

Georgetown University
Masters and Doctoral Liberal Studies Program

SYLLABUS

(As of 11/03/2016, subject to revision)

A Sense of Place: Values and Identity

LSHV- 399 - 01

Wednesdays, January 25 to April 26, 2016

6:30-8:45 PM

Class Room: White Grovenor 211

Spring 2017

Charles E. Yonkers

cey3@georgetown.edu

202-486-9309

The Romans called it *genius loci*. Modern thinkers and writers call it “a sense of place.” Today, diverse disciplines are rekindling an awareness of the importance of the concept of place. Prominent poets, novelists, historians, architects, geographers, literary critics, folklorists, preservationists, and urbanists/communitarians explore place’s significance to their disciplines, their visions of society, and in their personal lives. The travel, tourism, and real estate industries have long tapped into the power of place. Now with the 21st-century, the exploding world of neuroscience is offering new perspectives into the causes and effects of place in our brains. And in the humanities itself, there is greater recognition of Place’s importance: for example, fifty institutions of higher learning attended and presented at the 2015 Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs’ Annual Conference. The conference theme was “Place Matters.”

Place is not mere geography. It is a cerebral and emotional blend of associations, an awareness that is part physical, part science, and part history, culture and social memory, an affective bond between people and place or settings. Place can take the form of a community, a neighborhood, a building, a room, or a memory site. It can be Walden Pond, Old Faithful, or Huck Finn’s raft on the Mississippi, the Land of Oz, or Camelot. Some find place in a flag, a ceremony, a ritual, a dish of food, a song, or an event. Ground Zero, Little Big Horn, Chartres Cathedral, Julia Child’s kitchen, or a small town’s park or library can be a place. So can your grandfather’s workshop or an author’s *oeuvre* such as Wendell

Berry's Port William, KY or Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, MS. It can have meaning to a person, a community, a nation, or mankind. The United Nations designates over nine hundred "world heritage sites." In sum, place is a complex concept and a way of understanding the world and ourselves.

Description of Learning Goals and Outcomes:

The approach this seminar takes is both individual and interactive. Place is, in the end, subjective and personal. That said, the course attempts to assist the student's exploration in two ways. First, on an individual level, students are asked to come to the course with a list of proposed places or perspectives toward place *that must have some significance to them personally*. In addition, it is ideal but not required that the proposed places or perspectives (and eventually the selected place) have some meaning to a student's actual or proposed area of focus in the Liberal Studies Program. If the student is well advanced in the program already, the place might relate to an actual or likely thesis topic, but if one is new to the program or in individualized study, then the place or perspective should be one of keen academic and personal interest. The purpose of this objective is to create a connection between the student, the course, their place/s, and the program. The result will be, therefore, highly individualistic.

The second dimension of the course is the *collective* reading, research, discussion, and development during the course of the different ways to perceive and represent place. This group and interactive part of the course is critical. The purpose here is to draw from our collective perspectives in a creative way. Each student bears a responsibility toward the group. Discussion and appreciation of other's interests and perceptions will expand and enhance the ability to develop and describe one's own place. The course will thus examine place from a multiplicity of angles, individually and collectively, and this element will be real time and therefore somewhat unpredictable. A tolerance for process and imprecision is desirable. A student's initial idea about their own proposed places may change as we read and discuss samples of different authors' works, but students will begin to evoke their places in writing and will critique at regular intervals one another's developing thoughts and papers. *This dimension of the course requires substantial out-of-class virtual participation (estimated at a*

minimum of ten hours) through the Course Blogs (“Our Places”) and other modalities such as Blackboard’s Discussion Board and peer-review writing. This virtual time is supervised and material to the class and to a student’s grade (see below).

