and so much more. They can be whatever we need them to be to help us write.

Claire shared that, when getting started with writing, sometimes the greatest obstacle to overcome is putting pen to paper. We looked at a few techniques to help overcome this, including meditative drawing and Lynda Barry’s list exercise from her book, *Syllabus: Notes from an Accidental Professor*. First, to calming music, we drew circles the size of our inhales and exhales. We allowed our pens to scrawl across the page without judgment, just like we hope to do with our words. Then, using Lynda Barry’s list exercise, we divided a page into two columns. In one column we listed seven items that we saw that day, and in the other seven things that we did that day. We also wrote down one snippet of overheard dialogue and one doodle based on an item from our list. Another way to get our pens to the page is the act of rewriting. In our reading, “The Holograph,” Brenda Hillman muses on the power of rewriting our drafts by hand, how repetition can be a form of editing and a way to reconnect us with our words. Connection is the essence of writing, how we connect to the world around us, to other people, and, most often as writers, to ourselves.

WHAT WE READ

Barry, Lynda. *Syllabus: Notes from an Accidental Professor*. Drawn and Quarterly, 2014, pp. 60–66.

Berner, David W. “The Best Way to Keep a Writer’s Notebook.” *Medium*, 26 February 2019, <https://medium.com/the-writer-shed/the-best-way-to-keep-a-writers-notebook-1ffb4137bd41>.

Hillman, Brenda. “The Holograph.” *Poets on Teaching: A Sourcebook*, edited by Joshua Wilkinson, UOI Press, 2010, pp. 110–113.

A SEARCH FOR A DROP WATER

ANONYMOUS PANDA

When describing the process of writing, many use words like “calming” and “therapeutic,” implying that writing is as soothing as a warm spring. They claim that their process of writing is like swimming in said spring, where they, the writer, splash in the stream of their bursting and often generous creativity. As someone who has been actively writing for the past year, I find this metaphor hard to believe. In fact, I argue that writing is less like bathing in a natural spring and more like a painstaking search for a drop of water.

I do not deny that there are moments, though rare and fleeting, when writing feels natural and almost easy. The prose feels right. The words stick together. The story writes itself. However, most of the time, writing is often grueling and unforgiving. Like walking through a dusty, barren field, the process of writing feels straining and unnatural. But like a good soldier, the writer, despite his cramping feet and burning throat, marches under the scorching sun with his dowsing rod. He looks left and right for any sign of water—a patch of green grass, a waddling rodent, a barren tree, anything. And often, the signs mislead the writer, where he toils for days against the treacherous ground, only to be greeted by a large boulder—a “block” in creativity. He knows that he must dust off his boots and return to his search. This may last for hours or weeks. No one really knows. And in this grueling search, to which no writer has a clear solution, the writer sometimes avoids the work. He looks at the stars, hides in a cave, sings songs, or does just about anything that can help the writer evade the work. And many writers, defeated and dispirited, toss their dowsing rod and return to their former trade.

But the veteran writer, tried and true, does not budge. He crawls out of his cave and, once again, picks up his dowsing rod, searching calmly for a source of inspiration. His arms ache. His brow can’t sweat anymore. His throat is scorched. Each step more painful than the next, his body protests, “Why must you put us through this?” But his mind is quiet and alert. The writer knows that true work is not done in an instant. And when he, at last, spots the first sign of water after weeks of fruitless labour, he rushes over and plants his shovel into the cracked, dusty ground. The digging takes hours, days, weeks, or even months. And at long last, the writer is rewarded with a gushing spring—a creative “flow” for a lack of a better word—making every second of the shoveling worth it. But understanding that the spring will not last, the writer picks up his dowsing rod once again, searching for more signs of inspiration that can quench the writer’s thirst for inspiration. This is more or less how I view, hate, and love the art and certainly the *craft* of writing. The process of reading, examining, researching, writing, and rewriting the “right” words is a grind. The road is treacherous and often discouraging, which paralyzes even the most promising writers with anxiety, doubt, and self-deprecation. But the joy of writing, in my humble opinion, stems not from the “easy” natural part of writing but exactly from this “grind.”

To clarify, if I claimed that I loved every second of the grind, I would be lying. But the truest joy of writing comes from both the process and the result. After hours of wrestling with words, I often find myself rereading what I had written and can’t help but feel proud of the hard work that paved the way. Ultimately, I hate and love writing because writing, I believe, is an homage to the sentiment that Rome wasn’t built in a day.

INDIGENOUS LITERATURES: POETIC SHORT FORMS: “TRUTH AND MEMORY,” WITH WILLIAM G. LINDSAY (CREE-STONEY), AUTHOR OF *REZ DOG BLUES & THE HAIKU: A SAVAGE LIFE IN BITS AND PIECES* (2021).

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

In tonight’s class, Cree-Stoney author William G. Lindsay shared how he made his self-published novel, *Rez Dog Blues & the Haiku: A Savage Life in Bits and Pieces* (2021). William assured us that hard work really does pay off: he wrote the novel, edited it dozens of times, and marketed it without the support of a publisher. The novel has gone on to achieve critical acclaim.

Based on his experiences as a youth, *Rez Dog Blues* is a blend of storytelling, music discography and haiku. Each chapter opens with what William calls a “rez haiku.” A colloquial and shortened form for “reserve,” rez haiku mimics the traditional three-line Japanese haiku, where each of the lines consists of a specific number of syllables: 5, 7, 5. While the haiku grounds itself in images of nature, William’s rez haiku illuminates reserve life through the lens of the main character, Liam. Rez haiku is similar to senryu—another Japanese form with the same structure as haiku—in how it takes up satire and irony to write about human nature.

We learned that haiku are constructed to be read in one breath. They are intended for deep meditation and thought. These qualities are what helped William with the writing of his novel. Reflecting on “the power of poetry to heal,” William said that on the one hand, writing his story retraumatized him, but the writing process also helped him to heal. Journaling, writing and reading are a part of his everyday practices. William encouraged us to practice as much as possible, saying that with practise, haiku becomes a little easier. By the end of the class, we were writing our own haiku on the classroom’s white boards, surrounding ourselves with stories that demonstrated the power of poetry.

WHAT WE READ

Lindsay, William George. *Rez Dog Blues & The Haiku: A Savage Life in Bits and Pieces*. William George Lindsay, 2021, pp. 5–12.

A REQUIEM FOR A NIGHTMARE: 33 HAIKU DEDICATED TO YOU

IRIS SELTZER

I can see your face
A smile is there but not you
You left this life here

My life was improved
Dude, you were funny for real
Pent up energy

Missing you is hard
I'm in my sunken place bro
This ish makes me cry

Fuck my life, he's gone
I don't have words to express
Why didn't he phone?

You went MIA
My brother from another
Today was not good

Brother, where art thou?
I can't eat or sleep right now
Give me a sign please

Sayonara bitch
In just a blink of an eye
A great guy left town

Crazy as it seems
I'm really not mad at you
Just sad I miss Mike

Real talk my tears fell
Tell me when I can escape
Emotional pain

Sure he had bad days
Comedy was his strong suit
He was so joyful

Catharsis is cruel
How can I move on with life?
There's so much baggage

Darkness surrounds me
I try to make sense of this
Put the(se) words in order

I feel so angry
I'm not special I know this
I just want answers

It seems odd to me
The song that comforts me most
Is by Neil Young (ugh)

I'm all over you
Chaos will ensue for me
Give order a chance

I wish I knew why
That still won't change the outcome
He's not coming back

Sing a song today
Make meaningful art today
Hug loved ones today

You had lust for life
A broken heart can still beat
Your partner was lost

There are no mistakes
I found you at Park Royal
We laughed and had fun

My art is not done
Your heart has not yet been won
We have work to do

Ripples across water
My feet dig into the sand
I need some seashells

This is not a joke
I wake up and realize
You are really gone

Spare me the details
Your art was truly hardcore
Context was everything

Tall trees were on sale
You wave goodbye, wink, and smile
Sail on my good friend

I know that it's late
Thank you for being my friend
None of this matters

I had a vision
Moments before the car crash
I did not stop it

Photos that you lost
Have greater significance
Speak one thousand words

Sunshine this morning
I can greet you with a smile
You showed up as promised

Butterflies on jeans
Suffering here in silence
Peaceful times at work

I meant to leave you
However you got the jump
Rode out and left me

A generous guy
Very kind and gentle soul
You held space for me

Don't worry so much
I promise not to let go
Take my hand this time

Cradle me baby
You're so delicate it hurts
Why would you feel shame?

HAIKU

ARIE GREWAL

CLUTTER

Too much cluttering

Paralyzed, rumination

More anxiety

AXE THROWING

Throw an axe today

Learn from forestry students

UBC farms now

LONE WOLF

A solo person

Does not follow the wolfpack...

They make their own choice

SOLITUDE

A loner has an

Advantage over others...

They are free thinking

PICKLES

RICHARD RHEAME

A ball of fur
trusting my palm

exploring all around
skin so fun

biting gripping kneading
wet sweaty fur

looking deep inside
with blackest eyes.

Sweet pickles of memory
peeing on pillow.

Surprise! Its affection!
Many other treats

offered without exploitation.
Heart always open

You always felt
safe loving me.

Previous shadows aflame
mystery's worth attacking.

Noises. Movements. Ghosts.
Your last ripples

Spoke many questions
silent answers given.

Lack of sagacity
brought deaths wheel.

I feel you

forever.

OCTOBER 4

CREATIVE NON-FICTION AND POETRY: “HEARTS AMOK: A MEMOIR IN VERSE,” WITH KEVIN SPENST, AUTHOR AND EDUCATOR WITH THE WRITER’S STUDIO AND VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

In this evening’s class, we looked at how creative non-fiction lends itself to poetry. We started with a close reading of Steffi Tad-y’s poem, “Dear Jolina,” and then tried writing our own epistolary poems (poems written as letters) in response to a groundwork question. We studied the winding lines of Al Rempel’s *Behind the Blended Green* poems, and for our in-class writing exercises we practiced writing poems using

short
one-
word
lines

and then long, seemingly never-ending lines that had us short of breath by the end of them. Kevin Spenst encouraged us to try different techniques and to practice on the page.

We learned that many poets take their lived experiences and render them as poetry, using repetition, images and sounds. Poems can narrow our focus to think specifically but also allow us to consider the bigger picture. For instance, we can blend our dating lives with nineteenth-century-esque poems like Kevin does, or recreate a memory from our own childhood with poems, like Rempel. Kevin shared that poetry is indebted to the past and present. He said, “I am a poet because there are other poets.” When we practise writing poetry, we make ourselves from past and present poets, our past and present selves.

WHAT WE READ

Rempel, Al. *Behind the Bladed Green*. The Alfred Gustav Press, 2022, p. 1.

Spenst, Kevin. *Hearts Amok: A Memoir in Verse*. Anvil Press, 2020.

Tad-y, Steffi. “Dear Jolina.” *From the Shoreline*, Gordon Hill Press, 2022, pp. 37–38.

DO YOU REMEMBER, PAPA?

RANI BANSAL

That hot humid afternoon
we walked around
the bustling city streets.
A city which was to bear the burden
of dreams, yours and mine.
You held my hand ever so tightly,
afraid to lose me
so far away from home.
You trust me,
unaware of the disruption inside me.

We see the bookstore
across the hectic street.
Our palms sweaty, our stride quick.
The speeding bus,
its blaring horn
In a moment's flash
I run towards the sidewalk.

My heart races as
it dawns on me. I turn around and
see you there
left behind on the opposite side.

You smile at me, with kind eyes.

You walk to me and reassure me
that you're alright.
Shame fills my racing heart.
You know I left you on that
road. To save myself and
never look back.
Was it then that you lost me
or I you
so very far away from home?

Twelve years and a thousand miles apart
that unspoken pain still resides in my heart
Pain of breaking our bond that day
Pain of leaving your hand... on that dreadful day.

MY BELOVED BY THE SEA

NAYYAR BEHTARI

Amar Shona
Shagorer kache kaande,
Or choker jol diye she nodi gore.
Nohdhir tekhe she akash dakhe,
Shob akashta amar,
Amar nijer haate oke aye akash deelum.

My gold (beloved),
Cries by the ocean.
She creates a river through her tears,
From the river she looks up at the sky.

The whole sky is mine,
From my hand, I give her the whole sky.

Amar praner jonno golap ful ar machh delum,
Tara'r tekhe aro chomatkar shopno oke delum.
Modhu are dudhe ar amar chokher jol dilam,
Jokhon amar ak matro cheler jeebhon oke delum.

I give my beloved roses and swimming fish,
And dreams more awesome than the stars.
I gave her milk and honey and all of my tears
When I gave her the life of my one and only son.

Amar shona shaghorer kache kaande
My beloved cries by the sea
She amar ak angul dhore
She holds my finger
Akash jurey shey urte takhe
She flies in the fullness of the sky
Amar shona shaghorer kache kaande
My beloved cries by the sea

VIDA COMPLICADA

OSCAR AGUIRRE

It is natural to say we like this world,
but deep inside we don't—

I desire to be free, but
struggle to meet the need.

The parasite in my mind
(always encrusted deep inside)
Is like a virus in my brain
Terrorizing my days.

I wish I couldn't think, and be in peace
With my own being.
It is difficult to find,
that I am always out of my mind.

But that is life.

We are puzzled by life
And do the thing we dislike.
How can human nature remain good, when we keep doing things
That we disapprove?

Why do I feel strange?

Why do we feel strange in a world that never changes?

That is life—a strange aberration,
To put it simply, it's far from perfection.

DEAR EMILY

ANGELINA ANTHONY

Dear Emily,

I was so close
to him,
I loved him.

Being with him
was like reading
an exciting book
full of humour.

He was exciting,
caring.

he told me,
don't waste life.

I miss hiking
with him.

The air, scenery,
landscape, trees
and moss.

Peaceful and happy.

SOLITUDE

TERESA WONG

Sitting on a rock by the water with the full moon staring at me from high above and gazing at the sparkling harbour lights afar in the dark of night whilst listening to the sound of whispering waves, breathing in the salty accent in the air brought forth by the ocean breeze and slowly wrapping the shawl around my shoulders to warm myself against the chill as memories flashed back to the many quiet evenings that we used to spend here, your arms around me, bringing forth a feeling of emptiness, solitude and bitterness from my heart and I could not help but let a tear drop fall.

There is always a shadow behind the light.

The stage curtain is drawn followed by the sound of silence.

I have lost what I have found.

CREATIVE NON-FICTION: PERSONAL ESSAY: “WRITING THE I FROM THE EYE,” WITH MANDY LEN CATRON, AUTHOR AND EDUCATOR WITH UBC CREATIVE WRITING.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

When we think of writing an essay, our mind might conjure up the academic essay with its introduction, three supporting paragraphs and a conclusion. In an academic essay, we know where we’re going; we know what the essay is about. The topic sentence—the sentence that expresses the central argument of the essay—declares our direction. As Mandy Len Catron showed us, the personal essay has no such direction, no such structure. When we write personal essays, we don’t know where we’re going, our direction is uncertain. This can be both exciting and terrifying.

Personal essays exist under the umbrella of creative non-fiction. The word “essay” comes from the French word “to try” or “to attempt.” Whenever we try something, we don’t know if we’ll succeed. Our personal essays are our attempts to think through an idea on the page. We can start with what we remember, know, or what we are curious about. We filter everything through our own points of view. The personal essay says, “I can exist, it does exist.”

Mandy guided us through a close reading of “Swerve,” by Brenda Miller. We considered what made this brief essay feel true: the repetition, specific and vivid language, and her commitment to the truth. When writing personal essays, Mandy said there is one rule: it must be true. As writers of this form, we make a promise to the reader that we are telling our story with sincerity and veracity. Tonight, we learned that creative non-fiction is a terrible name for a cool type of writing because it blends two existing genres without appreciation for the genre’s breadth.

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Jamieson, Leslie. “52 Blue.” *Make it Scream, Make it Burn*, Little, Brown and Company, 2019, pp. 3–27.

Lima, Natalie. “Snowbound.” *Brevity: A Journal of Concise Literary Nonfiction*, 13 September 2019, <https://brevitymag.com/nonfiction/snowbound/>.

Miller, Brenda. “Swerve.” *Brevity: A Journal of Concise Literary Nonfiction*, 30 September 2009, <https://brevitymag.com/nonfiction/swerve/>.

Thom, Kai Chen. “Language is the Fluid of our Collective Bodies.” *Tongues: On Longing and Belonging Through Language*, edited by Eufemia Fantetti, Leonarda Carranza, and Ayelet Tsabari, Toronto: Book*hug Press, 2021, pp. 66–76.

THE MAKING OF US: ONE FAMILY'S EXPERIENCE WITH INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA AND RESILIENCE

CHARLENE M. MARION (AMANDA J. GREYWOLF)
NIPISSING FIRST NATION, CREE/OJIBWAY

There are plenty of fancy scientific terms out there describing what intergenerational trauma is, and plenty of people who'll try to explain the various definitions and myths that come with it. But I'm here to tell you what it's like from my own experience. It's not just some abstract concept—it's a real, visceral thing that I've lived through, and that I still struggle with every day.

For me, intergenerational trauma is an ongoing battle to find my identity, both as an individual and as a spiritual being. During my upbringing, my mother frequently told me that I wasn't good enough and that I couldn't survive without her. It felt as though she lacked faith in my ability to thrive independently, and she instilled those same beliefs in me. I was sheltered and overprotected, and it took me years to comprehend the reasons behind her behavior. Despite her good intentions, her actions have contributed to my ongoing journey to find purpose and self-understanding.

My mother's experience of being taken away from her parents and forced into residential school left her with deep emotional scars that she carried with her throughout her life. One painful memory she often shared with me was when she was finally allowed to visit her mother and brought a box of stockings as a gift, purchased with her hard-earned money. However, her mother simply ignored her, causing my mother immense pain and feelings of rejection. It's hard for me to imagine the pain and trauma that my mother experienced in her life, but I know it has had a profound impact on our family.

Looking back on my childhood, I can see that my mother had very strict rules about how I should express myself. Even though she said she wanted me to be assertive and stand up for myself, I always felt like my feelings didn't matter. If I ever showed any emotion other than happiness, she would shut me down and make me feel guilty for expressing myself. This made me feel like I couldn't be myself around her, and I was always afraid of making her angry. It was like I was constantly in survival mode, just trying to get through each day without setting her off. But now I realize that maybe this is how she felt when she was taken away to residential school.

