

# **AMERICAN CULTURAL STUDIES**

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# COURSE REVIEW

- The structure of this course is to enable you to pass it through the guided work you do through the semester.
- Students who do the majority of the work are guaranteed to pass.
- This is fair because following the course requires active involvement, as opposed to passive listening.

# TODAY'S TOPIC: TENDING TO OUR VIRTUAL COMMUNITY GARDEN

- Do you see the point of this community?
- Do you understand why we are calling it a community not a class?
- Are there weeds?
- Do you want your corner to look better?

# GARDENING: NOTICE ABOUT THE SITE

- The names of the categories are changed as of this week. It's hoped the new categories will be more suggestive of the depth good work aims for.
- **Challenges/reflections:** -> **Reflections**
- **Assaying:** to try to understand; analyze (detailed examination of anything complex to understand its nature and essential facts); judge the worth of
- **Comparisons:** to compare constructive vs. destructive practices; the present with the past; multiple perspectives; your change in perception

# GARDENING: NOTICE ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS

- In the future, all posts should begin with a sentence explaining the **structure** of the assignment that the post responds to. This may be added to previously published posts (weeks 1-4).

# GARDENING: THE FORUM SHOWS A LOT OF COMPLEXITY

- Is it easier to include insights on the forum and harder to put them into posts?
- This week, you can take some of your insights and put them into posts (more on that later)

# WHY IS THIS CLASS A COMMUNITY?

- Can you help each other?
- Less a question of right/wrong; more a question of learning how to share questions and insights. Though this does involve the problem of how to understand people and situations in a clear way.

# WHAT DOES THIS COMMUNITY *DO*?

- This course does not expect you to memorize but to demonstrate an awareness of:
- Nuance, similarity/difference, continuity/change, multiple causes, cause/effect...
- The practice of thinking (hypothesize, analyze, synthesize, criticize, realize, energize)
- -> excellent, engaging, ethical work



# WHAT'S THE POINT OF NUANCE, COMPLEXITY, ETC?

- A solution is an answer we come up with as a result of seeing about as openly as a human being can. - Neil Postman



# EXPLORE THE GARDEN THIS WEEK

1. If you need extra credit, write 2 posts.
2. Go through the site and forum
3. Write a short but complex post(s) that begin by sharing why they are relevant to the class and that address questions (see below). That is the **structure** of this week's assignment.
4. Add posts *where you want them*: choose 2 categories for your post(s) with the **exception of weekly questions** (note that resources posts need to include a list of resources: books, links, etc)
5. Posts can use forum insights, but don't have to

# ***ADDITIONAL, OPTIONAL GARDENING:***

1. Improve old posts (make changes, revert to 'pending', include brief note on what you changed). Are you proud of your work? Does it reflect complexity? Note that some work was published as having done 'most of' the assignment but are not complete.
2. Link to others' posts at the bottom of your post: featuring the best idea from their post and showing how it relates to your post (see 'pending' instructions above).
3. The site is your garden!



# QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Skim these questions and write down one that resonates with you and one that seems hard. Indicate which are which in your post.
- You can also use these questions as inspiration for you own - being sure that the questions emphasize: practical value, the value (or lack of value) of different types of solutions, solutions to complex problems, cause/effect... (make sure you set yourself a hard question)

**ARE YOU ABLE TO DEVELOP A REPERTOIRE OF 'SURVIVAL STRATEGIES' THROUGH THIS CLASS, FOR THE DIGITAL AGE?  
IF NOT, WHAT STRATEGIES DO YOU SEEK?**

**WHAT IDEAS/PRACTICES SEEM USEFUL AND COULD BE DEVELOPED AMONG PEOPLE IN THIS COMMUNITY, AND WHICH IDEAS/PRACTICES ARE LESS CONSTRUCTIVE? ARE THERE DIFFERING ETHICAL STANDARDS IN THE COMMUNITY?**



**WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE TOPIC SO FAR, AND WHY?**

**GOING FORWARDS, WHAT TOPICS DO YOU THINK ARE IMPORTANT TO THIS COMMUNITY AND SO SHOULD BE ADDRESSED THIS SEMESTER? (SUGGESTIONS INCLUDE: THE ATTENTION ECONOMY, SOCIAL NETWORKS, COPYRIGHT, CIVICS AND CANCEL CULTURE)**

**WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF BIG TECH? OF THE INTERNET? WHAT IS THEIR EFFECT ON PEOPLE?**

# WHAT RULES MUST BE FOLLOWED IN DIGITAL CULTURE?

# **WHAT RIGHTS AND RESTRICTIONS ARE GIVEN AND IMPOSED BY DIGITAL CULTURE?**

**TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE PROBLEMS OF DIGITAL  
TECHNOLOGY REQUIRE DECISIONS? CHOICES? SOLUTIONS?  
E.G. ARE THERE ADVANTAGES TO RESISITING APPS LIKE  
ZOOM, FB?**

# HOW IS DIGITAL CULTURE RELATED TO OTHER SYSTEMS OF KNOWING AND BEING?

# WHAT'S THE BACKGROUND TO THIS WEEK'S TOPIC?

- The idea that many people are working to make the internet a better place.
- Examples of alternative gathering places: web rings, IndieWeb movement, Microblogging, Neocities, the Free Software Foundation's work...
- Can you find your own examples?