This course arises from the Liberal Studies Program itself in that it is a human values program promoting the inter-connectedness of disciplines. MALS/DLS students are also typically diverse in background, profession, age, and curricular interests. The course seeks to build off this diversity, therefore, by using place to explore different values, diverse ways of achieving identity, and differing expressions of our humanity. The course’s most ambitious aim is to be transformative: to enlarge the way we perceive the world. Mark Twain might say such a goal is a bit of a stretch. But a sense of place is a significant human phenomenon, and the course aims to expand the ways the student’s mind senses place – what affects us, what we attend to, how we perceive – and to open up, therefore, new possibilities for meaningful *self*-discovery, learning what we care about, and how we appreciate life: thus, the sub-title “**Values and Identity.**”

The work of reading, thinking, talking, researching, and writing about a place is aimed at engaging the mind, spirit, and personality. It is a demanding but refreshing and fun inquiry. It can employ specialized knowledge, ethics and values, the physical senses, the emotional realm, the past and the present. It calls for self-reflection, imagination, and interior visioning. To translate it into a final product will require imagination and research into history, culture, geography, philosophy, and other disciplines as well as scholarly analysis and writing skills. There will be numerous short writing assignments along the way, one assigned outside book with a view toward what uses or tools the book or author offers to students of place, and two brief presentations to the class: one on the book, and one on your final paper. The final “draft” product will be a twelve-page (longer by agreement), double-spaced paper on a particular place, as defined by you. Also by agreement with the instructor, the product could take be in a form other than a traditional essay (e.g., poetry, drama, art, film, photo montage, digital story). *In all cases*, a bibliographic essay must accompany the final product. The final product will be assessed for authenticity to you, the utilization of different perceptions of place, breadth and depth of analysis, and excellence in exposition and documented

research.

Course Objectives:

1. **Employ Interdisciplinary Skills**: Use and develop different skills sets, approaches, or disciplines (e.g., geography, history, philosophy, political science, fine arts, sociology, ecology

2.

3. , etc.) to explore and enhance your perceptions, appreciations, and representations of place.

2. **Identify and Examine different perspectives of sensing and interpreting place:**

Experiential – personal experience

Physical - spatial, geographic, geological, cartographical, architectural

Natural - environmental, ecological, bio-regional, sensory (smell, sound, etc.)

Scientific – physical, chemical, neuro-scientific

Social - communal, economic, commercial, familial, demographic, tribal

Cultural - historical, genealogical, religious, culinary, ethnic, literary,

Political – geo-political, national, patriotic, partisan, rhetorical,

Memory – mnemonic, temporal, transitional, nostalgic, chaotic

Artistic - literary, musical, visual, poetic, cinematic, aesthetic

Philosophical – epistemological, linguistic, existential

Psychological – emotional, sentimental, subliminal, intuitive,

Spiritual – faith-based, mystical, numinous, Feng shui, extra-sensory

3. **Expand Research Techniques**: Explore new possibilities of researching, using traditional techniques as well as the ever-expanding web-based resources and experimenting with different approaches to interpreting place (e.g., images, sounds, smells, tastes, feels, extra-sensory, neuro-scientific, etc.).

4. **Develop Critical Analytical Skills**: Read, study, consider, compare, critique different thinkers and writers about your places, and assist others’

approaches to developing, evoking, translating, and communicating their places.

5. **Writing and Interpreting**: Practice in or exploration of the use of narrative, expository writing, poetry, graphic or other mediums to evoke your place/s and to engage and convince a reader about your subject place using appropriate scholarly criteria.

6. **Identify Values**: Through the exploration of your chosen places and areas of curricular concentration, seek out and define the values and meanings underlying your perception, interpretation, and expression of them and thereby discover a better understanding of yourself and the world.

7. **Enjoyment**: Place, in the end, is subjective and personal. The intellectual and emotional exploration of it as a subject and the challenges of its interpretation and expression are necessarily on-going, continuous, and perhaps life-long. It is, therefore, an objective of the course to create an agreeable attitude for place's study and an enduring taste for its pleasurable pursuit.

Evaluation/Grading: The final grade is based sixty-percent (60%) on writing and forty-percent (40%) on class participation and virtual work. The writing consists of the final (draft) paper, a three-page "book report" (or write-up, interpretation), periodic short written assignments, and blog and Discussion Board writing. The participation portion includes doing the required readings, of course, and active helpfulness in classroom discussions *and in virtual-discussions* via, for example, posting and comments on the Class Blog and Discussion Board, and constructive collaboration with fellow students. **It is estimated that this out-of-class participation will amount to at least ten hours of work.**

Attendance Policy: Based on the policy of the DLS/MALS Program, punctual attendance is required; attendance of the first class is mandatory; absences are not expected, and more than one excused absence may result in the withdrawal of the student from the course

since sufficient contact hours would not be met to warrant the award of credit or grade.

MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

Honor Code:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Disabilities Statement:

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

Readings: Note: There is one book to purchase [Tim Cresswell, *Place: an introduction*. (Oxford, Wiley Blackwell, 2nd Edition, 2015), 220 pgs. It may be ordered through the Georgetown Bookstore, but may be available for purchase on-line. *Other assigned readings will be excerpts* posted and accessible digitally through Georgetown Library's Electronic-Reserves. Students will also be assigned one book each from the list of "related outside" readings to read and interpret to the class.

Required Texts:

Cresswell, Tim. *Place: an introduction* (Oxford, Wiley Blackwell Publishing, 2015). See previous paragraph on Readings.

Required Electronic Reserves Readings [appearing as E-R below]:

Selected ***chapters or excerpts*** from the titles below are available on the course's Blackboard site (Click on Tools, then Reserves and Library Resources) or via Lauinger Library Reserves (type in instructor or course number):

Abbey, Edward. *Desert Solitaire*
Berry, Wendell. *A Native Hill* (entire chapter)
Beston, Henry. *The Outermost House*
Brand, Stewart. *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built*
Fisher, MFK, *The Art of Eating*
Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time.*
Lippard, Lucy R. *The Lure of the Local*
Liebling, A.J. *Between Meals*
McCullough, David. *Washington on the Potomac* (entire essay)
Nora, Pierre. *Realms of Memory.*
Proust, Marcel. *In Search of Lost Time*
Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory*
Stegner, Wallace. *The Sense of Place* and *The American West.*
Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Topophilia*
Turner, Frederick. *Spirit of Place*
Twain, Mark. *Life on the Mississippi, Huckleberry Finn*
White, E.B. *Essays of E.B. White*

Related Outside Authors & Titles:

[Each student will be assigned one book from the list below]

Anderson, Sherwood, *Winesburg, Ohio*
Berry, Wendell. *Jayber Crow* (or any of his novels)
Cather, Willa. *My Antonia*
Cosgrove, Dennis, S. Daniels, eds. *The Iconography of Landscape* (1988)
Demas, Corrine. *Eleven Stories High*
De Blij, Harm. *The Power of Place* (2009)

Dillard, Annie. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*
Erhlich, Gretel. *The Solace of Open Spaces*
Farmer, Sarah. *Martyred Village* (1999)
Faulkner, William, *The Bear*
Fisher, M.F.K., *Map of Another Town: A Memoir of Provence*
Galvin, James. *The Meadow*
Johnson, Denis. *Train Dreams*
Keillor, Garrison. *Good Poems: American Places*
Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*
MacLean, Norman. *A River Runs Through It*
McCourt, Frank. *Angela's Ashes*
O'Sullivan, Maurice. *Twenty Years A-Growing* (1933)
Sebald, W.G. *Rings of Saturn*.
Rybczynski, Witold. *Looking Around: A Journey Through Architecture*
Stewart, George Rippey. *Names on the Land*. (1945, 2008)
Tall, Deborah. *From Where We Stand*.
Thoreau, Henry. *Walden Pond*
Tuan, Yi-Fu, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977)
Turkle, Sherry, ed. *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With* (2007)

Thoughts on Place:

Wallace Stegner: "No place, even a wild place, is a place until it has had that human attention that at its highest reach we will call poetry...."

Wendell Berry: "You don't know who you are, unless you know where you are."

Marcel Proust: "Discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."

Rebecca Solnit: "A sense of place is the sixth sense, an internal compass and map made by memory and spatial perception together."

Seamus Heaney: "We are all hunters and gatherers of values."

Herman Melville: “It is not on any map. True places never are.”

Yi-Fu Tuan – “Place cannot be measured or mapped, and laws cannot be deduced about or from it. Places are experienced.”

Edward Abbey – “May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds.”