As I grew up, I came to understand that my mother lacked a parenting role model. She grew up in a harsh environment where emotions were suppressed, and she was always in survival mode. Despite this, I appreciate her efforts and wish I could express this to her. However, I am also upset with the adults who failed to protect her from the abuse she endured, which has deeply affected me. As a result, I have developed a mood disorder (borderline personality disorder) that causes constant inner turmoil, but I am managing it. Unlike Amber Heard, I don't have outbursts; instead, I tend to internalize my feelings and criticize myself, mirroring my mother's behaviour. The pressure and self-hatred became overwhelming, and I resorted to self-harm as a teenager, leaving scars that serve as a reminder of the profound impact of intergenerational trauma.

As an Indigenous person raised outside the reserve, I have faced unique and shared struggles. Unfortunately, some members of my community view me as an "APPLE"—red on the outside, white on the inside—due to my limited language skills and failure to conform to traditional expectations. They believe I do not understand the hardships of our people, as I am perceived to have adopted the mindset of the colonizers who came before. Consequently, I do not feel a sense of belonging to any tribe, nation, or reservation. This has caused me considerable pain, serving as a stark reminder of the

profound impact of intergenerational trauma on our community. I constantly grapple with the question of where I fit in this world, as I do not feel fully accepted within my own community or elsewhere.

Although I have never lived on a reserve, I have witnessed the devastating impact of intergenerational trauma on my family. My stepfather was an alcoholic who abused my mother, and I witnessed firsthand the violence that can occur in the home. Watching my mother suffer was incredibly painful and left me feeling helpless. As a young child, what could I do? As a result, I do not have many happy memories of my childhood, as most of them are blocked due to the trauma endured from my stepfather's drunken rampages.

The trauma that affected my family did not stop with my stepfather's alcoholism and abuse. My older sister also struggled with drug addiction and was ultimately forced into prostitution by her drug dealer boyfriend. Witnessing the person I once looked up to suffer such devastating consequences of addiction filled me with deep sadness and anger.

In addition to my sister's struggles, I learned that my older siblings were also survivors of the Sixties Scoop, a dark period in Canadian history that I am ashamed to admit I knew little about. The Sixties Scoop refers to the mass removal of Indigenous children from their families and communities by the Canadian government and their placement in the child welfare system, often without the consent of their families or communities.

As a child born in the 80s, I was sheltered from the atrocities that my family members had experienced before my arrival. My mother had one hope for me: that I wouldn't have to experience the trauma that had affected so many of my relatives. She made the difficult decision to leave Norway House, Manitoba, hoping for a brighter future for both of us. However, moving away did not erase the impact of the trauma on our lives. It was not until later, through my own research and exploration, that I learned about the Sixties Scoop and its ongoing effects on Indigenous communities. Through this process, I came to realize how little I truly understood about the history of my own country.

Unfortunately, the trauma that plagued my family didn't stop there. My nephew was also deeply impacted by the intergenerational trauma that has affected our family for generations. From a young age, he was placed in foster care, which seemed to intensify his struggles. Despite the difficulties he faced, we grew close over the years, and I became aware of the challenges he was dealing with as he tried to navigate his way through life. It's heartbreaking to think about the pain and confusion he must have felt, being taken away from his family and placed in an unfamiliar environment at such a young age. Unfortunately, things only got worse for him. He was sexually abused, which led him down a path of substance abuse and alcohol use in order to bury the pain.

It's a tragic reality that the very system that is meant to protect children can end up causing even more harm. It reminds me of how Indigenous children were taken from their families during colonization and the Sixties Scoop, and forced to live in residential schools or foster care. This ongoing trauma affects our communities deeply. The parallels between my nephew's story and the history of colonization are painfully apparent. It's a reminder of the ongoing trauma that our communities continue to face.

Tragically, my nephew's story didn't have a happy ending. In his thirties, he was discovered lifeless from a fentanyl overdose in Oppenheimer Park in 2020. His passing came barely a year after the loss of my mother, who passed away before the start of the pandemic. The pain of losing him is still raw, and I can't help but think about the ways in which his life could have been different if things had gone another way.

My life hasn't been easy, although others would beg to differ. The same can be said for those around me who continue to persevere. Family members who knew little of my own struggles and inner demons would never know of the things I've borne witness to. Yet, they believe I was lucky, and perhaps I

am, but I would not have developed a mood disorder or been hospitalized for my many attempts at ending my own life if life wasn't so overwhelming. The impact of history on a single individual can ripple through and affect everyone around them. While there are countless stories out there to share and relate to, it's important to acknowledge that there isn't just one perspective to consider. You can hear from the elders who experienced residential school firsthand, but it's equally important to hear from someone like myself who has seen the effects of intergenerational trauma and watched as families have crumbled under its weight through my friends and family.

For me, "the making of us" speaks to the formation of our family, shaped by a legacy of intergenerational trauma that has resulted in profound tragedies. Yet, amidst these adversities, it has also instilled in me a profound admiration for the unwavering strength and resilience displayed by my family members and those in our midst. Even if I am considered an apple, I am proud to be a part of this community and to be able to share and tell our story, which will continue to echo through many more generations to come with the hopes that there will be a significant change in how we approach reconciliation. We need more than an apology; some of us need genuine care and guidance. We need spiritual practices and pride, and to hear the voices of those who echo throughout time.

COMING HOME TO ME

GILLES CYRENNE

I grew up in a profoundly xenophobic settler culture. Because I was born Catholic, I was told by nuns that I was more special in God's eyes than everyone else and was guaranteed passage to heaven by living within that faith. Conversely, should I leave my religion and its values, the worst hell was reserved for me. (God loves me, but if I don't obey, He will burn me forever.) Everyone not born or converting to this faith was declared a foreigner, damned forever.

My father prefaced every mention of other cultures with damn, "*maudits*." So it was *maudits Anglais*, *maudits Protestants*, *maudits Juifs*, *maudits Indiens*, *maudits Métis*, *maudits Hutterite*, and *maudits* whenever anybody "other" came up. *Maudits Other!* Damn, damn, damned.

Coming home to who I am, to whom I feel resides at the core of every human, has been a process of rejection of those beliefs and acceptance of people of other ethnicities, races (a completely false construction), sexualities, ages, and abilities. I believe that becoming more fully human requires growing out of our "isms": racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, and poor bashing. Becoming human is about being less or not-at-all judgemental of others. Acceptance and love of one's neighbour as oneself, as required by all spiritual and ethical traditions, help create acceptance and love of one's self.

My journey into acceptance of others, of "strangers," started early. Fortunately, the one-room country school I went to was on the boundary of the French Canadian Catholic and English Canadian Protestant farm communities in southwest Saskatchewan. Half of the kids were "other." To me, they were just kids; we all played together, had a good time together, and learned together.

Going to college and university after high school also exposed me to a variety of people, but I don't recall much in terms of personal growth around overcoming prejudices, but I did drop out of Catholicism, another "ism" I don't need, and became a secular atheist/agnostic. In Vancouver in the sixties, I became in my family's eyes—a stranger, an outsider, a dirty hippie, poor, different, other. So, as "other" myself, I learned to accept people outside of the mainstream, and accept myself as not fitting into mainstream society. Artists, actors, musicians, and persons of many different ethnicities, people who were looked upon somewhat askance during the narrow-minded environment of my childhood, became friends. Being an outsider encouraged broader perspectives.

Unfortunately (or not) my rejection of the so-called values I grew up with, and the Catholic promise of hell for dropouts, achieved its self-fulfilling prophecy mandate and I became addicted to alcohol, suffered from depression, and again felt further marginalized from polite society. But even the worst hang-over hells I suffered as a result of my devotion to the Church of the Three-Day Drunk were not as bad as having to live an entire life of Christian guilt and fear in that God-sanctioned hell.

In recovery, my sobriety was helped by a gay man who brought his knitting to meetings, by people of colour and by Indigenous friends. My twenty stoned years, the last seven as a drunk, led me to stumble into a diverse community which saved my life.

Finally, becoming involved with Thursdays Writing Collective at Carnegie Community Centre expanded my circle of connections and friendships to a full spectrum of humanity: people of colour, Indigenous, queer, trans, neurodiverse, poor, and most of all, all fabulously creative. Those connections, hopefully,

make me a bit less white, more able to listen and learn other histories, and help transform me into being more accepting of others and of myself.

All the “isms,” all the dislike of strangers or foreigners, amounts mostly to projected self-loathing. Transforming one’s attitude to acceptance creates self-acceptance. That is my experience of me coming home to me, to a place where I try, not always 100% successfully, to see beyond appearances to a heartbeat we all share. Robin Diangelo concludes her book, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* (2018), by telling us that working against racism is “... a messy, lifelong process, but one that is necessary to align my professed values with my real actions. It is also deeply compelling and transformative.”

My growth away from the xenophobia of my childhood religion and family has enriched my life and given me a home in a community that rewards me every day in ways completely unexpected in my wildest imagination. I am wealthy beyond any amount of gold in my friendships, acquaintances and community.

WHAT DO YOU NEED THAT FOR?

PAUL GRIGAITIS

I spent a lot of time with my Sony Walkman in my late teens/early twenties, while growing up in Winnipeg in the early 1990s. It was a bright yellow, portable cassette player with water-resistant sport protection that just fit in the inside pocket of my blue jean jacket. I blasted loud music to my brain using any pair of cheap, old earphones I could find.

I bought my Walkman second-hand from a pawn shop. I remember my dad angrily asking me what I needed “*that*” for after I told him what I had spent my money on. He didn’t think it was important, but to me it was something I could not live without.

Winnipeg is a cold Canadian prairie city where it’s common for temperatures to sink below -30C during the winter. Because of the extreme temperatures, many say that Winnipeg has just two seasons—summer and winter. Growing up in Winnipeg, I was either listening to music or playing hockey.

My taste in music had always been unpopular in my family. They found my preferred genre of music—heavy metal—vulgar and loud. Sometimes I was allowed to choose what got played in the car, but rarely did it last long before it was criticized as too angry and negative. Complaints were for sure if I dared played anything I liked on the home stereo when anybody else was home. But I needed something so I could hear my heavy metal music.

Heavy metal music was a much more popular genre back when I went to school than it is now. It was popular among a significant clique of kids often referred to as “headbangers” (aka “bangers”). I found that I could make friends at school with those who liked the same type of music as me—the bangers. I never sang or played any instruments (well), but I was still able to make friends with them. I wore black, heavy metal t-shirts and shoulder-length hair to try and fit in.

My parents used to think that my taste in music was part of a phase. They and other authority figures often told me I would grow out of it. I eventually got rid of the mullet and the jean jacket, but I never did grow out of my taste for heavy metal music. But what I always secretly wanted was those in my family to hear what I heard. What I heard in heavy metal music was much more than anger or negativity.

Sometimes I wonder why such loud and aggressive music appealed to me because I was such a shy and quiet kid. For me, there were powerful messages and strong emotions behind all the fast guitars, heavy bass, loud drums, and what I found in the lyrics. I would get lost in the words that others couldn’t seem to comprehend. They would often complain that it was “just screaming” whenever I would try to get them to “just listen.” I could not only understand but relate to what those musicians were saying. A lot of what my world is for me came from music. It helped me understand a lot of my emotions that otherwise felt neglected. It brought my attention to and helped shape my opinion around issues such as peace, war, politics and greed. It helped establish the inner rebel in me.

Maybe such loud and aggressive music appealed to me *because* I was such a shy and quiet kid. Maybe the reason I wanted others to hear the music I was listening to was because I didn’t know how to properly express myself.

Looking back, it also makes sense how I became so fond of my Walkman. It was a personal and portable music player that allowed me to listen to whatever kind of music, whenever and wherever I wanted

without bothering anybody else. I remember listening to it in the back of the plane when travelling. I had it on me in the boat when I was fishing with my father. I could sit at the back of the bus and just get lost in my music wherever I was going. Music was there for me when I otherwise felt alone.

While I loved getting lost in the music, my Walkman's earphones used to let me block everybody out. I was really dying to be heard but kept a lot of my emotions to myself. I think what I really needed was a creative way of my own to express myself. I have since struggled with both anxiety and depression. In a way, I think I used my Walkman to keep to myself in an unhealthy manner.

My parents always supported my creative side. My father bought me an electric guitar and paid for music lessons when I was younger. My mother encouraged me to paint and draw. She enrolled me in art lessons at the Winnipeg Art Gallery when I was a child. I never did keep up with those activities but can't help but think I would have felt more fulfilled, better able to express myself, been more sociable and felt less alone if I did.

Many years after the disappearance of my Sony Walkman I discovered that I have a passion for writing that I have since made my own creative outlet. I was suffering without it.

KICKING BEAR OUR BROTHER

KIMBERLEY HURRELL

The sun was shining upon the small town of Cochrane, Alberta. It was a warm and muggy day in mid-July. Mandii was just coming home from grocery shopping and as she was getting out of the car, she heard the telephone ring.

Mandii ran to the phone. She answered it, "Hello Mandii."

On the other end was Mandii's good friend George, who replied, "Can I come to see you?"

"Yes," Mandii said.

Mandii was very worried because George had never called with such concern in his voice. An hour later, George arrived at her front door. Mandii escorted him into the house and brought him to the kitchen. She gave him a glass of refreshing homemade lemonade. George took a sip, placed the glass back onto the table, and with empathetic eyes he said, "I have a very big favour to ask you."

Mandii replied, "I have known you for 20 years. I love you like family."

"Well," George said, "As I have told you before, I have been spending a lot of time with the Indigenous Elders on a reserve in southern Alberta, helping to build fires, collecting wood for the sweat lodges, and I am at a point of my spiritual journey that I have requested to participate in a Sun Dance.

Mandii, asked, "Why do you need a Sun Dance? You're not Indigenous, you are Scottish-Canadian.

"Contrary to popular belief, Indigenous peoples accept non-Indigenous people into their community if they show respect and are deemed worthy," George explained. "I need you to pray for me during the Sun Dance," he said.

"What is a Sun Dance," Mandii asked.

George commented, "I have asked the Elders if I can participate in the sacred Sun Dance, to find out my spiritual name, and to bless my people. I need a female energy to help me, by praying during the Sun Dance."

Mandii was very puzzled. Why was George asking her to pray for him during a Sun Dance. She needed to clarify how she could assist him, so she called him back the next day.

Mandi asked George, "What can I do to help in your spiritual journey?"

George said, "Pray for no distractions. We will be starting the Sun Dance next Monday. This will involve doing a sacred sweat lodge for four days. As of Thursday, try not to eat or drink too much so that you can connect with me spiritually. Allow your psychic intuition to connect. During the sacred sweat we express gratitude for all the things that Mother Earth gives us. The Sun Dance is a time that I need a pure spirit."

Mandii listened to George's request. At the time of the Sun Dance, for four days and four nights she

sat quietly in her home, praying for her friend. On the fourth day she heard the sound of distant drums: bang... bang... bang. Suddenly her friend's face flashed before her eyes. He looked so peaceful. She heard his voice say I am there with you, my sister, and you are here with me. I'm at peace.

The sun rose at 6:00 a.m. on the morning of the fifth day. Mandii called George and he answered with a tired but calm tone in his voice, "I am so tired, but I felt you there. You and I did this together. Mandii, my name is, Kicking Bear."

Mandii felt a feeling of joy pulsate through her body. Tears welled in her eyes. I am so happy for you, Kicking Bear. You rest now. We will talk soon.

These events are based on a based on a true story: dedicated in memory of our spirit brother, Kicking Bear (George Kerr).

NO TRUTH ~ NO RECONCILIATION KNOW TRUTH ~ KNOW RECONCILIATION

VIVIAN BOMBERRY

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER, SOUTHERN ONTARIO

There has been much press about the missing children and unmarked graves found at former Residential Schools. Children of all ages were taken and then disappeared once they were detained at these “schools.” They were subjected to all manner of abuse: physical, psychological, and sexual. Many survived and many did not, or they were left traumatized for life.

I have not seen anything on the subject but my question is this: What happens next when they find the body of a young girl, a child that had been impregnated? Who, what, where and when? We know why.

So having said that, I believe we need to leave the paper with just this question.¹ It will start a major conversation and people will start having their own conversations and questioning. My parents and grandparents on both sides were interned in that system, and I know how it traumatized them, and it had devastating effects it had on their families.

¹ I have shared this short essay with two Elders and they both agree that any more information would be traumatizing, and readers might not have support. Each Elder said this type of information needs to be disclosed in a safe, supported way. Especially those who had family that did not come home. When I talked to these women, they both went where I thought they might, questioning and wondering what would have happened and who would have gotten them pregnant, and why would they be killed. Both of them went down the rabbit hole of what happened. And when I left them, they were in deep conversation.

OCTOBER 18

VANCOUVER WRITERS FESTIVAL “SISTERS IN RESISTANCE: TILAR J. MAZZEO IN CONVERSATION WITH MARSHA LEDERMAN.”

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

For this class, we attended a Vancouver Writer’s Festival event on Granville Island. Author Marsha Lederman interviewed Tilar J. Mazzeo about her new book, *Sisters in Resistance: How a German Spy, a Banker’s Wife, and Mussolini’s Daughter Outwitted the Nazis* (2022).

Mazzeo’s book is written in another sub-genre of the creative non-fiction umbrella: narrative non-fiction. Narrative non-fiction tells a true story in the style of a fictional novel. The genre uses prose to represent facts in a compelling way—facts told as a story. While the emphasis is on the storytelling itself, narrative non-fiction must remain as accurate to the truth as possible. *Sisters in Resistance* is a true, little-known story about how three women helped change the course of history by delivering critical evidence of Axis war crimes to Allied forces during World War II. In telling this story, Mazzeo drew on newly released historical records and first-person interviews with people who had witnessed the events.

Much like how Mandy said that “creative non-fiction is a terrible name for a cool kind of writing,” history also gets a bad name for a cool kind of storytelling. History, as a genre, is sometimes seen as producing dry and boring facts. But beneath each fact is a story. Narrative non-fiction is a vehicle that allowed Mazzeo to give a historical account by blending truth-telling with storytelling techniques, such as plot and character building. If Mazzeo had written what happened as a novel, she said that the true events would have seemed unbelievable, for instance the many detailed accounts of backstabbing within in Mussolini’s inner circle, four wild car chases, multiple love affairs—in a novel, this repetition would have appeared unimaginative, “too much.” However, because narrative non-fiction is committed to the truth and these events actually happened in real life, Mazzeo was able to create an action-packed story that we have to read to believe.

