

Master of Arts in Cultural Studies Graduate Research Conference

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Presentation Abstracts (*by alpha*)

Heath Davis

We might think of the archive as a quiet, controlled, neutral, objective environment where responsible and highly efficient professionals trained in the practice of care for historical artifacts safeguard material of memory. This presentation calls on the audience to consider an archive space that houses material emerging from the noise, mess, and every day, and witness its placement in a "living" archive that actively introduces noise and mess into daily practice. Drawing on collaborative work making zines, as well as highlighting examples from the zine archive central to a personal and joint effort to intervene in dominant ideologies of normativity, this presentation seeks to create an intervention into the traditional academic presentation and engage the audience in the practice of thinking with the zine.

Lauren Dun

In American culture the idea of belonging, of finding a place to call home, is highly valued. But is this desire innate and natural? This project is intended to complicate these very notions through an examination of my personal search for belonging in Hawaii. As an Asian American from the Continental United States, my two-week experience in Hawaii is emblematic of the way places are constantly constructed and remapped in order to attempt to achieve belonging in America. Although the concept of belonging is in a fixed state, perhaps true belonging is located within the "in-between" state which is where we actively negotiate and search for the answer.

Katie Grainger

My current project is a discursive analysis of the contemporary representations of the femme fatale in Hollywood and Latin American film, otherwise known as the action heroine. I am interested in not only how these women work/kill, but also how these cinematic representations of women are tied to greater social and political dilemmas within their individual cultures. For instance, these characters exist to not only gain self-representation and agency as tough women, but also to engage in the intertwined acts of sex and violence as a form of activism against the patriarchal discourse in which they are implicated. They transgress the structures to which they belong and, in doing so, they are able to protest their cultures' oppressive social and political systems.

Shana Hirsch

As Scotland re-visions its land use in terms of nation, regions such as the Highlands and Islands are coming to be viewed in terms of what is best for the national economy and the landscape is reframed in terms of public goods for citizens both urban and rural. This “new contract between farmers and society” is a significant shift in the ways in which rural people and farmers are established as citizens. Each of these subject-positions leads to different futures and possibilities for alternative economic and social structures in articulation to the global, but further, the ways in which livestock, landscape, and individuals are themselves articulated defines and reshapes the possible futures for the crofting community itself.

Ken Matsudaira

Contemporary discourses of Nikkei (persons of Japanese descent living outside of Japan) identity are heavily framed in relation to the internment of 120,000 Nikkei during the Second World War. Japanese American loyalty, patriotism, and justice are arrayed against the backdrop of the Internment experience, pinning Nikkei identity to the Internment camps and positioning Nikkei history within discourses of US nationalism. The standard narrative distances Japanese American history from the Japanese Imperialism. Yet within the tellings of the camps, within the tellings of Japan-town and the Nikkei community before the war, traces – some vivid, some subtle – of Japanese nationalism can be found. How are these traces negotiated, and what is lost in their omission? And what is built in their place? This project questions narrow definitions of loyalty and the negotiation of nationalism within the Nikkei archive.

Ari Roy

My argument is this: while those living with profound cognitive disabilities are individuals, they are not subjects. I will discuss how individuals living with PCD and those interacting with said individuals engage in the subversion of modernist culture as they partake in Surrealist activity focused on communication that is facilitated through the strength of multiple minds and bodies working together. The Exquisite Corpse and the notion of the cyborg function as my methods for analysis. I use these methods as they engage in surrealist play, question reason, disrupt common sense notions of normalcy and directly confront the mutability of the body. My engagement in questions of PCD, subjectivity and re/rep/presentation, are meant as an experiment and a play rather than as an attempt to answer a question that, due to the nature of those being spoken about, I will not be able to answer. My desire with this project is to further thought and consideration of the ways in which subjectivity and discourse exist on the body and to tease out one space where they do not.

Steve Will

American institutions of higher education attract students from around the globe. Having an international student population promotes intercultural communication and provides an opportunity for multicultural understanding. However, despite the opportunity for an integrated learning experience,

student groups are often divided by race, ethnicity, or nationality; resulting in visiting students feeling isolated among the student body. International students are then left with the challenge of reaching out to others to form social relationships in a society wherein acclimation is already a challenge. With a large majority of these students coming from East Asia, I will be focusing on these dilemmas faced by East Asian immigrant and international students in adjusting to American student life, as well as methods to improve and promote cross-cultural learning, in an effort to answer the question: How can we create an open campus environment in which students of all cultural backgrounds feel welcomed?

Nancy Will

This study gathers the stories of Chinese immigrants working in the Seattle area. The study seeks to highlight the personal narratives of Chinese immigrants and experiences that they have had when dealing with racism and/or discrimination on the job. Although the nineteenth century history of Chinese immigration in the Pacific Northwest has received some attention in the academic literature, this study focuses on contemporary Chinese immigration and thus examines the contemporary movement of people due to globalization. The study focuses on gathering the personal narratives of white collar Chinese immigrants and asks what their experiences have been with racism and discrimination. Dominant discourses of immigration in the United States often focus on working class immigrants. However, by focusing on the stories of middle class, white collar Chinese immigrants, this study adds to our understanding of class, race, ethnicity, migration, and globalization.