*T.S. Elliot: “We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”*

Weekly Assignments for classes from 6:30 to 8:45 PM [*Class hours are shorter because of required outside virtual work. Readings and Topic Order May Change*)]

January 25: **Introduction: Rubrics and Metaphors** [Pages: 50+]

Discussion: Experiential Place: Our Geo-Biographies

Tim Cresswell, *Place: an introduction* (2nd ed.), Chapter 1: Defining Place

Wallace Stegner’s essay “Sense of Place” [E-R]

Wendell Berry essay, “A Native Hill” [E-R]

Roam: National Register of Historical Places: Definitions:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/regulations.htm#603>

Roam: UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Criteria:

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>

David Brooks, “The New Humanism.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/08/opinion/08brooks.html?_r=1&ref=davidbrooks

Discussion of Metaphors: Work shop, Geodesic Dome, Bench Buddies, A Concept Map, `etc.

February 1: **Genealogy of Place & Geography:** Theory and Physical Place
[Pages: 83+]

Tim Cresswell, *Place*: Chapter 2 The Genealogy of Place, 23-58

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Topophilia*: Common Traits; Summary & Conclusions [E-R]

Lippard, Lucy R. *Lure of the Local*, “All Over the Place” [E-R]

John Brinkerhoff Jackson, “Sense of Place, Sense of Time” [E-R]

Optional: Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn*, Chapters 1, Flow [E-R].

Roam: Toward An Architecture of Place: See Project for Public Spaces

<http://www.pps.org/toward-an-architecture-of-place/>

Optional: Resource: William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*, Travel [E-R]

February 8: **The Power of Memory:** Temporal Place [Pages: 60]

Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*. Vol. 1, Overture 33-36;

Combray 37-51, 141-143; Vol. 2, The Princess de Guermantes Receives 990-1009 [All E-R]; and Jonah Lehrer, *Proust Was A Neuroscientist*,

Chapter 4 Marcel Proust [E-R].

February 15: **Realms of Memory:** Political and Cultural Place [Pages: 58+]

Pierre Nora: *Realms of Memory*,

In Remembrance of Things French [E-R]

General Introduction: Between Memory & History [E-R]

Schama, Simon. Landscape and Memory, Introduction [E-R]

Draft #1 of Paper on a *potential* Place: Two paragraphs or up to 500 words and post on Personal Portfolio. Buddies: provide tough support re post.

February 22: **Cultural Place: A Museum or Monument Visit:** Represented Places

Student/Class Visits & Reports [To be self-selected and scheduled.]

See many options:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_museums_in_Washington,_D.C.

(E.g., Phillips Gallery; Museum of the American Indian; National Archives; National Portrait Gallery, Supreme Court, Sackler Gallery, Museum of African Art, Lincoln Cottage at Soldiers Home, News Museum, Dumbarton Oaks, MLK Jr. Memorial, Hirshorn Sculpture Gallery, and/or the many statues, memorials, and national monuments in the area, etc., etc.)

Write-ups: (Post two page draft on Personal Portfolio; 3 minute presentation)

March 1: **Literature and Place:** Literary Places. [Pages 67+]

Frederick Turner, *Spirit of Place*,

How Divine These Studies [E-R] (Roam:
<http://uncw.edu/garland/Iowa/index.htm>)

Pilot's Memory [E-R]

Mark Twain. [From] *Huckleberry Finn* and *Life on the Mississippi*

End of Chapter XVIII [E-R]

Beginning of Chapter XIX [E-R]

Vendetta and Other Things [E-R]

Past and Present [E-R]

E.B. White, *Once More To the Lake*, [E-R]

Draft # 2: One full page on your (or a new) place but from wholly different perspective. Post on Personal Portfolio, check you buddy's draft, and comment.

March 8: [NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK, March 6-10]

March 15: **Poetry and Place:** Poetic Place [Pages 50+]

Wendell Berry: from *Openings*, "The Return" [E-R]

City Life: poems selected by Garrison Keillor, *Good Poems: American Places* [E-R]

Walt Whitman, "Once I Pass Through a Populous City."

Robert Frost, "Birches," "A Gift Outright"

Robert Service: “The Cremation of Sam McGee”

<http://wordinfo.info/unit/2640?letter=C>

Dylan Thomas, “A Child’s Christmas in Wales.”

Hear it: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xfpf66_dylan-thomas-a-child-s-christmas-in-wales_creation

Read it: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/a-child-s-christmas-in-wales/>

March 22: **American Regions and Narrative History** [Pages 50+]

Stegner, Wallace. “Living Dry” [E-R]

Abbey, Edward. *Desert Solitaire*, Solitaire [E-R]

Aldo Leopold, “Country” [E-R]

Henry Beston, *The Outermost House: A Year of Life on the Great Beach of Cape Cod*, [E-R pp 1-18].