Learning about narrative non-fiction offered another example of how we can make ourselves through blending genres, techniques, stories, and how finding the right genre can help us tell our stories.

ALCOHOLISM AND AA—FOR BETTER OR WORSE!

HOWARD REID

In a personal essay, explore the ways a historical event has helped shape—or not shaped—who you are today.

Interesting project, one that I hadn't given much, if any, thought. I realize every historical event, throughout history, impacts and shapes who we are in some way or other. After considerable thought, I'd have to say the historical event that helped shape me the most is when alcoholism was officially recognized as a disease.

I am the local coordinator for SMART Recovery, Vancouver, Coast and Mountain region. I have been a certified SMART Recovery facilitator for the past five years. I had originally begun attending AA meetings back in 1992, although I was extremely active volunteering to do service work, manning the phones at central office, serving as the chair of the intergroup committee, facilitating meetings for the deaf and visually impaired. I served on roundup committees three years in a row. But I loathed AA meetings filled with hypocrisy, 13-Stepping, one-up-manship and the revolving door of "I'm coming back," "you're the most important person in the room" bullshit. Worse yet were the cakes...people claiming to take a 25-year cake, claiming they had been sober, living meaningful, healthy, balanced, productive lives for the past 25 years, when in the reality of developing a healthy, balanced lifestyle... they were just taking the same one-year cake for the 25th time.

On top of that, I could never come to terms with the concept of a benevolent, omnipotent, omnipresent, higher power, which everyone knows to be GOD. It annoyed the hell out of me when people would suggest that I could use the term God for "good orderly direction," the group could be my higher power, a chair could be my higher power, a fucking doorknob was suggested as a higher power. There is an expression in AA that "we've never met anyone too dumb to get this program, but we have met people too smart to get it." Any form of that idiotic adage that intelligent people like me couldn't get the program was proof that the whole concept of AA was out of whack with reality. It was not that I didn't try to believe, it was not that I didn't want to believe, it was and still is that I just can't believe. To paraphrase a quote from Steven Pinker, a Harvard professor of psychology, the belief in a higher power defies logic; to take something on faith means to believe without good reason. So, by definition, to have faith in the existence of supernatural entities clashes with reason. I was once told by a theological teacher that the devil had planted the dinosaur bones on our family farm in Saskatchewan to deceive me, so that I would no longer believe that the world was created in six literal days, about six thousand years ago and doubt the existence of God. What an idiot!

But I digress; what is the historical event that has influenced my life to the greatest extent? Ah, the answer is damn simple when you consider the past and where I am today. The recognition of alcoholism as a disease by the medical profession in 1956 has caused horrendous psychological and physical damage to countless individuals. Recognizing alcoholism as a disease and insisting that there is only one cure, that is not really a cure, but merely a daily reprieve and that it is spiritual is completely illogical and impractical; psychobabble, gobbledygook! If there is a spiritual reprieve from the disease of alcoholism, why isn't there one from cancer and COVID? Let's form some 12-step groups for those suffering from cancer, AIDS, COVID and all the other terminal diseases. Chuck out modern medicine and leave it all to "God would and could if he sought" (*Alcoholics Anonymous: The Big Book*, page 60).

For me, sitting in a room full of people who I wouldn't normally be caught dead associating with, all claiming to be sick, suffering from the disease of alcoholism, expecting a higher power to intervene and fix them is nauseating. It wasn't until my third time in Vancouver detox that I discovered a practical, evidence based, scientifically researched approach to the negative life impacting **habit** that I had acquired over the years. It said that alcoholism is not and was never a disease. It is an acquired habit as are most addictions. Any habit that one can acquire one can eliminate or replace by building new neural pathways. Neuroplasticity! It is time for the recovery industry to move out of the dark ages and into the light. Get rid of the myths and mythology and embrace science.

It was only this morning during a contentious confrontation between two old farts that I realized there was, in fact, a historic event that had significantly impacted my life in the past and was impacting it even now. The recognition by the Medical Association that alcoholism or any other addiction is a disease treatable through a spiritual awakening of any kind is ludicrous. There is a growing body of evidence that confirms successful remittance of alcoholism (an acquired habit) can be achieved and maintained over time, without formal treatment. Contrary to common lay and professional perceptions, a significant percentage of alcoholics appear to achieve sobriety without receiving formal treatment. I do not have a disease; I am not an alcoholic. I merely acquired a negative, health and life impacting bad habit. Then, I discovered the POWER of Choice and made the changes necessary to live a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

WHY ARE WE DYING?

MICHAEL LINDBLOM

Crawling through muck
Killing men just like us
On barbed wire stuck
Out of luck
Rust on our bayonets
Thrust through their guts

It's them or us
Keep moving forward!
General's orders
Into the fray
And pray we don't
Lose half our soldiers
Brothers in arms
Carried on shoulders
Of regular men
Taught to be warriors
Destroyers of life
Indispensable, trite
Whose fight
Are we fighting?
In trenches dug deep
Six feet from
Scorched earth igniting
Lighting the night

Smoke rising
Turning the tide
Of battle
Like cattle we moan
And march to the slaughter
Boots tied tight
We tread through the water
Shallow graves for the brave
Who fought on with honour
And saved
Their fellow man from
Fifty caliber rounds
Rained down
From enemy planes
This is intense
And insane
Much too much
For my brain
To make sense
Of this matter
I just cannot wait
For this hell to be over
Not much of a life
For a soldier

RHETORIC: “WALKING THE TALK, THE MAKING OF OURSELVES THROUGH MANIFESTOS! THIS IS WHAT ME WE TRULY, MADLY, DEEPLY WANT!” WITH MARGOT LEIGH BUTLER, HUM AND ASSOCIATE, INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES, UBC.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Tonight, we learned how to declare, “This is what we want!” Our teacher, Margot Leigh Butler introduced us to “the manifesto,” which is a form of persuasive writing that is as old as the ancient Greeks! Aristotle wrote his book, *The Art of Rhetoric* in the 4th century BCE. A manifesto aims to persuade those who hear it and is sometimes called a “struggle text” because it is often directed toward institutions and powers that get to define who and what counts as “normal.” There are three key parts to a manifesto: 1) **who makes it**; 2) **what’s said and how it’s said**; and 3) **who hears it**. We tried our hands at manifesto writing by first writing statements of what we each, individually want. Then, we turned to our neighbours to connect our demands with one another: we said, “this is what we, together want!” Margot taught us that doing this together (connecting our demands with another’s) is what she calls a

ME

WE

—a contingent relationship that exists in this present moment. It isn’t forever, it’s provisional. It shows how we’re entangled, how we depend on one another, and how a ME/WE is very, very specific. After learning the mechanics, we watched, listened to, read and interpreted a range of different manifestos, learning that manifestos can come in many modes: in musical, video, artistic, academic (e.g., TED talks)—and in written form!

WHAT WE READ

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HOMES ARE WHAT WE WANT: A MANIFESTO

JIAN LIAO

The street tents in the Downtown Eastside were a hundred and eighty in number in July 2022. The numbers increase every day. Each day, people in this city are evicted to the streets, their belongings and dignity packed into carts. Where is their home?

What is a Canadian's basic need in 2023?

Everyone deserves a quality life with affordable housing, medical care, and fresh, nutritious food. Even birds have nests, and animals live in caves. But where are the homes for the homeless?

The rent for a one-bedroom in Vancouver is almost \$2000 per month. If a worker earns \$20 per hour and works eight hours per day for forty hours per week, their net income per month is around \$2400. How could this tired, overworked person, stretched to their limit, afford to live?

The only choice left is to share a space with others, and never own one of their own. What kind of quality of life is this for a full-time hard worker? The people who depend on ministry income assistance receive just around \$1000. Which landlord would they turn to?

For the children following parents who are living in shelters, how do they focus on their studies? How can they get support from their parents and the community? How can they invite their friends over to have a play date when they live in a shelter? How can they live a full, healthy life that children deserve, without giving in to hopelessness or despair?

How can they maintain their self-confidence with their peers? Who can take care of their emotions and support their mental health? What is the meaning of home for them?

More questions arise than we have answers for. Who takes care of the homeless? How can they get physical and mental support? Where is the home so that their family can support them in the extra hard times? When do they have dinner in their real home?

The people in the Downtown Eastside need more than just a roof. They need a real home and a quality life. A home with a warm kitchen to prepare nutritious foods. A home with a sweet bedroom for rest and recovery. A home with a dining table for family dinners where the family members can support one another.

We have a long way to go. How much love has the government offered to the homeless people in the Downtown Eastside? **LOVE, SUPPORT, EDUCATION, CARE, and HEALING** are the best ways to help those without shelters people to build and secure their loving homes.

Together, let's raise our voices for those suppressed and help more people find loving and peaceful homes.

WEALTH INEQUALITY: A MANIFESTO

SU CHOL CHONG

We have to get rid of the poverty that has screwed our society up by changing social and legal systems. The greed of the rich has corrupted our society and has exploited marginalized groups of people.

Current systems were designed to benefit and protect the small number of rich and learned people. The descendants of the rich will benefit from generational wealth, while the descendants of the poor will continue to be oppressed. Their offspring will be on top of the poor and execute merciless financial cruelty on us and our children. In solidarity, let's identify the root causes of the crisis of inequality we face. Let's rebuild and strengthen our power to take back what's ours.

To achieve our goals, we, the people belonging to the lower income class, should be organized and educated. Then we can change the current unfair system by protesting without stopping until our goals are met. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* will be our Bible for why we are fighting.

With solidarity, we can achieve our goals by marching and voting for the opposition party until our goals come true.

To read the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, visit: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pch/documents/services/download-order-charter-bill/canadian-charter-rights-freedoms-eng.pdf>.

INVISIBLE JOURNALIST/REPORTER TO CORPORATE MEDIA

HERBERTO ESTRADA

In an age when classified information is destined to travel through the electronic superhighway, sensitive information can be leaked. As corporate media refuses to inform the public and the international community of the leaked contents and the publishers, this essay will expose the story of a whistle-blower who published classified information in the hope of making the world a better place.

His name is Julian Assange, publisher, investigative journalist and co-founder of WikiLeaks. As a publisher of secret military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, Assange exposed classified information, making him a subject of prosecution by the United States government. Assange is an Australian journalist who has ended up in Belmarsh—a high security prison in London, England. The English authorities complied with the U.S. government to arrest and detain Assange, whom they claim has hacked secret and confidential information regarding U.S. military operations. The U.S. government has requested his extradition.

The U.S. government accuses Assange of bridging military data, by hacking sensitive information distributed through the Internet's cables. Assange had taken asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, England, up until April 2019, but then the Ecuadorian government handed him over to the English authorities. From this time up to now, Assange has been in Belmarsh prison awaiting extradition to the U. S. The government of the U.S. wants to extradite him and try him in a court of law, where he will be charged under the Espionage Act, with the possibility of facing a lifetime in prison. Meanwhile, in Belmarsh prison, Assange faces physical and mental health challenges due to his poor imprisonment conditions. With his psychological health deteriorating, he has been put under suicide watch.

Assange is married. His wife and two sons have begged many times to the U.S. government to stop the extradition request and the English authorities to release him. Both the U.S. and English governments have declined their requests, claiming that he has to be tried and testify in a U.S court of law. As an investigative journalist and reporter, Assange defiantly published a video in which a U.S. military Apache helicopter opens fire on a group of European journalists. These journalists were reporting on the war events taking place in rural areas of Afghanistan, and their reports were transmitted to major European media networks and newspapers.

Now, according to the U.S. government, Assange has violated the Espionage Act by publishing this horrifying event. Assange's team of lawyers have appealed the extradition request. The lawyers have claimed that due process in U.S. could easily infringe on his civil rights, by not giving him a fair trial. Moreover, Assange's health has deteriorated to such extent that he could die in prison due to the cruel, inhuman and torturous conditions of his imprisonment.

Corporate media still refuses to cover Assange's conditions and what he has gone through. His case has been silenced by the mainstream media, even when he took asylum at the Ecuadorian embassy, at a time when the U.S. authorities planned to assassinate him (Goodman).

Despite the lack of mainstream media coverage, Assange's case leads us to think that history isn't made by the wealthy and powerful, but by the everyday person. For instance, a normal person like Assange has made history by exposing crimes against humanity. As we urge corporate media to

report on this case, at the same time, we demand that media should be neutral and transparent on its own business of reporting. This is the popular thinking and feeling of many people of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and beyond. Many of us don't consume corporate media. We are the unbiased media, and this unbiased approach is how the world events would be reported if we were in charge of delivering the news. Corporate media is just another weapon of mass disruption to control the minds of the world's population.

We, the residents of Vancouver East, have been observing that the people delivering the news, for instance on CTV and CBC, have been selected and appointed to report about certain issues, particularly yellow journalism for the consumption of vulnerable populations. The journalists delivering the news for major corporate media outlets belong to a clique of people committed to protecting and defending the interests of wealthy multimillionaires. Crimes against humanity, like the news Assange leaked, does not get corporate media approval or coverage because the stories are considered unworthy. News is generally geared towards a passive audience rather than critical thinkers. The mainstream medias' journalists regularly tell stories that stigmatize people living the Downtown Eastside, but there are also alternative media groups who report on the same events with an insightful point of view that generates critical thinking—for instance, David Barsamian at Alternative Radio, and Ben Swann at Swan Sovereign. The mainstream media doesn't like the way in which we expose the truth; like Assange had exposed crimes against humanity.

We have pleaded to the governments of this world to help free Julian Assange. Humanity has had enough! We'll be the ones who'll carry on this fight, invoking and reciting our *Epopya* throughout, until our voices are heard. Assange enjoys a place of glorious prestige alongside the likes of John Lennon, Bob Marley, Louis Riel and so many others who fought for the betterment of this world!

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THE RIGHT TO A QUIET PLACE

ANGELINA ANTHONY

A human being
deserves
housing
It's a basic human need
Nobody should
be homeless
When I am sick
all I want
is a Quiet place
to be...
in the shelter
there is never
Quiet
Imagine how hard it is to
feel well
when there is
No privacy
No safety
No Quiet

CREATIVE NON-FICTION AND FICTION: AUTOFICTION: “MAKING FRICTION WITH FACT AND FICTION,” WITH CLAIRE MATTHEWS, HUM.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

A genre of many names, autofiction blurs the boundaries between autobiography and fiction. This hybrid genre has no exact ratio; writers make the genre their own. Like the personal essay, autofiction begins with the truth; it is based in a factual account of the author’s life. We can think about how this sets up a tension between truth and fiction, or real and not real. Truth is often opposed to fiction—real life events that actually took place versus made up stories—but differentiating between truth and fact is important. A fact is objective, whereas a truth can be subjective. Perspective, opinions and feelings are personal, and people will experience similar events differently, to the point where one person’s account of the truth might be perceived as fiction to another. While personal essays are journeys to unravel truths, autofiction concerns itself with retelling the truth in aesthetically pleasing ways, much like fiction. In one of our readings for tonight, “In the Line: Between Memoir and Fiction,” David Mura says, “Issues of accuracy in fiction are not as important as issues of aesthetic interest” (205). We learned that aesthetic interest can include plot, characterization, theme, dialogue and suspense, among others. Like fiction, autofiction strives to tell an engaging story. Both want to find the best way to tell a story. But unlike most fiction, autofiction grounds itself in the lived experiences of the writer.

Claire Matthews showed us some unifying features of autofiction: the protagonist almost always has the same name as the author and the point of view is often first person (the *I* tells the story). Identifying details, such as names and locations, are changed and the central plot mirrors events in the writer’s life. Some events may be dramatized or exaggerated, and fictive subplots can be added—whatever techniques help tell the story. Truth and fiction might be of equal weight, or fiction might outweigh non-fiction elements.

We learned that while many writers enjoy this genre for its flexibility and anonymity, some readers and writers view autofiction as a cover. Under the guise of fiction, it allows writers to hide from acknowledging the truth and to not take full responsibility for what they write. Some memoirists, especially marginalized writers, have fought for the ability and credibility to tell their truths. The murkiness of autofiction, the inability to distinguish truth from fiction, is a line that raises a question we must ask ourselves: is the line worth crossing? Claire encouraged us to consider and reflect upon the ways we make ourselves as writers, especially as we send our work out in the world for others to read. As Mandy Len Catron noted in a previous class, truth-telling in non-fiction writing is essential. It is a trust created with readers. In autofiction, a reader doesn’t always know *what* the truth is. This can be seen as a trick. A lack of trust building.

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HERE IS WHY

MBELEKO

With her other classmates, she stood on the stage behind the school president and other dignitaries. The bright, loud and triumphant sound of the trumpet marking the beginning of the ceremony evoked a seesaw of emotions, reminding her that all two years she had put into her studies finally paid off. As the trumpet bellowed out for a minute or so, it was as if she were time-travelling. With eyes welling up, she remembered the brokenness, hardships and dysfunctionality of her upbringing. Of all memories that raced through her mind in that moment, this one stood out the most.

One early Sunday morning, the landlord showed up to wake everyone and demanded that her mother pay the owed rent or leave that same day. Her mother requested a little grace time while she reached out to family and friends for support. By little grace time I mean a few hours. The owed rent was around \$450, which to some might not seem like much, but to a newly divorced, single mother with five mouths to feed, and living in a world with little social services support, this was a rather sticky web with no escape. One must point out, this was a regular occurrence.

Two hours later, with her mother gone, the landlord directed her and her siblings to start packing their belongings and move out. With nothing much to say, all the kids obliged and gathered everything under the tree. Their mother did not show up until later in the evening, just before it got dark. As she walked through the gate, all the kids locked their teary eyes with hers. It was evident that they were going to spend the night under the tree.

Ever heard people say, “when it rains it pours?” Well, that same evening, rain clouds gathered and it drizzled as the family prayed for the heavens to spare them from further misery. As morning came, she got up before anyone else in their neighbourhood. That way she was sure that she’d get ready and leave before anyone saw her. Using her mobile phone torch, she scouted through piles of clothes to find something to wear and went on to brush her teeth by the garden water pipe. Once done, she left, hoping to make it to work before everyone else.

While on her way to work, the bronze, orange, yellow and peach light of dawn gradually ascended upon the sky. Instantly, she noticed how wrinkled her clothes were. Shamefaced, cramped up in a minibus and sandwiched between other commuters, she slowly pressed her palms on her shirt and pants, moving them inch by inch, hoping to smooth out the creases. A ride that was usually filled with strangers chatting away was this time around filled with just the excessive rattling sound from the car.

