

CCCX 215

Creative Communities: People, Power, and Narrative – Unsettling Chicago

Model contributed by C. Richard King

This course focuses on stories people tell about themselves and their communities. By collecting, analyzing, and retelling stories, students will develop a sharper understanding of how and why people use stories to make sense of their lives and local environs. Students will learn about life stories, help make hidden stories visible, and establish connections between diverse stories and diverse communities. Through the process of discovering, understanding, and relaying narratives, students will establish deeper ties with their own communities at the college and in the city.

Unsettling Chicago concerns itself with the place of imagined Indians in Chicago and the distinct representational practices and cultural politics that have made such renderings pleasurable, profitable, and powerful. Place names and origins stories, museum installations and world's fairs, collective memory and commercial brands, as well as sports mascots and public art will be examined. Readings and discussion seek not simply to catalog a set of stereotypes but encourage a deeper understanding of the construction and circulation of such representations and a fuller appreciation of the cultural, historical, and political forces shaping the uses and understandings of Indianness. Throughout, attention will be directed at the shifting contours of race, power, and identity as well as the persistence and fecundity of core ideas about indigenous peoples.

Class schedule and format

This class meets in person once every other week for 90-120 minutes with all students in attendance. Throughout, instructor will leverage Canvas to frame discussions, direct student learning, draw upon online discussions to stage on campus lesson plan, participate in discussion, and hold online office hours.

Course-specific organization, examples and dates

The course is broken into two-week segments, allowing for structured flow between on campus and remote learning. Each segment will demand that student do active learning outside class and/or collaborate with peers around a problem or prompt.

Students will be required to participate in discussions on Canvas every Thursday & Friday. This is to foster community and build momentum across learning platforms and spaces.

- Week 2
 - Students will complete a tour of the Art Institute of Chicago, studying the presence/absence of indigenous people (as subjects and artists) and interpreting one work of art.
 - Students will post and respond about their visit.

- Week 3
 - Student meet in class. Focused discussion of emergent themes, lessons for creative practice, and listing keywords to describe alternatives.
 - Students will briefly work though one key term and respond to peers.