March 29: **Place, Society, and the Politics of Belonging** [Pages 50+]

Cresswell, Tim: *Place*, Chapter 3, Reading ‘A Global Sense of Place’

Debra L. Shutika: *Beyond the Borderlands: Migration and Belonging in the U.S. and Mexico*, Introduction [E-R]

Roam: Project for Public Places: <http://www.pps.org/blog/michigan-leads-the-way/>

Draft # 3: Two full pages [An abstract or argument on/about your place]. Post on Personal Portfolio.

April 5: **Local Histories** [Pages 25+]

Visit and Evoke a local neighborhood: your own or one of your interest

David McCullough, “Washington on the Potomac” [E-R]

Roam:

<http://planning.dc.gov/DC/Planning/Historic+Preservation/Maps+and+Information/Landmarks+and+Districts/Inventory+of+Historic+Sites/The+matic+Edition>

DC Cultural Tourism: Visit a DC Historic District or other neighborhood (e.g. LeDroit Park, Capitol Hill, Georgetown Historic districts)

Roam: <http://www.culturaltourismdc.org/things-do-see/historic-neighborhoods>

Roam: http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/place_where_you_live/

See: “The Genius of Place” film trailer: Cortona, Italy

Cast a look at MALS Thesis (2006) of C.E. Yonkers, “The Creation of a Sense of Place: History, Culture and Henderson, KY” [In Blackboard’s Documents]

Write-Up: Write and post 2 pages on a neighborhood on your Personal Portfolio

April 12: **Food, Wine, Scent, and Music** [Pages 50+]

MFK Fisher, *The Art of Eating*

Appreciation (by James Beard) [E-R]

Introduction, Aix-en-Provence, Main Street, P is for Peas, Pale Yellow Glove [E-R]

A.J. Liebling, *Between Meals*, Just Enough Money [E-R]

Annie Dillard, *World in a Bowl of Soup: A Christmas Story* [E-R]

Music and Places: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/glenn-kurtz/the-marriage-of-music-and_b_51759.html

“Midnight in Paris” trailer:

<http://www.imdb.com/video/screenplay/vi954965273/>

April 19: **New Ways of Seeing Place** [44+]

Lehrer, Chapter 5: Paul Cezanne [ER]

Lehrer, Chapter 8: Virginia Woolf [ER]

Kimmelman, Michael: “Time Travel: By Way of a Tiny Painting”

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/06/22/arts/22postcards.html?ref=arts>

Lawton, Graham. “The Grand Delusion,” *New Scientist Magazine*, May 16, 2011.

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21028122.100-the-grand-delusion-what-you-see-is-not-what-you-get.html>

Robson, David. "Neuroscience: Your Clever Body," New Scientist Magazine, October 11, 2011

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21228341.500-your-clever-body-thinking-from-head-to-toe.html?full=true&print=true>

Draft # 4: Two page/s

April 26: **Journeys, Places, and Values: The Interviews**

Reading: Lehrer: "Coda" [E-R] Brand, Stewart: *The Clock of the Long Now*, Chapter 25 The Infinite Game [link or E-R]

Presenters: Each student should prepare a three-minute talk [strictly enforced] on the subject of *The Journey to My Final Draft Place: How and Why I came to choose it*. Compare your Pre-Knowledge Questionnaire response to your ultimate choice of a place. Reflect on those pre-class intentions and then where you ended up. What the values did you discover along the way?

Interviewers: Your job is to tease out the values that the Presenters' journey may represent.

Closing Observations & Conclusions about A Sense of Place

Course Evaluations: Time will be allowed to complete the MALS Evaluation Form.

May 3: **Final Draft Paper** (hard copy) **due** by 5 PM at Dean's Office in ICC or mailed to the instructor at P.O. Box 7, Wittman, MD 21676 with prior post-mark. 2017 May graduates will have to make arrangements for earlier submission. [*Graded papers with comments will be returned to the Dean's Office for pickup or mailed back to you if submitted with a self-addressed and stamped envelope*].