Arriving at work just before six o’clock, she had ample time to put herself together in the staff lavatory. As everyone started to arrive, she could tell from their stares that they suspected something was wrong. She wondered what could have easily given her away, maybe it was the badly wrinkled clothing, dry ashy feet, not so well-kempt hair or the distressed look on her face.

And that is one of the many reasons why she shed a tear on that stage when everyone else was happy and exchanging warm embraces.

ELIJAH IN THE SECRET PLACE

NAYYAR BEHTARI

Chapter 1

Sweat, dread and heart palpitations. Aana measures her husband's every movement like she would of a dragon.

"If you don't give them back that Christmas money, then you and I are done," he whispers, his breath like a blood hot flame.

"But it was a gift to help us," she says in desperation, placing her hand over her belly, wondering if her unborn child Elijah has picked up on this darkened environment.

"They are witches, and that money is cursed. Our family is to have nothing to do with them or their money," Emmanuel demands. His dragon-like frame stalks towards her in the outpour of these words.

"They aren't witches, they are my friends. Why does that voice in your head have to ruin everything for me?" she cries.

"You're insulting me. It's not a voice, it's God and he revealed to me that they are witches. Give them back that money or I will end the lease of our home and leave you," he says menacingly, charring her broken vinyl record of thoughts.

Everything inside of Aana drops like glass cups falling to the floor. She knows the man she has trusted to protect her and their unborn child has completely desecrated their home.

"I'm leaving you," she says in a nearly imperceptible voice that has been burned too many times.

She bolts out the door.

An empty malt bottle swings at the doorframe from Emmanuel's hand, and it shatters like a thousand broken diamonds before his dragon eyes.

"Fine, leave then," he screams. "You always come back anyway!"

The echo of his voice haunts her, bouncing off broad and empty halls as she runs out of the wreckage that she once knew to be home.

An excerpt from *Elijah in the Secret Place*

Aana with her tears dried, lays in bed gazing at Elijah's ultrasound photo like it is a sea of stars. The warmth of the blanket the safehouse has provided her with wraps around her shivering soul.

"My meteor," she says, "I have loved you ever since I knew you were the size of a tomato." She says this as she drifts off into a deep sleep.

The dream that follows

"My meteor, I have loved you ever since I knew you were the size of a tomato." The sound of these words sink down under the sea and the impact of them raises plumes of sand. Through the tapestry of the sands and of the sea, a little boy is seen swimming through turquoise and teal waters, swimming to his mommy. His little naked fingers reach out to be held by her. His mother swims towards him too in a flowing white dress, pushing past much sand and suffering so she can grasp the chance to hold him. His beaming brown eyes and dark fluffy hair frame his toothless grin in joyful expectation.

MY FAVOURITE STREET

LISA K. WARSH

My favourite street in Canada is Park Lane Circle, Don Mills, Ontario. Right in the heart of midtown Toronto is a spot known as “Post Road Area” or “The Bridal Path Area”—four beautiful streets off of Post Road, beginning with Park Lane, ending with The Bridal Path, middled by High Point. Lawrence Ave., being the centre point through these three streets, has this one quiet area along its enormous and busy length.

My father picked this street to design and build our house on. This was also Dad’s favourite street. It is surrounded by magnificent, natural features, spanning fifteen kilometres of ravine, glen, and the Don River. There is a very tall bridge standing over the Bayview Glen that you would never realize the wonders below if driving past, through the city. A special place to raise a family, my father chose this oasis for us—my two brothers, Mom, and myself. This is the street I lived on for my first twelve years of life.

When I think of this street, my senses get overloaded by all of the seasons in Ontario. I can smell all four! The foliage, the earthy ground, the flowers and horses at the bottom of the park. The big, white boulders that lined the street, in front of each house. There were no sidewalks on Park Lane then; however, there is a sidewalk now on one side.

The lots were all two-and-a-half acres, but some residents had two lots. They all back onto a ravine leading to the Don River below, which winds all the way down to Edward’s Gardens and Sunnybrook Stables. That is where the RCMP stable is. I believe it has been rebuilt since the May 2018 fire devastated Sunnybrook Farms/Stables.

When I was really young, maybe four years old, I learned to ride a bicycle. My brother taught me in the driveway. That was when I got my freedom. Mom never knew where I was after that. I rode up and down that street every day, with trips to the two schools and playgrounds. It was quiet and safe. At the end of the street was Bayview Glen and Bayview Glen School, a private school that I attended after kindergarten at the Park Lane public school where I was bullied horribly.

In the middle of Park Lane Circle was Lawrence Ave. There was this huge hill going down to the glen that was at the end of Lawrence Ave., which continued to Bayview Avenue just on the outside of this gem of a neighbourhood. To me, this hill was a playground, a theme park, and to the other kids in the neighbourhood, a rite of passage. All the big kids rode their bikes down this hill, including me. After doing it once, I was addicted to the thrill.

As a kid, I always had skinned knees from playing outside and in the ravine, but this was the worst accident I had back then. I had a friend over to play and we promptly rode over to the famous mega hill. My bicycle chain broke along the way, but I decided to go down despite the warnings from my friend. Off we went at speeds that were exhilarating to us, but with no chain, my bike went faster and faster. Soon my bike was out of control until a screech rang out from my deepest senses—pain, scrapes, cuts, bruises and a small, purple bike on top of me. That was a brutal day. Typical Lisa, never listening to other people’s warnings, as if I thought I knew it all at five! After that horrific battle with gravity, I stuck to tadpole hunting in the creek that lined Lawrence Ave.

There were lots of great hiking spots leading from the school. The way to Glendon University was through the glen too. We used to swim at the university in the winter. We all had outdoor pools for the summer.

When I close my eyes, I can smell the musty piles of leaves that were outside each house in the fall and covered the white rocks. I can hear the rattling sound of the community bus going by. I remember the names of all of the kids I grew up with there, jumping in and out of those piles of leaves. I am still in touch with a few of them today.

I don't know of a prettier street or one with so much meaning to myself and the other kids who grew up there. The lousy, broken concrete and asphalt road that winded through the nicest neighbourhood in the city of Toronto. The strong tall trees that gated our street and watched over the children playing.

Maybe the magic was all about being so young there. The busy world went on outside this quiet place where we made forts in the rows of plowed snow like tunnels leading somewhere special. We were in our own little world on Park Lane Circle.

VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

MICHAEL LINDBLOM

Vancouver Public Library

Reminds me of Rome

Though I've never been

Just the architecture

Many days creative

Many ways my mind

Word-stained

Alive and

Occupied

Like a sponge

Forever slurping

Searching

For the next idea

The next big thing I

Didn't know I

Didn't know

THE SHARK

JESINTA STONEBURGH

I looked down with the pressure wand in my hand and saw a glimpse of the colour blue. Usual for the grey of the cement. I bent down and reached out my hand. As I brought the smooth, plastic fragment closer to my eyes, I noticed it was a small figurine. A shark figurine. Perhaps a child's toy? But how did it end up in the drained fountains of the rich?

Rummaging through trinkets haphazardly, I came across the shark. I placed it on the corner of my freshly cleaned desk. A visual representation of my accomplishment and on display, a piece of nostalgia. The shark took me back to memories of my father like the waves of a tsunami.

To anyone else, this is just a toy figurine, but to me, there are so many strings of attachment of emotions moved by impulse.

I left work that day with sand and little rocks in my shoes. The water had penetrated every crevice from my knees down. The sun was shining. In my pocket, I carried a new friend, the shark. I found him in a large fountain pool where he seemed to be the only survivor in the vast emptiness of stone. A drained pool, a stranger. Laying there in the empty fountain of wishes.

Sometimes, you find something that grabs you before you grab it. It takes the wind out of you, takes the breath from your lungs. Sometimes, you grab it and only later realize you can't let go.

POETRY: COLLABORATIVE POETRY: “(RE)MAKING TOGETHER,” WITH GEOFFREY NILSON, POET, PHD STUDENT AT SFU, AND EDUCATOR WITH VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENGLISH.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

We began the evening writing poetry together, in the form of a chain poem. Each table had a piece of paper with the same first line written across the top, “I would meet you now under suburban night.” The paper was passed from person to person, with a new line added every time. Our twists and turns, departures from the opening line, and commitment to rhythm and sound varied from table to table. While all our poems started alike, no poem ended in the same way. When we share, we learn—from each other and from the new pathways our minds travel when working with new people for the first time.

Geoffrey Nilson introduced us to different ways we can collaborate in poetry. Whether it’s by working together, such as our chain poem, or working with the words of other poets. We learned about poetic forms that arise from collaboration: the cento, epigraph, glosa, renga and found poetry. We had a familiar friend in these forms: the renga contains a haiku (seventeen syllables), in addition to a fourteen-syllable couplet, called a tanka. For our in-class writing exercise we used examples of haiku from William’s *Rez Dog Blues and the Haiku*, as well as from our class readings, and then made them into renga by adding a tanka. From there, we learned about erasure poetry, a type of found poetry that takes a sample text and crosses out whatever words the poet does not want, leaving behind a poem. For this exercise we used an excerpt from a previously banned book—George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*—but poets draw on a variety of source materials like newspapers, legislation and other works in the public domain to make a political statement. With pens in hand, we erased to unearth new narratives.

WHAT WE READ

Dawn, Amber. *Where the Words End and My Body Begins*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2015, pp. 9–10, 39–42.

Hoagland, Tony. “Whose Voice is It? A Writer’s Voice is Made From Other Writers’ Voices.” *The Art of Voice: Poetic Principles and Practice*, W.W. Norton and Company, 2019, pp. 49–53.

Page, P.K. *Hologram: A Book of Glossas*. Brick Books, 1994, pp. 9–12, 42–43.

TRIPLE GROWTH

SAMANTHA DAVIS
NISGA'A NATION OF GITLAXT'AAMIKS

East Van. New Aiyansh. Hawaii.
A place I once knew
A place where I grew
A place somewhere altogether new

My heart has always felt the vibes of the Nass
Fresh sockeye, campfire, smokehouse stash
Little girl me, so innocent soft spoken and sweet

Moving to urban(ness), ever so deserving this
Wipe away past sorrows,
Bringing together brighter tomorrows
Solid take no crap, crazy teen combat
Walls up, trust down, must always know what surrounds

Me against the world, still such a little girl
Lurking in the unjust, no one ever I trust
Some day make it to paradise

To make the best of my life

HEY, MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS PLS

CINDY QT

If you were busy being kind,
Before you knew it you would find
You'd soon forget to think 'twas true
That someone was unkind to you.
—“If You Were Busy,” R. Foreman

If you were busy speaking kind,
Your kindly words are gentle tones that sweeten hearts.
If you were busy showing kindness,
Your kindness will be like smiles spread around.
If you were busy thinking kind,
You will be busy doing fine
You won't have time to think about the bad
And no one will upset you.
You will be strong enough being kind
If you were busy being kind.

You won't have time to notice someone being unkind to you;
What you have is the kindness coming back,
If you were busy finding kindness.
Your life is full of kindness
This is something we are doing without even thinking about it.
November 13, World Kindness Day reminds us being kind,
Promotes the principle of kindness
Kind to others as you are kind to yourself
We will busy being more kind
Before you know it, you would find

Being kind is not something to win, applause.
Being kind, therefore, we are.
If you were busy being kind, you won't care if people are not kind.
Kindness will fill your eyes.
Mind your business and let others take care of their own.
Take good care of yourself, others will take care of their kindness.
There is a Golden Rule and also a Silver Rule.
Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you.
We should always seek the cause in ourselves first, kindness.
You'd soon forget to think 'twas true.

If you were busy treating others as you want to be treated.
You won't do unto others what you would not have them do unto you.
If you were busy minding your own business,
You won't have time to judge others
Because you are too busy on your own.
Ask yourself more, not ask others for kindness.

Be lenient on others as on yourself.
If you were being lenient on others
You would be too kind to remember
That someone was unkind to you.

“IF YOU WERE BUSY” AND ME

“If you were busy” by R. Foreman is a poem which has influenced me the most for the past two decades. I first heard this poem at the Reciting Program which is designed for Chinese pre-teen kids to learn western culture. I purchased it for my sister’s son about 20 years ago. As I always played the poem on a CD for him, I listened to it with him. First, what I have learnt is if I am busy being good, I won’t have time to notice when others are not doing good. Also, if I were busy being kind, I shouldn’t have time to notice who is unkind to me. That means, no matter what, just be kind to others. Secondly, I should always focus on minding my business, and others will take care of their own. Lastly, this poem also reminds me to be lenient on others and to be lenient on myself. I was taught by Confucianism that I should be strict on myself and lenient on others, but I like the lenient way. So, it is great to keep this verse in my mind, to help get along well with people around me, especially my teenage son for whom I should be a good model instead of bossing him around. It also helps me cultivate mutual respect. I am so grateful to keep this poem in my mind and guide me for the past two decades.

I have heard there is a Museum for Human Rights in Canada. I also heard that there are some issues that arise in our First Nations communities which our Museum for Human Rights should care about—like no clean drinkable water in a country famous for having the richest amount of fresh water in the world. I am wondering whether clean drinkable water is not defined as a human right, or is the government too busy caring about human rights across the world and has no time to care about what is right in front of us?

Recently, the news is talking about our prime minister criticizing the Chinese government for manipulating our Canadian elections. Sounds just like the U.S. criticizing Russia for manipulating their elections.

According to my experience of volunteering for the Canadian election office and MP candidate office, I learnt that some rich people are our MP’s sponsors, as well as some big companies. They donate big money to support our election and deduct the amount from their taxes. If these sponsors are Canadian, that is fine, but if these sponsors are not Canadian, will they be manipulated by other countries? If our democratic system can be easily manipulated, that is the system’s problem, not the rich people or their big companies. They are just trying their best to get the government’s privilege to run their business better, right? They might not only choose the governments, but also choose the countries which they can trust.

In the past couple of years, the relationship between Canada and China has been getting worse. As a Chinese Canadian, I can’t help asking Canada, would you please mind your own business and leave China be. China is so big and the system is too complicated; it’s definitely not a communist country like Karl Marx defined over 100 years ago. The Chinese government is busy taking care of their problems. I don’t think the Chinese government will have time to manipulate other countries elections, but the richest Chinese citizens might, just like the richest people in other countries. They are busy making more business, and busy selecting the right country for their business. True?

MERCY

TERESA WONG

The quality of mercy is not strain'd.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:

—William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

The street by the SkyTrain station is quiet if not for the timely rumbling noise of the train in the cold night air. The snowflakes leave a thin coating of white on the road. A small coffee shop standing at the corner of the crossroad stays open. The shop is well lit and warm air slips through the heavy wooden door every time it is opened, sending forth a strong aroma of coffee as well as the fragrance of food, awakening the gastronomic sense of people passing by.

A frail, elderly, short man with a cane wearing a black toque, sparsely dressed for the weather, makes small steps on the side of the road in the cold. He hesitates for a moment outside the coffee shop but finally decides to go in to warm up, at least for a little while. Next to the entrance is a counter attended by a heavily built, middle-aged shopkeeper with sharp eyes and a stern look on his face. He is multi-tasking, watching all the activities going on in the shop whilst the old man catches his attention. By the side of the coffee station are counters displaying a sumptuous array of freshly made sandwiches of various flavours, placed in plastic containers with a labelled price. The sandwich with red tomato, fresh lettuce, olive-green pickle and tender chicken pieces packed between slices of brown bread looks outstandingly delicious and inviting to the old man. He fumbles around the few coins in his pocket and utters a sigh. However, hunger for food does not allow him to take his eyes away from the sandwich and at the spur of the moment when desperation supersedes dignity, consequence, sense and sensibility, he grabs the chicken sandwich without further contemplation and hides it under his flimsy coat. Nevertheless, before he manages to exit the shop, the shopkeeper has his hands on him.

All eyes in the room are on the old man. His leaden, distorted face turns almost white as paper and, trembling, he falls to his knees whilst the chicken sandwich packed in its container drops out of his pocket. Frightened, crushed, humiliated, stricken with grief, filled with shame and embarrassment, meek as a lamb, he tearfully implores for forgiveness as the shopkeeper apathetically tries to bring in a security guard. Amidst the onlookers, a girl from a corner of the shop steps up and looks straight into the eyes of the shopkeeper. Pleading for compassion and pardon for the old man, she offers to pay for his sandwich and begs for his release. The shopkeeper's face softens as the girl picks up the cane and the sandwich from the ground, gently helping the old man to the door.

NOVEMBER 15

CREATIVE WRITING: SHARING PERSPECTIVES: “WE ARE ALL MAKERS, WRITERS, ARTISTS!”
WITH ALANNA EDWARDS, ART INSTRUCTOR AND ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR, SURREY ART
GALLERY.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Much of this term’s content focused on storytelling through the written word. But storytelling comes in many other forms too, for instance the spoken word, and visual art. As an opening to the class, Alanna Edwards encouraged us to share what brought us to Hum, our perspectives. She reminded us of our dedication to learning, and that we are always learning from ourselves and others.

We learned about the numerous exhibits at the Surrey Art Gallery where Allana works, and the various ways that artists share perspectives about their artwork. Alanna shared her perspective on the stories the Mi’kmaq tell through basket weaving, box making and bracelets. Bracelets can be a way to show appreciation to another. Alanna showed us how Coast Salish artists use positive and negative space in artmaking, something we would see again during our visit to the Vancouver Art Gallery, where we saw the exhibit *Guud san glans Robert Davidson: A Line that Bends But Does Not Break*.

Art is a way to create a visual language. We made our own visual language by crafting collages from materials generously provided by the Surrey Art Gallery. We snipped from magazines, drew our stories, beaded our appreciation. Alanna showed us that we all have stories worth telling, and she offered us another way to tell them.

WHAT WE READ

Willard, Tania. “Protecting, Carrying, Defending.” *An Open Book*, Surrey Art Gallery, 2018.

COMEDY: WRITING COMEDIC FORMS: “IT’S A BIG DEAL!” WITH DINA DEL BUCCHIA, AUTHOR, PODCASTER, AND EDUCATOR WITH UBC CREATIVE WRITING.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

For tonight’s class, we suspended our doubts about our own personal funny bones and learned that writing comedy is much more than punchlines. Good comedy has many elements, including repetition, hyperbole, escalation, understatement, overstatement, word play and juxtaposition. Sometimes, when writing a poem, song, or script, beginning with an unexpected or surprising idea can get the humour started. For our first in-class writing exercise, we wrote an imaginary contract. We pretended we had answered an ad from a local “expert” who promised they could get rid of our writer’s block for the rest of our life! The contract, however, had some unusual terms—which were not a surprise to us because we drafted those terms ourselves.

Dina Del Bucchia guided us through the foundations of writing comedy. We learned about the importance of setting up the joke, and how this context leads into the punchline, the payoff, the “ha ha!” moment we all love. We briefly discussed the ethics of writing comedy and the rule of “punch up, not down”—writing jokes that don’t make fun of the marginalized and disempowered.

By the end of the evening, we were writing our own one-liners. The classic opening line, “Why did the chicken cross the road?” produced some hilarious results:

- ...because it was jealous of the zebra crossing
- ...because it likes to play chicken
- ...because someone at the chicken wings.

CREATIVE AND CRITICAL WRITING: “REVIEWING BOOKS FOR PLAIN PLEASURE” WITH MARISA GRIZENKO, REVIEWS EDITOR AT EVENT MAGAZINE, WRITER, AUTHOR OF PLAIN PLEASURES NEWSLETTER.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

A hybrid genre of literary criticism, marketing and news, book reviews might summarize, contextualize, analyze, and evaluate a book—or a play, film, or any other artistic medium. Book reviews often make comparisons between the book under review and another book like it, and some “go beyond the text” to include things like the author’s biographical details, or the context in which the story was written. When writing a book review, the venue (where will this review live?) and audience (who will read it?) are important to consider. We discussed ways that reviews can be catered to different venues and audiences.

We learned about Marisa Grizenko’s journey into the world of writing book reviews, how the genre combined her love of reading with her training in critical thinking. We discussed the importance of offering constructive criticism using critical thinking and supporting our critiques with examples from the book.

Marisa provided an outline for how to get started writing reviews. Successful book reviews share common features. They include the necessary information like book title, author, year of publication, and sometimes the publisher and genre; answer some basic questions (who, what, where, why, and how?); offer a critical perspective; provide a new perspective; and some of the best reviews include a close reading of the text. Marisa reminded us that we all have a perspective to share, and we should do so with confidence. Book reviews do not need to be article length, they can be as little as two paragraphs, like the reviews Marisa writes in her *Plain Pleasures Newsletter*.

WHAT WE READ

Grizenko, Marisa. *Plain Pleasures*, <https://www.marisagrizenko.com/plain-pleasures-newsletter>.

Nilson, Geoffrey. “A Song from the House of Moans: Janet Gallant & Sharon Thesen’s *The Wig-Maker*.” *Arc Poetry Magazine*, 8 January 2022, <https://arcpoetry.ca/2022/01/08/wig-maker-janet-gallant-sharon-thesen/>.

Pierre, Terese Mason. “Persephone’s Children: A Life in Fragments.” *Quill and Quire*, 25 January 2022, <https://quillandquire.com/review/persephones-children-a-life-in-fragments/>.

BOOK REVIEW: *HOW THE BEATLES ROCKED THE KREMLIN*, BY LESLIE WOODHEAD

CLAUDE F. RANVILLE

MÉTIS NATION, CRANE RIVER MANITOBA

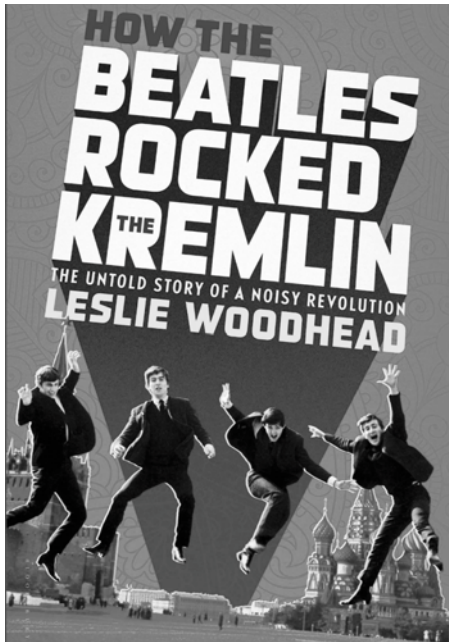


Figure 1: *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin* book cover, Bloomsbury Publishing.

It was during the Cold War—Western music was banned behind the Iron Curtain—when Beatlemania music penetrated the Soviet Union. Just as the youth of western nations were taken in by these four lads from Liverpool, the USSR youth also embraced the sound of The Beatles. In Soviet Russia, The Beatles would take on a mythical status. Even though it was against the law in Russia to possess Beatles’ records, the Soviet youth would go so far as to press their music onto old X-rays which only allowed four or five plays before burning out.

I grew up during the Cold War and was conditioned to fear the Soviet Union as a terrible communist country to live in! There is this legend that The Beatles, while refueling in Leningrad, became snowbound for a couple of days. Word soon spread in the local community that The Beatles were in town and in their tour airplane at the Leningrad airport.

Well needless to say, a large group of youth began to congregate at the airport for a slim chance of getting to see their musical idols. Legend has it, The Beatles were restless, so they appeared on the wing of the aircraft with their instruments and proceeded to perform a few of their biggest hits for their enduring young fans in Leningrad.

This narrative follows our protagonist who makes his home behind the Iron Curtain all the while living in his own Beatles’ shrine, which would get him into some serious hot water with the authorities if they were to become aware of his illegal Beatles temple. The decades of living through several regimes and the cat-and-mouse game the Soviet youth engaged in with the KGB—all this just for the simple pleasure of listening to their youthful sounds of the West.

These young Soviet Beatles fans would grow up to take down the Berlin Wall. When I read *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin* during the pandemic, I gave the book a five out of five. I was even a fan of Putin at the time, but since the start of the war in Ukraine (Putin’s choosing), I now give the book a rating of three out of five. I guess you might say that I am not being fair to Leslie Woodhead, and it is true that she has nothing to do with the war in Ukraine. I feel that I am now back in the seventies when it comes to the Russian people. I do believe that Leslie Woodhead is on the right side of history and The Beatles music will one day rock the Russian youth once again.

BOOK REVIEW: THE LITTLE PRINCE

SU CHOL CHONG

This book review is on *The Little Prince* (1943) by Antoine De Saint-Exupéry, French pilot and writer. This book has sold more than 150 million copies and has been translated into over 505 different languages and dialects worldwide. It is the second most translated book in the world after the Bible. Few books have been as universally cherished by children and adults alike.

I first read this book as a grown-up and I had to recall my memories from childhood to compare with the Little Prince. This story gave me a chance to compare my adult and childhood lifestyles. There were huge differences.

As a child, I had dreams of the future, touring around the world like Lemuel Gulliver in *Gulliver's Travels*, but after growing up and becoming a family man, I had to work hard to make a living for my family. So, I had to be realistic and see the practical things around me... **income**.

De Saint-Exupéry, at the age of six, drew a Boa constrictor that swallowed an elephant, and it looked like a hat to the adults. He asked them if the drawing scared them. They answered, "Why be scared of a hat?" In the second drawing, the elephant inside the Boa could be seen but the grown-ups advised him not to focus on art, but study geography, history, arithmetic, and grammar for practical uses in the future.

The Little Prince tells the story of a pilot stranded in the desert after an airplane crash, until one day he meets a little boy—the Little Prince. He tells the pilot many stories of his magical journey from his little planet (B-612) and of his encounters with various grown-ups. They are only interested in matters of very little importance in life, which the Little Prince cannot understand.

The story highlights how most grown-ups miss out on the simple things in life, such as friendship, love, music, arts, literature and the beauty of the world. They indulge in gaining more wealth and more power and endless greed and eventually, they ruin their life because of it. If they appreciated what they had, they would have been happier. As Buddha said, want/have less and be happier.

The Little Prince teaches readers that it is important to look beneath the surface to truly understand something. Most people fail to do so, as they are only interested in the face-value of material things, as demonstrated at the very beginning of the story. This reminds me of three principles from Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path: the need to have the right view, the right livelihood and the right mindfulness.

The book has an important message that any child or grown-up can understand, and tells it very beautifully. The book's message that touched my heart is:

"It is only with the heart
that one can see lightly,
what is essential is invisible
to the eye."

DECEMBER 6

SONG WRITING: COMPOSING LYRICS: “WE’RE NOT GIVIN’ UP THIS FRONT ROW SEAT,” WITH TARIQ HUSSAIN, SONGWRITER/RECORDING ARTIST, NON-FICTION WRITER, AND EDUCATOR WITH UBC CREATIVE WRITING.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

What makes us musically? The sum of all the music you’ve ever heard, Tariq Hussain said. Song writing is primarily about lyrics, but where might lyrics be available to us? Where are words just hanging around? On the bus, in conversation, social media and inside yourself for starters.

Tariq reminded us of some simple yet important advice that can be applied to all forms of writing: regular writing practice is important for song writing, and the goal is not to strive for perfection. Song writing is an exercise of memory. To make our own songs, we followed three steps. First, we identified a life event and responded to a series of questions. For example, what are you doing; is there anyone else with you; what sounds can you hear? Our responses were turned into prose, which was then mined for lines to write our very own #1 hit.

WHAT WE READ, LISTENED TO*

Tweedy, Jeff. *How to Write One Song*. Penguin, 2020, pp. 77–80.

*Hirway, Hrishikesh. “Weezer-Summer Elaine and Drunk Dori.” *Song Exploder*, April 2016, <https://songexploder.net/weezer>.

QUEEN COVID THE NINETEENTH

SIMEON TONG

What will Queen COVID the nineteenth ask?

Queen C-19th won't ask about the colour of your skin.
She will ask what colour coffin you want to lie in.

Queen C-19th won't ask what kind of immunity exists.
She will deliberately enter your body, organs and cells without reason or expense.

Queen C-19th won't ask what brand of car you drive.
She will ask whether you know that the journey to death takes a split second without spending a drop on gas.

Queen C-19th won't ask about your age, gender or ethnic nature.
She will ask which cemetery you prefer and which grave you want to stay in forever.

Queen C-19th won't ask what fatal weapons your country is equipped with.
She will ask what kind of funeral service you want before returning to the soil of mother nature.

Queen C-19th won't ask your social status.
She will take every resisting being to the coronation of death.

Queen C-19th won't ask whether you had a custom to celebrate Halloween.
She will assign you to the parade of lost souls every day.

Queen C-19th won't ask why you turned away from entering the gate of Heaven to meet Lord God and Jesus Christ.
She will *not* stop you seeking salvation to eternal life.

DECEMBER 8

HUM: “MAKING HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES!” END OF TERM CELEBRATION FOR ALL HUM AND WRITING PARTICIPANTS!

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE PARTY

Hum loves a good ol’ partie. Together with the Hum 101/201 gang we shared food, mingled, played games, and laughed a lot. This year’s end of term party took place in a basement; where all the fun stuff happens. Thanks to Hum’s fabulous long-term volunteer Delanie Austin, this year’s party was hosted in Sprouts Café, where Delanie has been a long-term volunteer—talk about a committed volunteer.

Sprouts is a student-run organization that address food insecurity. They make lives better by nurturing bellies and minds with local B.C. foods—lots of which is quality food donated by supermarkets before it becomes food waste. To support the drastic number of students who need support accessing affordable, healthy foods, Sprouts has crafted a number of innovative food initiatives, such as seasonal organic B.C. produce for sale at whatever price the buyer can afford; a free community fridge; a meal distribution initiative in solidarity with the DTES; and 30 free lunches a day, plus free Friday lunches at their rad café.

MARCH 14

PUBLISHING: “BANNED BOOKS” WITH RONYNE VAN DER GRACHT, UBC BOOKSTORE

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Since 1984, the UBC Bookstore has showcased banned and challenged books from across the globe and the ages. Each year, Ronyne Van der Gracht and her colleagues choose what banned books to exhibit based on contemporary censorship issues.

Towards the rear of the bookstore stands a corridor of banned books. Cue cards are used to catalogue the books as either banned or challenged, as well as providing notable details about when, where and why they were banned or challenged. The earliest banned written work is a play from 411 BCE, Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*. We discussed periods when book burning was common, such as during Nazi Germany. We learned that *The Diviners*, by Canadian novelist Margaret Laurence, was challenged in Ontario in 1976 and this was the catalyst for the Freedom to Read Week.

After the tour we returned to our classroom for a lively discussion about censorship. Who has the right to tell us what we can read and write? How does censorship affect writers and readers? We learned more about the latter question in tonight’s reading, “Not Recommended,” by David A. Robertson (Cree), whose fantasy novel *The Great Bear* was temporarily removed from school library shelves by the Durham District School Board in Ontario. With no reason stated for the temporary removal, the satirical website www.walkingeaglenews.com made their own conclusion: “it’s simply too Indigenous.” While the article provides a good laugh, it touches on critical issues in contemporary literature: telling Indigenous Peoples what they can and cannot write about goes beyond censorship; it is another form of cultural genocide.

WHAT WE READ

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Ellis, Richard. “Grunts and Twitches: Living Next to an Elephant.” *Freedom to Read*, 2023, <https://www.freedomtoread.ca/articles/grunts-and-twitches/>

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BANNED BOOKS

HIND ABUALAMRAIN

One day, I found a book that was banned and could not be read. I was a little surprised and thought for a moment with curiosity why this book was banned? What does it contain? And who ordered it to be banned? I imagined that I had written a book, and I was surprised that it was forbidden to be published after I worked hard to write it, staying up for many nights.

Banned books are the books that a group of people or authorities decide should disappear and be prohibited from reading by the public because it contains some inappropriate content. As a result, the book will be removed from the libraries.

In this essay, I will talk about several reasons for banning the publication of books, like social reasons, religious reasons, historical or political. Also, the disadvantages of banning books. I will give examples of banned books and why they were banned. Finally, I include some opinions from authors about banning books.

First, there are many disadvantages to banning books. Books provide us with wide information from different cultures. Without the breadth of information, we cannot bring about change. Likewise, banning books may be motivated by obscuring some facts and preventing society knowing what the truth is. Also, banning can restrict our thoughts and freedoms, restrict writers from narrating their thoughts and feelings, and writers experience disappointment when the publication of their book is banned, which has negative effects on their future aspirations. Reading is the way to experience events we never did. Books have the power to change our mind, thoughts, habits, behaviours and life. Also, banning books does not mean people are not able to access to the information that they are looking for.

The social reason for banning a book is parents have the right to choose the book that suits their children's age, and they have the right to prevent their children from reading or seeing content that does not suit them, like sexual hints, violence or offensive language. Also, teachers can help to select the reading material. However, when we become an adult, we can make our own decision on what we read. Banning books can be due to religious reasons: some books distort the meanings of the holy books and the writer interprets them from their point of view rather than being based on religious grounds. Religion is offended through misconceptions. Therefore, publication is prohibited. The ban on publishing historical books is widespread. There is a lot of distortion of history by publishing false information and concealing the publication of books that talk about historical truths—in order to prevent society from knowing the real history. It is also possible that banning historical books is for political reasons. Politics and history are closely linked to each other. A book can be banned because the writer's political opinion contradicts the current policy. In some countries, where freedom of expression is prohibited, the book is banned and the writer is punished.

Some books are banned, like *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, by Shel Silverstein. It's banned due to inappropriate content. Also, *Where's Waldo?* by Martin Handford is banned from some libraries and schools due to inappropriate pictures. The graphic memoir *Gender Queer*, by Maia Kobabe, which talks about gender identity, is now the most banned book in the United States, according to the American Library Association.

Many authors object to banning books, including Jeff Smith, author of the series *Bone*. He said: “The point is that they are trying to take away someone else’s ability to choose what they want to read, and you can’t do that” (Flood). Neil Gaiman, author of *Nevermore* said: “Well-meaning adults can easily destroy a child’s love of reading: stop them reading what they enjoy, or give them worthy-but-dull books that you like.”

In my opinion, any book that offends a human’s dignity or insults them should be banned. Likewise, any book that contradicts morals, values, ethics and principles. Also, books that deliberately distort the image of religion and distort its true meaning should be banned. Moreover, distorted historical books that don’t reflect the facts should be banned. On the other hand, we must fight against banning real historical books, demand their publication, and ensure their survival. As well as books that respect all religions and all people and societies. It is also important to ban books that incite violence in children, fighting and war in indirect ways. As well as the books that spoil morals, so that future generations will be raised and educated well. When we are writing a book, it must be supervised. Censorship plays an important role in reducing conflicts between people and societies. Also, it can help reduce hate speech. Likewise, what we write must not contradict the culture and restrictions of the country in which we live. Therefore, if I wrote a book and was surprised that it was banned, then I discovered that my book contains things that are illegal, I may argue about the banning, but I will accept my mistake and try not to repeat it in the next book. However, if the ban was unfair, then I will defend my book in every way and I won’t hesitate to publish it.

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LIES BUT IN DISGUISE AND SOUNDING AS TRUTHFUL: DOUBLE STANDARD AND CENSORSHIP IN THE WRITTEN WORD

HERBERTO ESTRADA

In *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988), Noam Chomsky talks about the engineering of thought, and how printed material is consumed and shapes the minds and thoughts of readers. As many of us read new electronic mass media, we tend to absorb and be absorbed into what Chomsky calls ‘manufactured consent.’ According to him, manufactured consent is the process of taking the word of printed media as the absolute truth. Chomsky points out that mass communication has served as an instrument to maintain the ideological standing of the average population, which is dictated by the political authority that supports it.

Manufactured consent works swiftly through journalistic media, which is available to the modern audience through both print and electronic formats. We now don’t have to consult the history books because anything can be found on a telephone screen with just a click on a computer screen. This ease of access to news makes it even easier to peddle dominant narratives and ideologies. News can be crafted and published by any individual who, regardless of their ethical standing, can manipulate words to their advantage.

This is well illustrated by writer George Orwell in his essay *Politics in the English Language* (1946), where he shows how language can be twisted and its superficiality does not retell the exact account of any event reported. He further illustrates how any writer can portray true events with a twisted meaning. The reporter will craft their printed material illustrating a biased point of view of their report. The real meaning of any event reported would be in disguise using euphemism through the “debasement of language.” The consensus will be the acceptance of most printed material by the public. If written with proper artistic flair and conviction, these writings can then change a reader’s cultural assumptions and the way these readers think about life and people around them.

Orwell has also pointed out in his book *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) that language can be transformed and masked with the purpose of diminishing its meaning. In this novel, Orwell creates the fictional language Newspeak as the official language used by a totalitarian state, to ensure that the ordinary citizens complied with the state’s ideological practices. In Newspeak, the state twists the meaning of common language to inspire submission by the citizens: the phrases ‘Peace is War’, ‘Freedom is Slavery’ and ‘Ignorance is Strength’ are chanted as a daily prayer. The result is an obedient mass that plays right into the state’s politics.

In such context, Orwell shows how authoritative text can warp language, which can then go on to influence the masses that consume it. He also hints that euphemistically spoken and written language are lies but in disguise and sounding truthful. Today, we witness that printed media is filled with euphemistic terms where the actual crime executed is portrayed in inaccurate language. In such portrayal, the actual painful, bloody action is received as soft mitigated action by the general reader.

This censorship shines through especially during moments of crises. For example, in present times we are witnessing a war being fought in Ukraine. On one hand, Russian news channels are banned in most Western countries now, while Ukraine has banned Russian literature entirely. Thus, in the former case, we can see how one perspective in a war is drowned out completely, while in the latter we witness how access to cultural knowledge can be made inaccessible during war, breeding hatred and angst towards another nation.

Evidently then, censorship and control over language extends to literature as well. The banning of such cultural items is a violation of the readers' right to have access to any cultural information. Books which have been written by great masters of literature, translated into all the languages of the world, like Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and* are banned now in Ukraine where the war is being fought. In such ways we notice the dual system of allowing or banning is done for the purpose of diminishing the already established cultural authority of these masters of literature.

Control of language thus, can shape cultures and change the way people think, as we can see happening in the Russia-Ukraine war right now. Any written word can be subject to censorship; readers should be aware of what they are reading and the culture that they are consuming, and exercise their authority to choose what they consume.

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Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Secker & Warburg, 1949.

TOO INDIGENOUS

SAMANTHA DAVIS
NISGA'A NATION OF GITLAXT'AAMIKS

If I wrote a book, it'd almost definitely
be banned for being "too Indigenous."
I'd write about the Life of Sam,
Every wrong ever done to me, to my Loved ones,
all the pain and sorrow inflicted upon each of us.
WE ARE SURVIVORS because they wanted us gone.
They wanted us tamed, stripped us of our names,
our culture, like if God was a vulture.
Yes, they used the good Lord's name
to cover up all their shame.
The Queen of England has slain, died in vain.
I hope she's in hell, only time will tell.
I believe we are all here for a higher purpose.
My ancestors never needed churches!

MARCH 28

SCREENPLAY: SCRIPTWRITING: “MAKE A SCENE,” WITH JOCELYN TENNANT, SCREENWRITER OF *YEAR OF THE TORTOISE* (2022), *UNSILENCED* (2021), *EXHAUSTED* (2014) AND DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, REALITY DISTORTION FIELD.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

We dove straight into the foundations of scriptwriting, learning how all stories, regardless of genre, start with a protagonist (the main character) who has a goal and meets obstacles on their path to achieving their goal. We learned about the Western-centric three-act structure that begins with setting up the world, introducing the protagonist and their main goal. Once the protagonist answers the call to action, they are fundamentally changed and cannot go back to their old life. In the second act, the protagonist faces increasing conflict and meets allies who will help them along the way. The final act is where the protagonist achieves their goal (or doesn't!). We also learned that this structure is not the only one; there are many ways we can make our stories.

After a prewriting exercise, Jocelyn Tennant had us making our own scenes. Scripts for the film industry contain basic information about the scene's setting and action, as these are two areas that the writer has little control over. What the characters do is determined by the director. The writer has control over what the characters say. We created two characters and introduced a conflict between them, increasing the drama and the laughter in class as we shared snippets of our scenes.

139 EAST HASTINGS ST.

JESINTA STONEBURGH

EXT. 139 EAST HASTINGS—NIGHT.

MASON waits outside of Insite as SHELLY approaches. People are shuffling around the area.

MASON

What took you so long?

SHELLY

I couldn't find parking and there's police up the street, sorry.

MASON

It's freezing and my feet hurt.

SHELLY

Well, why are you wearing those shoes?

MASON

They're all I have.

SHELLY

Today, I was walking home, and this lady came up to me out of nowhere—

MASON

I believe you.

SHELLY

Okay, see how little you care about me?

MASON

No, I obviously care about you. I'm just tired, cold, and I just want to sleep. Can you please let me sleep in your car? Just for tonight?

SHELLY

I knew there was a reason you wanted me to come here.

MASON

Come on, Shelly, if you actually loved me, you'd just let me sleep for one night.

SHELLY

It's never just one night though...I do love you, but I just don't want to do that anymore. You want to get some rest so you can start it all over again.

MASON

That's not true, I just want to sleep. You know I don't want to live like this.

SHELLY

Then when are you going to detox?

MASON

I can't feel like this and go to the clinic. I need to feel better first.

SHELLY

I'll help you change, Mason, but I can't help you stay the same. I love you too much to do that.

MASON

You don't love me! You want me to fail!

SHELLY

I do love you! But these are your choices.

MASON sits down against the building on the sidewalk, defeated.

MASON

Can I call you later? I feel like you're just going to move on because no one wants to be around this.

SHELLY

Yes, you can call me. I'm not moving anywhere, but I'd like to, with you.

SHELLY kneels and holds out her hand to MASON. He reaches back.

SHELLY

I learned something new this week. It's hard to watch someone you love kill themselves, but it's harder to pretend like they're already dead.

MASON

I'm trying.

SHELLY

I know. Give me a hug, I'm gonna go.

They embrace. SHELLY walks away.

APRIL 4

CREATIVE WRITING: EKPHRASIS: “THE MAKING OF US THROUGH ART WRITING,” WITH CLAIRE MATTHEWS, WRITING COORDINATOR, HUM.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CLASS

Ekphrasis refers to a detailed and vivid description of visual art, usually a painting or sculpture. It aims to expand on the meaning and/or the theme(s) of an artwork. It should be considered a way to honour an original artform by expanding on the piece and creating a conversation between the original and the ekphrastic work.

Claire Matthews walked us through some common features of ekphrasis. Ekphrasis usually makes a reference to the original work, either in the title, epigraph or body. It also includes vivid imagery and descriptions that function to engage the senses and connect it to the original. The process of ekphrasis can serve as both an inspiration and a challenge to the ekphrastic creator. It starts a conversation, gives the creator a starting point, and can ultimately help to become familiar with a novel writing form, or mode.

To demonstrate the process, we looked at Hieronymus Bosch’s triptych painting, *The Temptation of St. Anthony* (1501), and an ekphrastic poem based on it, Elee Kraljii Gardiner’s, “Mirror of Hieronymus Bosch.” Following a close examination of the painting and poem, many connections were made apparent, such as the prominent red and white imagery, representations of burning, and deviation from social norms.

Claire guided us through her ekphrastic writing process, which begins with prewriting to generate general ideas about our topic, followed by questions to ask oneself when outlining and planning the writing, such as, what genre will you be writing in? Why are you writing this? What is the purpose? Who is the audience?

Well Wishes

I wish we could lose the idea that we can make things better by doing what we've always done.

.....
Martin Hunt, Hum101
.....

There are moments in life that stand out in their brilliance, some more than others. Finding HUM was one of them. Some moments turn into magical wardrobes, opening spaces within us that we never knew existed. I opened this one and went through.

.....
Meghna Chatterjee, Student Staff Programme Assistant
.....

Thank you for your wonderful and ongoing efforts in our education.
You are the teachers who inspire and motivate students to achieve their best.
We cannot thank you enough for the knowledge and culture you have given us.
You left your own mark in our lives; you are the unforgettable teachers.
Your lessons have always been fun and interesting, so thank you for keeping us excited.
You are the professors who understand that teaching students requires more patience and dedication.
Thanks for your valuable guidance and important tips that will stay with us forever.

.....
Zaid Altobal, Hum101
.....



“May your studies here illuminate a path toward your goal.”

I found this sign at the UBC Rose Garden on the first day of class. This made an impact on me. You were there, on our first tour and with me, remember? What I learn here, the effort I put in, changes what I know and how I choose to hope and dream.

That hope is illuminated for me by knowing this community. Hum community keeps me grounded. Thank you. I know where I am because of you. I've made connections and I'm very grateful. Not only do I see you but you reflect off me. I see myself in you. You show me where I am and where I've travelled to get here. I have heard your words and we are here. I don't exist without you, I only know myself because of you. I see myself because you are the light that illuminates my path.

It's an honour to stand on Musqueam land, to be at UBC, to be in the Hum community.

What I learn here changes the past, and what I see for the future. In the present, it makes *life* more vivid!

Yours in adventure,

.....
Lara McQuay, Hum101
.....

In Hum 101 I enjoyed watching and being part of a bridge building exercise between the DTES and UBC.

.....
Vern Lorenz, Hum101
.....

Best wishes and hopes on your continuing educational journey...
had a good year listening and learning at each lecture...
your opinions sparked good thoughts to add to my opinion in every lesson....

The words below were originally penned by novelist Eudora Alice Welty, and the last two lines by Albert Camus. My writing practice involves transforming prose into verse form. This poem is called, "My Hope":

My continuing passion
Is to part
That curtain
That invisible Shadow
That falls between people

That veil of indifference to
Each other's presence
Each other's wonder
Each other's Human plight

Art is never the Voice of a country...
It is an even more precious thing... voice of the Individual...
Doing its best to speak... not comfort of any sort... but Truth...
And the Art that speaks it... most unmistakably...
Most directly... most variously... most fully...
Is fiction.

Fiction is a lie through...
Which we tell the truth.

.....
Isaac White, Hum 101/201 Mentor
.....

Dear Hum community—

It has been a treat, a pleasure, and a privilege to get to spend time talking about ideas and life with you on Thursdays. I hope you've benefitted at least a fraction as much as I have from our hours of collective reflection. Thanks for all your generosity, and I hope our time together will serve as a productive interlude, and prelude to whatever comes next.

Much love,

.....
Lewis Page, Hum 101/201 discussion facilitator
.....

Dear hummers, though I met you briefly, I really enjoyed interacting with you and hearing about your sensory and magical experiences. I wish you the very best in life, dreaming, intellectual and creative endeavours.

Take care,

Leslie Robertson, Anthropology and Affect Theory: “(Un)making sense”

Dear HUM friends,

Thanks for inviting us to participate in your wonderful program again this year. There’s always a special connection when we meet up and use public art as a way to explore the social interactions that have produced the city. Learning is a process of gaining both knowledge and self-actualization, or as bell hooks said “connecting the will to know with the will to become.” HUM embodies this so well and I am humbled to join you on the journey.

Alasdair Butcher, Urban Geography: “Vancouver Winter Arts Festival”

Moving from Edmonton to Vancouver was made easier knowing I would have the opportunity to be part of a Hum community like the one I had known in Alberta. Thank you all for making Thursdays my favourite day of the week, and for making me feel at home in a new province!

Jesse Carson, Student Staff Programme Assistant

As we celebrate the 25th year of HUM, I am reminded of many relationships we have cultivated along the way. I hope our program has made a lasting positive impact to this year’s graduates as well as those who came before you. And that you will be encouraged to pass on this positive energy to the next individual you come across. In this increasingly cynical world, it will take our collective strength to stem the tide and steer towards the light. I trust that all of you will join me to commit to our cause and may each of you find your unique sense of vocation in the future.

My heartfelt congratulation to you all. Well done!!!

Gerald Ma, long-time Hum friend and supporter

Congratulations to all students on your hard work and diligence this year. Your dedication and commitment have led you to this time of celebrating your accomplishments. Congratulations also to the incredible faculty, staff and volunteers, without whose work and commitment Hum would not be possible. Together you have created what the yearbook reflects—well done!

Sincerely,

Jody Butler, on behalf of the Butler family

As a long-time supporter of Hum, I am grateful to be privy to this amazing program. Margot and Paul, your dedication to Hum is exemplary! In spite of the challenges, despite the odds, over the years I am continually astounded by the creativity, commitment, care and compassion, growth and talent of Hum folks—truly humanity at its finest!

In awe and with gratitude,

.....
Ayah Ouziel, long-time Hum teacher and supporter
.....

It was so wonderful to be able to connect with you in person for HUM this year! I very much enjoyed talking with you about power and resistance according to Michel Foucault and Patricia Hill Collins, as well as how HUM supports resistance and radical hope. Your ideas, insights, and questions during our discussions made these topics, which could otherwise be fairly abstract and academic, come alive and hold deep and practical meaning. Teaching in HUM was a highlight of my year, and I hope your learning experience throughout the year was also meaningful and impactful. Congratulations on your hard work and accomplishments!

.....
Christina Hendricks, Philosophy: “Situations we find and make ourselves in”
.....

The forces of cruelty and willful ignorance seem to be in the ascendant today, and the land and waters and future seem ever-more imperilled. When I’m asked what gives me hope in a time that seems so hopeless, my answer is immediate: being a teacher. And the reason that gives me hope is because I get to learn with, among, and alongside such incredible thinkers as the students in Hum101. You understand the power of thinking differently, of changing the way we engage with the world and one another, of imagining otherwise. You’re here for truth, not easy answers, and courageous reimagining, not conventional thinking. Thank you for being such powerful thinkers and doers. I’m grateful for your vital work in this wounded world.

.....
Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee Nation), Critical Indigenous Studies: “Making a different yield with informed subjectivities”
.....

Dear Hum friends,

Congratulations on your graduation! Thank you for welcoming me into your circle again this year. It is always a pleasure to work with you, and I especially appreciate learning from and with you. My wish for you is that you continue to explore the places around you with curiosity and care, knowing that even features that appear boring and mundane hold clues to understanding the cities we inhabit. May your journeys be continuously rewarding!

.....
Tiffany Muller-Myrdahl, Geography and Gender Studies: “Re-drawing the boundaries: who’s included in which urban spaces, how, when and why? Making our way as culturally gendered, classed, racialized bodies”
.....

Each and every one of you has made such a generous contribution to “the making of us” this year—thank you! I send you my deep appreciation, admiration and my confidence regarding your future makings. And remember that you’ll always be welcome to make waves as permanent members of Hum’s alumni Steering Committee!

Margot Leigh Butler, Academic Director, Orientation: “Where are we & how do we figure?”; Critical Indigenous Studies: “Finding freedom in the context you inherit”; Cultural Studies: “What does Hum mean by ‘no carrots no sticks’ learning?”; Cultural Studies and Activism: “Shimmering semiotics: just follow the SIGNS!”; Writing and Publishing: “Binding us together,” on producing Hum’s annual publication; Indigenous Studies, Art, Music and Media Studies: “Around the fire: Indigenous survivance and futurisms”

Thinking with you all about the ‘bridges and doors’ that both connect and separate as we go about ‘making us social’ was a great honour for me! I’m thrilled to be a part of your success this year, and thank you for making the educational mission of UBC relevant and real. Congratulations graduates!

Tom Kemple, Sociology: “What if everything depends on everything else?”

Dear Hum classes of 2022/23,

My heartfelt congratulations to you on your graduation and on all the hard work (herein represented) that you put into this year: reading, thinking, writing! What a delight! It was an absolute pleasure to spend a night thinking with you all about the place where we live—the world around us!—what we make of all of it, and how it is meaningful to us, individually and collectively.

All the very best in the year ahead,

Reuben Jentink, Environmental Humanities and Critical Indigenous Studies: “Writing with the world around us”

I never would have imagined that I would have the opportunity to participate in such an amazing program. Last August was a particularly challenging time for me, as I was struggling with some personal battles that left me feeling unsure of myself and my future.

However, I began to notice signs that were pointing me in a positive direction. One day, I saw a poster in the DTES for a course that caught my attention. I asked a colleague about it, and she shared a firsthand account. I was intrigued and decided to apply for the next available session.

To my surprise, I was accepted shortly after, and the experience has been life-changing. Seeing my fellow classmates around the DTES has made me feel a sense of community and belonging. You all have brought so much joy and positivity to our class, and I am grateful for the memories we have shared.

I want to always chase my dreams, embrace my passions, and let my light shine bright. Remembering that every experience is a stepping stone to my future, so make each one count.

Yandira Feliz, Hum101

>>Spring of Happiness<<

When we write, we write with a pure heart, pursuing the spring of happiness. The spring of happiness accumulates honey water day after day, and fills our cup until it overflows. It originates from every droplet of writers and thinkers—those who have a profound influence on humans—with an intact pure heart.

Every droplet is tiny and also persistent and serene, but it could be vibrant and gusty. It dips out from our pure heart.

At the very beginning, the droplets form a small pond in the high mountains. Then it flows down to the distant lowland as the gesture of the rapid, stream, waterfall and river which are blood veins nourishing our vast natural habitat.

Meanwhile, they also cut across mountains and lands to reform the outlook of the landscape. In the adventurous flowing downstream, the souls of spring would be speeding up or holding back.

They may stretch or sustain. They may expand or contract. They may be roaring up or swirling down. Finally, they may deliver and gather into lakes, entering into the seas and oceans where the living of the other half of mother nature is nurtured.

We do Thanksgiving to our creator, hence our writing from the depth of our pure hearts is like turkeys on Thanksgiving Day. Every day could be Thanksgiving Day! We keep writing till the last supper, a supper with pen, paper and a pure heart.

.....
Simeon Tong, Hum 101 and Writing 201
.....

The winter went so fast...and now it's time for the graduation of the Hum 101 Class of 2022–23!!! All I can say is that it's been a winter well spent. They say that people living quality lives live longer, not just because of their diet, lifestyle or genetics, but because of their community connection. And what a community connection indeed!

To all my benevolent UBC Hum 101 Team and volunteer instructors, supporters, volunteers...my deepest thanks.

To all my classmates who, like me, have a thirst for learning and inquisitive minds, my hats off to you.

Remember, reach out and support our community. That's why our city is one of the most livable cities in the world.

.....
David Deocera, Hum201
.....

Like every place that we step changes us, every person we touch touches us, every person we meet changes us. I am impressed how much I have learned in this course: from all the teachers who shared with us a piece of their knowledge; from every classmate who shared with me even just one word or a long experience; from every volunteer who encouraged me to be more confident and made me do it. Thank you so much everyone, I have learned a lot and I think now I am a better person because all of you already touched me. I have always enjoyed learning more about philosophy and human beings, however after this course I'm sure I love the philosophy, and that everything has to do with human beings. Thanks a lot for being so kind, the world would be so different if everyone was more empathetic, as you are, always helping everyone.

.....
Ximena Gabriela García Santillan, Hum101
.....

My first Hum class was in 2008 and I have taken all the courses since then. After going a few years without Hum and returning this year I am fulfilling my dreams. I wish you all a happy bon voyage on a journey that will fulfill your dreams.

.....
Dan Wilson, Hum 101/201 Mentor
.....

Together, trees shape forests and let us breathe.
Together, drops create rivers and sing the soothing song of movement.
Together, birds hum the soft notes of flight that go far deep in the blueness of the sky.
Together, we can shape humanity with all its might.
Let's wish the best for you and me. For us!

.....
Shahla Masoumnejad, Hum Mentor
.....

The time has flown by so fast! I am so honoured to have been a part of the HUM program and so grateful for all of the kindness and patience of all staff and speakers. Participating in this program has been an explosion of new ideas, experiences and perspectives that will have a big impact on my learning journey moving forward. I want to thank Margot and Paul, UBC and everyone who made this program fantastic!

.....
Maria Giron, Hum101
.....

Congratulations to a wonderful, accomplished group. It was a true pleasure and privilege to spend time with you.

Warmly,

.....
Margot Young (The other Margot!), Law: "Making us strong: fighting for, knowing and tending our rights!"
.....

I believe that education is doing its best work when two things happen. First, when you learn something that challenges—or completely changes—your fundamental assumptions about the world, your taken for granted attitudes and beliefs. The second is when you are brave enough to test out what you learn, by sharing new ideas and perspectives with others. This is when the Making of Us is really happening. By participating in Hum, you have put yourself in the perfect position to embrace these situations. My hat goes off to all this year's graduates for being such open-minded, inquisitive and brave people.

.....
Paul Woodhouse, Programme Manager, Orientation: "Where are we & how do we figure?"; Sociology: "The making of our digital doubles"; Writing and Publishing: "Binding us together," on producing Hum's annual publication; Cultural Studies and Community Activism: "My Vancouver includes the Downtown Eastside"
.....

Thank you for sharing a great class on the Stoics, and best wishes for the next stages of your journeys, wherever they take you! You change UBC just as surely as it changes you—this was a wonderful process that happened this year in the ‘Making of Us’!

Sylvia Berryman, Philosophy: “Making ourselves, making community”

You changed me and I’m trying to change my community in a positive way. I need to contribute to society in several ways like giving money, the gift of time, volunteering, or any other form of giving. Connecting with society gives me happiness and rewards me in the form of knowledge. I practice self-determination for life-long learning. Being a student gave me hope and hope gave me a reason to live. I’m extremely grateful for this wonderful experience I’ve been given.

Angela, Hum101

Every time we go to class it is a relationship of students, teachers, and volunteers where every week we connect with many topics. When we feel the support there is joy, it helps our brains to be full of dopamine and we have the will to attend class even if it rains, snows, or is windy. When we are in the classroom, that is the most beautiful thing, to be part of a community.

Dr. Raul Antonio Castillo Rio, Hum 101/201 Mentor

It was a delight to be a guest in your class, and to have so many interesting conversations with so many interesting people. I wish you all a fruitful writing life and look forward to being thrilled by what you create.

Thank you!

Dina Del Bucchia, Comedy: Writing Comedic Forms: “*It’s a Big Deal!*”

Although my COVID cancellation kept us apart this time, it’s a reminder of the importance of keeping our communities and each other safe while on our journeys of learning. Wishing nothing but health and happiness for participants of HUM101.

Alanna Edwards (Mi’kmaq, settler), Creative Writing: Sharing Perspectives: “We are all makers, writers, artists!”

Thank you so much for having me in your wonderful class! It was so nice to chat with you all about screenplays and movies, and to share your stories and thoughts. I can’t wait to read your words in the future!

Jocelyn Tennant, Screenplay: Scriptwriting: “Make a Scene”

I wish all you amazing students the best in your endeavours going forward. I was so impressed by your knowledge of and curiosity about the world of censorship. I am honoured to have been part of the conversation. I hope all you writers continue to be strong and not let other voices denigrate your bravery. Thank you

Ronyne Van der Gracht, Publishing: “Banned books”

I want to wish this term’s Writing 101/201 participants all the best in their future endeavours, and I would also like to personally thank Margot, Paul and Claire for inviting me to participate as a writing tutor. It was wonderful reading some of your work and learning so much from such an incredibly talented group of people. I hope you all continue to harness your writing powers and see where it takes you!

Jayden Emslie, Writing 101/201 tutor

Dear Hum community,
It’s always such a treat to spend time in your company. You ask great questions, produce interesting insights, and clearly care deeply about learning and honing your creative abilities. I wish you all the best as you continue reading, writing, and thinking.

Marisa Grizenko, Creative and Critical Writing: “Reviewing books for plain pleasure”

We can’t change the world.
But we can change ourselves. To,
Our own selves be true.

Best wishes, peace, and love to all the Humanities 101 and Writing 101 participants this year! It was an honour and a pleasure to be in your presence. Keep writing!

William G. Lindsay (Cree-Stoney), Indigenous Literatures: Poetic Short Forms: “Truth and memory”

Thank-you for welcoming me into your classroom and for putting on your songwriter hats for the evening. I know that can feel like a big ask, especially with a less-familiar genre like songwriting, but you all did so well and I was blown away by everyone’s creativity. Thanks for trying it out and sharing your ideas. Best of luck with all your writing pursuits moving forward and hopefully that’ll include a few song lyrics every now and again too.

Tariq Hussain, Song writing: Composing Lyrics: “We’re not givin’ up this front row seat”

Thank you, Hum, for helping me face my fears of writing after all these years. I'm gonna miss the authors coming in and our class discussions. Thank you for the gentle and safe class environment you have all created and for growing my love for creative expression through words and a budding love for books. This class was really good for my mental health.

Nayyar, Writing 101

Thank you Hum students for sharing space with me to write and collaborate with you. I hope my workshop inspired you to break outside your comfort zone and try some new poetic forms.

Geoffrey Nilson, Poetry: Collaborative Poetry: “(Re)making together”

Thank you to everyone at HUM for having me back this year! It is always one of my favourite nights of the term, full of thoughtful questions and insights from students and faculty. I feel so lucky to be a part of this community!

Mandy Catron, Creative Non-Fiction: Personal Essay: “Writing the *I* from the Eye”

Congrats everyone on your studies, enquiries and creative pursuits. Given the level of engagement and fantastic questions from y'all, working with HUM 101 was richly rewarding as an instructor. May poetry continue to propel your hearts and writing!

Kevin Spenst, Creative Non-Fiction and Poetry: “*Hearts Amok: Memoir in Verse*”

It's been an honour and pleasure to write with everyone this past year! Thank you for being curious learners and always open to new forms, new genres, and new ideas. Your dedication to writing inspires me to educate in ways that encourage others to do so too. I hope the words come easier and easier each time you put the pen to the page.

Thank you to all the guest speakers each week for sharing their time, wisdom, and passion. Thank you to the volunteers, Heidi, Jayden, and Delanie, for their enthusiasm, kindness, and commitment. Thank you Meghna for her unwavering support, can-do attitude, and for all the laughs. Thanks to Jesse too, I guess. You're alright. Thank you Margot and Paul for your creativity, encouragement, and positivity. Congratulations everyone on an incredible year!

Claire Matthews, Writing Coordinator, Orientation: “Where are we & how do we figure?”; Creative Writing: On Keeping a Notebook: “The making of writers”; Creative Non-fiction and Fiction: Autofiction: “Making friction with fact and fiction”; Creative Writing: Ekphrasis: “The making of us through art writing”

My wishes go out to my classmates and the staff, volunteers and teachers. The aim to focus on ideas and stories without emphasis on grammar and rules allow a form of synergy to develop that builds excitement and joy to any and all of the writing processes that we choose. It feeds.

.....
Richard Rheume, Writing 101
.....

My special big thanks to Hum staff who helped make our readings accessible so that my PC could read aloud our materials and release my getting old eyes. Also appreciate my HandyDart ride, and the screentime spot that keep me warm and dry while waiting for my HandyDart ride home.

.....
Cindy QT, Writing 201
.....

I want to begin by saying thank you. This course is a small step, but also a big step towards my future success. I found that the Writing 101 course disciplined me in many ways. I feel that the smallest step is the biggest step forward. The feedback was excellent from various teachers and students alike. Different writing styles in more ways than I expected.

I feel I am the artist in the art. Lots of reflections in the writing exercises and guided healing practices were extremely useful for me. It has allowed me to open my eyes wider than before. The staff were very caring and guided me on from the first day and the librarians made my journey at the university very enjoyable. They cared for me and nurtured my learning. They provided me with the necessary items for my class. Thank you.

My experience will be cherished in my heart because I needed to be appreciated at this time of personal loss. Success takes hard work, and it is a ladder, take it a step at a time. It is priceless and endless. Thank you, UBC, for this gift of knowledge. It will stay with me for the rest of my life, and I'll keep it in my memory of recollections. In addition, thank you for all the help I received from Carnegie Learning Centre and from the UBC Learning Exchange.

.....
Angela, Writing 201
.....

Classmates, thank you for the opportunity to meet and connect. I am grateful for the insights and different perspectives each one has brought to the classes. So many amazing people, so many different stories.

Margot, Paul, Claire, Meghna and the many teachers that facilitated these classes, I am grateful. The classes broadened my creative writing horizons beyond anything I had imagined possible in such a short time.

My magnanimous thanks to everyone involved with the HUM Writing 101 course. And I mean everyone: facilitators, students, volunteers, behind the scenes support, etc.

.....
Howard E. Reid, Writing 101
.....

Writing 101 was more than just challenging and rewarding for me. It was transforming. My wish is that others get the same experience from Hum that I did. Special thanks to Claire for the one-on-one help with my writing and to Gilles for the grammar lessons. I had a blast.

.....
Paul Grigaitis, Writing 101
.....

There is the history of the victors & the history of the vanquished...history of the nation state and the people's history...know both, learn both...express yourselves through your writing, be it poetry, manifestos, etc...inspire others through motivation. Express yourselves.

.....
Anonymous
.....

Lao-tzu, an ancient Chinese philosopher of the 5th century BC, once said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." Inspired by his words, I made up my mind to stride on the writing path. I began acquiring small but necessary steps in the learning process. I took a mini writing course at Carnegie Community Centre this summer, facilitated by Claire who motivated me to participate in the fall Hum Writing 101 Course. At the Hum Writing courses, I explore, discover, learn, collaborate, share the love of writing and acquire proficiency. The writing journey opens my eyes, broadens my mind and exposes me to a sphere that I have not known before. The ocean of writing is vast and fathomless. As I leave behind my footprint on the shore, I pick up gems of knowledge. My participation in the Hum Writing 101 and 201 courses is one of the most enjoyable as well as valuable experiences in my life of learning. I am extremely grateful to all the incredibly learned lecturers, my wonderful classmates, the ever-obliging staff and all who have assisted me at the campus throughout the past memorable months.

Julius Caesar said "I came. I saw. I conquered." I say "I came. I saw. I learnt." THANK YOU HUM!

.....
Teresa Wong, Writing 101
.....

August 24, 2022. Talk about being at the right place at the right time
From the day I met everyone to help with information sharing and enrolment
Like flickering flames of an oil lamp,
My heart danced to the soft notes of what was being shared
Each class fine-tuned my rhythm
I claim not to be a pro of different writing genres taught thus far,
But this I can tell you, my heart now Hums better and louder
In sync with the warmth and teachings of all guests, encounters with kind and mind
Enriching learners and our dear teachers.
May our hearts, hands, inks, and paper always move in HUMony.

.....
Candy T., Writing 101
.....

I am honoured, I am humbled
For such an opportunity to exist
Always up for learning, extending knowledge,
Looking forward to keeping going...
201 if I'm accepted.
Great atmosphere, wonderful tips and tidbits
Some stuff I feel I knew
but never put into words.
Thank you, teachers, thank you, peers, for such a dynamic year

.....
Samantha Davis, Writing 101
.....

To Claire,
The light you shine upon the
World is ever bright.
You've an infectious laugh & an
Amazing smile.
Thank you for being you,
Teaching the class in a
Way we all can follow
Even if I still am constantly
Asking you questions.
You're a great teacher.

To Class,
Each & every one of us brings something unique to this class, & that makes us the most awesome
class UBC has to offer.

To J,
Thank you for being such a good friend. I never expected to make friends when starting this
journey, & I'm glad it was you. You're kind, funny & have a beautiful soul. Also, rides to class were
sweet! Looking forward to our friendship.

.....
Chayse, Writing 101
.....

Thank you again, UBC Hum, for another great series of classes and for supporting my grammar
class, "Falling in Love with Sentences." I hope and wish that everyone who showed up for gram-
mar classes has left with a better understanding of grammar.

Though I didn't attend all the writing classes, I am grateful to the teachers and staff who, as is the
norm, have done a great job sharing their knowledge and wisdom.

Thank you,

.....
Gilles Cyrenne, Hum alumnus & Public Programme Facilitator: "How to fall in love with sentences"
.....

Thank you
Hum 101 Writing class
For giving me a chance
To grasp
A new perspective
One directed at
A broader sense
Of equality
Of mind
Time the enemy
Slipped by
But my time was spent
Wisely
And I did find
Collaboration, easily
The very thing
That set my pen free.

.....
Michael Lindblom, Writing 101
.....

This course has been an excellent experience for me because I got to know more about my inner desires as a way to communicate in writing. Thank you very much to all the staff of Writing 101, but most important especial thanks to Meghna C., Claire M., Margot B. and Paul W. I wish that through the years of teaching, your experience will be materialized for the betterment of our community and the world. Especial thank for all the feedback you gave us and to the class. I wish you the best to all of you in your lives. Great wishes and enjoyment in your lives.

.....
Herb, Writing 101
.....

Thank you for creating a safe space for learning for the sake of learning. I appreciate the opportunity to learn high level art forms which expand my ability to communicate my thought and ideas more freely.

.....
Anon, Writing 101
.....

I am so humble with Hum 101. Thanks so much for the support you give to me! Now I am looking forward to improving my writing and reading. I enjoyed the discussion groups and the trip to the art gallery. Great big thanks to all the Hum staff for the preparation and hard work to make the program work. Best wishes to all my fellow classmates.

.....
Nacer-Edine, Writing 101
.....

I am honoured to be a mentor of Hum’s Writing program. This semester has gone quickly, and it has been a pleasure to see all the bright minds and eager students. I see a lot of interested minds and the willingness to try and write a memoir, for instance. It’s different when we are adults, we usually know what we want and know where we want to go. This program offers a wide variety of subjects and genres of writing. The program has many visiting academics and professors of all stripes, so we have a lot of different views and perspectives on the types of writing. And, there’s Claire our regular instructor and an absolute font of knowledge in the ways of writing. If she does not know about a piece of writing she will find out or find it and provide the feedback and any views on it. We will all find our niche and what type of writing rings our bell. Sometimes as a mentor I have been a cheerleader and guide and then sometimes a nag, yeah you Herb, I’m talking about you. Get your writing in! The social aspect is fun when we all get together and have dinner, which is part of the program, and I would recommend the program to anyone who wants to improve their writing skills.

.....
Vivian Bomberry, Writing 101/201 Mentor
.....

I want to thank the facilitators for giving me the opportunity to take on this course! Through the days, I have learned a lot about myself, the people around me and more about the history of Vancouver. Thank you to UBC for supporting this programme. I really, strongly believe that many more people will benefit from having equal opportunity.

.....
Charlene M. Marion (Amanda J. Greywolf), Writing 101
.....

Thank you for the opportunity to be a student again at the HUM Writing course. The choice of lesson plans gave me a diverse look into the many genres of writing. I enjoyed all of the lessons. The staff are fantastic! I felt supported and encouraged. The mentors were particularly helpful. A special thanks to Vivian, Claude, Gilles, Heidi, Jayden, Jesse and Meghna. I leave this course with a clear sense of how to continue with my own projects and an interest in other styles of writing that I did not expect. Thank you Claire, Paul and Margot! “Don’t let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment, that was known as Camelot” — Alan Jay Lerner.

.....
Lisa, Writing 101
.....

I wish to sincerely thank everyone involved in making this class come to life. Creative writing courses are hard to come by unless one has access to the right resources and connections. However, with the support that I received from a team of wonderful staff like Claire, Margot, Paul, and the other volunteers, I enjoyed the creative writing course offered through the HUM program. I hope that the HUM department can reach out to more people with even more classes and support the education of those who may not have access to a college education.

.....
Anonymous Panda, Writing 101
.....

I have waited for several years to register Writing 101 at UBC. Was informed my luck and was excited to learn college level English. I have studied various genres of English: on keeping a notebook, Indigenous literature, poetic short forms, personal essays, creative writing, creative non-fiction, non-fiction, autofiction, collective poetry, rhetoric, creative writing. The professionally designed program made me write better English and this knowledge and skill will last long and will enrich my lifestyle and quality.

.....
Su Chol Chong, Writing 101
.....

I will forever be grateful that this course gave me an introduction to book writing and the opportunity to listen to other peoples' views and struggles that all matter when it comes to writing a book.

I like the English language and I'm learning a lot of different concepts and ideas that other people have learned during their lives as writers.

.....
Oscar Aguirre, Writing 101
.....

Hum 101 is my first ever peek into creative writing and learning the techniques of it, and it has brought out a creative non-fiction piece that I am ready to share with the world and even publish. I am forever grateful and indebted to this wonderful community that gave me the confidence to do this. I'm sincerely thankful to the brilliant team of Claire, Dr. Margot, Paul, Meghna, and Jesse for bringing this program together and supporting me in this journey.

Million thanks J.

.....
Rani Bansal, Writing 101
.....

Thanks to everyone who makes Humanities 101 happen! You're doing an amazing job! It takes a village to do all of the work necessary for things to flow smoothly. I appreciated each and every one of you! Your dedication and resilience are unparalleled. This program is like no other. I'm humbled and happy to be a participant in the program.

.....
Iris, Writing 201
.....

An amazing program opened my views and encouraged me to come back to campus. Teachers, volunteers, and the staff's smiling faces brought us to different parts of writing, trying to understand and use beautiful words. Also, different approaches let us learn more culture and knowledge. Thanks for all of your hard work and loving hearts.

.....
Jian, Writing 101
.....

I started the semester full of hope, aspirations, and happiness bursting at the seams.
Finally, I've made it, I'm accomplishing my dreams.
Writing has always been my safe place,
My peace, my love, my saving grace.
This course reignited a spark that I had long thought I'd left to diminish.
So much talent in this course.
Intimidated, I never thought I'd finish.
But here we are, a newfound community.
Through writing we all found our immunity.
So stay in that safe space, put pen to paper.
But always remember that even when it feels
as if you aren't moving forward in life, in writing;
maybe it feels as if you're falling;
remember, it's okay to fall, that's how you learn to fly!
So soar!

.....
Sky-iban Green Wagamese, Writing 101
.....

Inspiration comes in many different forms
I never know where it's going to lead me.
It is flow, it's not something I control.
When I started Writing 101
I had no idea where that flow would take me.
Just somewhere I needed to go.
On the first day we were given a page
about journaling. On the page
were all these cheerful doodles.
I thought (I'm normally an everyday journaler)
OK that's different, I like that
and started to work on a poem
that's been in my head and drew a picture.
The thing is I've had a hard time
putting it into words and decided
to draw it. I went to the library and took a Photoshop
class and learned they have all these
LinkedIn Learning courses. So now
I've been animating my poem every day
and have learned all about animation.
Something I don't know that I ever would
have pursued otherwise.

.....
Bonnie, Writing 101
.....

Give me a penny for my thoughts
I'll toss it to the wishing well,
Something of value bought,
One chance to show and tell.
Of the blossoming kinship
From seeds planted through winter and spring
Looking toward the harvest they bring.

.....
Robert, Writing 101
.....

It's been a good two semesters.
Quite the experience I must confess, there
is a lot that I've missed, was always writing less
than before I started this.

Writer's block had me shocked for ten-plus years.
I'm glad for this opportunity, possibly make a career.
Writing has always been my favourite pastime.
Everyone is so welcoming and kind.
It was great to learn different ways from yours and mine,
getting out what is on my mind.

Most definitely recommend and take again.
Quite sublime!

.....
Samantha Davis, Writing 201
.....

To the wonderful Hum team:

I am glad I had the chance to get to know Hum and meet its members. You are an integrated team and work as one family. This is why Hum has been so successful over the years. You are a collaborative and creative leadership team. I was very pleased to be among you. I benefited a lot, got useful books and learned types of writing. The type I like the most is writing poems, then writing personal essays. I also liked haiku poems, but I found them a little difficult for me. Also, I was very happy having trips with Hum. The trip I enjoyed was the Vancouver Art Gallery. I was fascinated by Robert Davidson's paintings and admired his creativity. I thank all of you: teachers, volunteers and staff, wishing you all the best and more success in the future.

.....
Hind, Writing 101
.....

Thank you Dr. Margot Leigh Butler, Academic Director; Paul Woodhouse, Programme Coordinator; Claire Mathews, Writing Coordinator; Gilles Cyrenne, grammar tutor; UBC teachers, volunteers and staff.

As I reflect on the past years with Hum, both online and in-person classes, I have come to value the inclusiveness of the Hum program. Hum doesn't discriminate in any way but is an open and honest platform in which to launch great ideas from.

From human rights studies, poetry, song, cultural studies and science, the Hum program's open-minded teaching, schedule, and honest platform have helped me to build my confidence. As a person who suffered with complex PTSD, Hum has helped me to see my value, my skills, my talents and what I can contribute to society.

I am profoundly grateful for this wonderful gift of knowledge.
Class of Spring 2023.

.....
Kimberley Hurrell, Writing 101/201 Mentor
.....

It has been a pleasure to meet all the wonderful people who I have met and seen every week in every class. My wish to all the volunteers, teachers and classmates is that you must continue enriching the lives of us students who are hungry for knowledge and wisdom.
I want you to feel satisfied that your work made me happy and satisfied.

.....
Herb, Writing 201
.....

Everything costs more. Rent keeps rising; food is up 30%; transportation is more expensive.

The only constant in life is: good friendship has no price tag—only its presence.

Knowledge has no price tag—its hanging on the tree of life for anyone to pick. These last two examples encompass everything I have come to know at the Humanities program. Thanks again to all staff and volunteers. To my fellow students: it's been a pleasant journey.

.....
Claude R., Writing 101/201 Mentor
.....

Public Programmes

HOW TO FALL IN LOVE WITH SENTENCES

When: Tuesdays, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m

Where: Buchanan D323, UBC

Facilitator: Gilles Cyrenne (Hum alumnus)

In this introduction to grammar mini-series, Gilles Cyrenne guides the class through the rules and quirks of English grammar. Whether learning English as a second language, or needing a refresher, writers in the group work towards penning artful sentences following Gilles' carefully crafted sequence of lessons on sentence structure and style.

A TASTE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

When: Mondays, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m

Where: The Gathering Place.

Facilitator: Shahla Masoumnejad (Hum alumna)

Middle Eastern countries have rich cultures and although they are frequently identified as one region, each country represents a distinguished culture that is rooted in ancient traditions. In this study group, we enjoy the beauty of these cultures and explore the differences that make each country unique, often paired with delicious sweet and savory inducements.

HUM PUBLIC PROGRAMME SERIES PRESENTS...

101 Humanities
COMMUNITY
Programme

Documentaries for thinkers

On the 2nd and 3rd Saturday of every month, join us in the Carnegie Theatre to watch and discuss some fabulous documentary films. This thought-provoking series will offer a selection of films covering a wide range of topics. Cakes and hot drinks will be served.

WHEN: 2nd and 3rd Saturday of the month at 6:00 p.m.
WHERE: Carnegie Centre Theatre
CURATORS: Paul Woodhouse and Claude Ranville

EVERYONE WELCOME! NO REGISTRATION NECESSARY!

h.u.m@ubc.ca | 604-822-0028 | humanities101.arts.ubc.ca

Acknowledgements

Hum gathers, with gratitude, on the unceded, ancestral, traditional territory of the hən'q'əmin'əm' speaking x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skw̓xwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations (Vancouver). We deeply appreciate all of the folks who supported the Programme during the 2022–23 academic year!

MEMBERS OF THE HUM STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee guides all aspects of the Programme. Everyone who has taken a Hum course since it started in 1998, and for whom we have a current email address, is invited to each Steering Committee meeting held in the Downtown Eastside, Downtown South, and this year, online.

HUM MENTORS

Isaac White, (Haida Nation), Raul A. Castillo, Cindy QT, Shahla Masoumnejad; Claude F. Ranville (Métis), Vivian Bomberry (Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee Territory, Cayuga Nation), and Kimberley Hurrell were this year's returning alumni who helped welcome the new participants and gave classroom support.

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE, DOWNTOWN SOUTH AND VANCOUVER COMMUNITIES

Carnegie Centre staff Rika Uto, Beverly Walker, Margaret Massingale, Neil Pillay, Antonietta Gesualdi; PaulR Taylor and Lisa David (Carnegie Newsletter); Vancouver Public Library (VPL) náca?mat ct Strathcona Branch; Downtown Eastside Women's Centre; Sheway/Crabtree Corner Family Resource Centre; The Vancouver Recovery Club; The Gathering Place; Since its inception in 2006, Hum has been a proud member of a coalition of DTES educators who meet monthly to share skills, ideas, support and resources: Meetings of the Downtown Eastside Literacy Roundtable, coordinated by William Booth, brought together members from literacy programmes held in the DTES by professionals from Vancouver Community College, Vancouver School Board, Simon Fraser University, VPL, Carnegie Community Centre, Carnegie Learning Centre, Sheway/Crabtree Corner, Capilano University, UBC Learning Exchange and more.

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dean of Arts Clare Haru Crowston; Associate Dean Renisa Mawani; Faculty of Arts staff Elizabeth Busch, Jessie Tang, Brian Lee, Betty Wong, Barry Yee, Eri Yoshida and Silva Kraal; Emma Novotny (Arts Communications); Marilyn Wiles (Arts Development); Lenny Mah and Gary Andraza (Arts Instructional Support and Information Technology [Arts ISIT]); Alia Abu-Sharife (Bookstore); Ricky Sung and Josefina Pablo (Carding Office); Christine Saunders (Recreation); Nancy Cook (Science 101); Dr. Bernard Perley and Connie Wintels (Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies); Ryanne James and Christine Wasiak (First Nations House of Learning); Rahim Rajan, Martell Julve and Chef Karen (The Delly).

HUM 101/201 TEACHERS

Margot Leigh Butler (Hum and Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC); Paul Woodhouse (Hum); Pete Edwards (Vancouver DeTours); Tiffany Muller Myrdahl (Urban Studies and the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, SFU); Christina Hendricks (Philosophy and the Centre for Teaching and Learning Technologies [CTLT]); Reuben Jentink (Education Graduate Program, SFU); Daniel Heath Justice (Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies and English, UBC); Mathew Arthur (Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Graduate Program, SFU); Thomas Kemple (Sociology, UBC); Susan Rowley, (Museum of Anthropology and Anthropology, UBC); Susan Rome (Vancouver Art Gallery); Dr. Bernard Perley (Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC); Margot Young (Peter Allard School of Law, UBC); Alasdair Butcher (Vancouver DeTours); Sylvia Berryman (Philosophy, UBC); Glen Coulthard (Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies and Department of Political Science, UBC); Gage Averill (Provost and Vice-President, Academic, UBC); Leslie Robertson (Anthropology, UBC).

WRITING 101/201 TEACHERS

Claire Matthews (Hum); William G. Lindsay (Author of *Res Dog Blues & the Haiku: A Savage Life in Bits and Pieces*); Kevin Spent (Creative Writing, The Writer's Studio, SFU); Mandy Catron (Creative Writing, UBC); Margot Leigh Butler (Hum and Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC); Geoffrey Nilson (Department of English Graduate Student SFU); Alanna Edwards (Art Instructor and Engagement Facilitator, Surrey Art Gallery); Dina Del Bucchia (Creative Writing, UBC); Marisa Grizenko (Author of *Plain Pleasures Newsletter* and Reviews Editor at *EVENT Magazine*); Tariq Hussain (Creative Writing, UBC); Ronyne van der Gracht (UBC Bookstore); Jocelyn Tennant (Screenwriter and Development Coordinator, Reality Distortion Field).

VOLUNTEER DISCUSSION FACILITATORS AND WRITING TUTORS

Delanie Austin, Lewis Page, Niki Afsharpour, Heidi Rennert and Jayden Emslie.

PUBLIC PROGRAMME FACILITATORS

Shahla Masoumnejad, "A Taste of the Middle East" held at The Gathering Place; Gilles Cyrenne, "How to fall in love with sentences" held at UBC; Paul Woodhouse and Claude Ranville, "Documentaries for Thinkers" held at Carnegie Centre.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Dr. Margot Leigh Butler (Academic Director), Paul Woodhouse (Programme Manager), Claire Matthews (Writing Coordinator), Meghna Chatterjee and Jesse Carson (WorkLearn Programme Assistants).

SPECIAL THANKS

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COVER ARTWORK INSTALLATION

Photograph by E. Zoe Walker (zoewalker.ca). Installation by Margot Leigh Butler.

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Hum 101/201 Course Outline 2022/23

“The Making of Us”

PART 1: *Living sweet spots where everything hums, everything flows and mingles...*

Sept. 15: Orientation: “Where are we & how do we figure?” with Margot Leigh Butler, Hum and Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC, and Paul Woodhouse, Hum, UBC (p. 12).

Sept. 22: Critical Indigenous Studies: “Finding freedom in the context you inherit,” with Margot Leigh Butler, Hum and Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC (p. 13).

Sept. 29: Art and Activism: “What are you in a perfect position to know + do, now?” Indigenous Murals Walking Tour with Vancouver DeTours’ Pete Edwards (p. 14).

Oct. 6: Sociology: “The making of our digital doubles,” with Paul Woodhouse, Hum, UBC (p. 15).

Oct. 13: Cultural Studies: “What does Hum mean by ‘no carrots no sticks’ learning?” with Margot Leigh Butler, Hum and Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC (p. 16).

PART 2: *Where there’s walls there’s holes*

Oct. 20: Geography and Gender Studies: “Re-drawing the boundaries: who’s included in which urban spaces, how, when and why? Making our way as culturally gendered, classed, racialized bodies,” with Tiffany Muller Myrdahl, Urban Studies and the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies, Simon Fraser University (p. 22).

Oct. 27: Philosophy: “Situations we find and make ourselves in,” with Christina Hendricks, Philosophy and CTLT (Centre for Teaching and Learning Technologies), UBC (p. 23).

Nov. 3: Environmental Humanities and Critical Indigenous Studies: “Writing with the world around us,” with Reuben Jentink, Education Graduate Program, Simon Fraser University (p. 24).

Nov. 10: No class due to UBC’s Reading Week.

Nov. 17: Critical Indigenous Studies: “Making a different yield with informed subjectivities,” with Daniel Heath Justice, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies and English, UBC (p. 25).

Nov. 24: Affect Theory: “What if everything you need is already inside you?” with Mathew Arthur, Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies, Simon Fraser University, PhD candidate (p. 26).

Dec. 1: Sociology: “What if everything depends on everything else?” with Tom Kemple, Sociology, UBC (p. 27).

Dec. 8: Hum: “Making hay while the sun shines!” End of term celebration (p. 28).

PART 3: *It only takes a spark*

Jan. 12: Anthropology: “It only takes a spark... or a leak...or a tremble! Making museums resilient,” with Susan Rowley, MOA (Museum of Anthropology) and Anthropology, UBC (p. 34).

Jan. 19: Cultural Studies and Activism: “Shimmering semiotics: just follow the SIGNS!” with Margot Leigh Butler, Hum and Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC (p. 35).

Jan. 26: Art and Critical Indigenous Studies: “When sparks ignite a creative fire that lives within us,” field trip to the Vancouver Art Gallery (p. 36).

Feb. 2: First Nations Languages: “Hum as a nexus in world making,” with Dr. Bernard Perley (Maliseet from NeGoot-Gook [Tobique] First Nation), Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC (p. 37).

PART 4: *“Keep a fire”: the tending of us*

Feb. 9: Law: “Making us strong: fighting for, knowing and tending our rights!” with Margot Young, Allard School of Law, UBC (p. 42).

Feb. 16: Writing and Publishing: “Binding us together,” on producing Hum’s annual publication, with Paul Woodhouse, Hum, UBC, and Margot Leigh Butler, Hum and Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC (p. 43).

Feb. 23: Urban Geography: “Vancouver Winter Arts Festival,” with Vancouver DeTours founder Alasdair Butcher (p. 44).

Mar. 2: Philosophy: “Making ourselves, making community,” with Sylvia Berryman, Philosophy and Global Citizenship Seminar in Guatemala, UBC (p. 45).

Mar. 9: Critical Indigenous Studies: “‘Cultural burns’: on Dechinta Bush University Centre for Research and Learning,” with Glen Coulthard, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies and Department of Political Science, UBC (p. 46).

Mar. 16: Music: “The making of a university, and who a university makes,” with Gage Averill, Music and Provost/Vice President (Academic), UBC (p. 47).

Mar. 23: Anthropology and Affect Theory: “(Un)making sense,” with Leslie Robertson, Anthropology, UBC (p. 48).

Mar. 30: Cultural Studies and Community Activism: “My Vancouver includes the Downtown Eastside,” student-led walking tour of DTES places of personal significance with Paul Woodhouse, Hum, UBC (p. 49).

Apr. 6: Indigenous Studies, Art, Music and Media Studies: “Around the fire: Indigenous survivance and futurisms,” with Margot Leigh Butler, Hum and Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC (p. 50).

Apr. 27: Graduation Ceremony at Sty-Wet-Tan Great Hall in the First Nations House of Learning Longhouse.

Writing 101/201 Course Outline 2022/23

“The Making of Us”

Sept. 13 + Jan. 10: Orientation: with Claire Matthews, Paul Woodhouse and Margot Leigh Butler, Hum, UBC (p. 72).

Sept. 20 + Jan. 17: Creative Writing: On Keeping a Notebook: “The making of writers,” with Claire Matthews, Hum, UBC (p. 74).

Sept. 27 + Jan. 24: Indigenous Literatures: Poetic Short Forms: “Truth and memory,” with William G. Lindsay (Cree-Stoney), author of *Res Dog Blues & the Haiku: A Savage Life in Bits and Pieces* (2021) (p. 76).

Oct. 4: Creative Non-Fiction and Poetry: “Hearts Amok: Memoir in Verse,” with Kevin Spent, author and educator with The Writer’s Studio and Vancouver Community College (p. 80).

Oct. 11 + Jan 31: Creative Non-Fiction: Personal Essay: “Writing the I from the Eye,” with Mandy Catron, author and educator with UBC Creative Writing (p. 86).

Oct. 18: Vancouver Writers Festival “Sisters in Resistance: Tilar J. Mazzeo in Conversation with Marsha Lederman” (p. 97).

Oct. 25 + Mar. 21: Rhetoric: “Walking the talk, the making of ourselves through manifestos! This is what ME WE truly, madly, deeply want!” with Margot Leigh Butler, Hum and Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC (p. 101)

Nov. 1 + Feb 7: Creative Non-Fiction and Fiction: Autofiction: “Making friction with fact and fiction,” with Claire Matthews, Hum, UBC (p. 107).

Nov. 8 + Feb 14: Poetry: Collaborative Poetry: “(Re)making together,” with Geoffrey Nilson, poet, PhD student at SFU, and educator with Vancouver Community College English (p. 114).

Nov. 15: Creative Writing: Sharing Perspectives: “We are all makers, writers, artists!” with Alanna Edwards, Art Instructor and Engagement Facilitator, Surrey Art Gallery (119).

Nov. 22: Comedy: Writing Comedic Forms: “It’s a Big Deal!” with Dina Del Bucchia, author, podcaster, and educator with UBC Creative Writing (120).

Nov. 29 + Mar 7: Creative and Critical Writing: “Reviewing books for plain pleasure,” with Marisa Grizenko, reviews editor at *EVENT Magazine*, writer, author of *Plain Pleasures* newsletter (121).

Dec. 6: Song writing: Composing Lyrics: “We’re not givin’ up this front row seat,” with Tariq Hussain, songwriter/recording artist, non-fiction writer, and educator with UBC Creative Writing (p. 124).

Dec. 8: End of term celebration: “All the ways we’ve made ourselves!” (p. 126).

Feb. 28: Publishing: “Banned books” with Ronyne van der Gracht, UBC Bookstore (p. 127).

Mar. 28: Screenplay: Scriptwriting: “Make a Scene,” with Jocelyn Tennant, screenwriter and development coordinator, Reality Distortion Field (p. 133).

Apr. 4: Creative Writing: Art Writing: “When one medium of art tries to relate to another medium, it’s called ekphrasis... but what if everything is related to everything else?” with Claire Matthews, Hum, UBC (p. 136).

Apr. 27: Graduation Ceremony at Sty-Wet-Tan Great Hall in the First Nations House of Learning Longhouse.