

CONCEPTS OF HOME ••• PHIL 3750

Spring 2012 / Tuedio and Zangeneh

This course tracks the emergence of a “multivariate” concept of home – one contained not within definitions marking boundaries of security and belonging but, rather, within attunements transgressing the boundaries of a firm and fixed definition. The assigned readings invite exploration of several provocative angles on the complexities of home. Beginning close to the heart, we will work our way out to the boundaries of pure displacement, expanding our sense for the meaning and value of home in contemporary life, and for the value of home within the “setting” of the elementary school classroom.

Course Texts

Klaver & Tuedio (editors), Concepts Of Home: Displacement, Hospitality, Resistance and Belonging

“Short Cuts” (film by Robert Altman)

“Beloved” (film by Jonathan Demme)

“Pleasantville” (film by Gary Ross)

“The Weeping Meadow” (film by Theo Angelopoulos)

Course Themes

- *nostalgic longing ... invented tradition ... security/comfort/homesickness*
- *homespace ... homeplace ... the "lifeworld" space of home*
- *"walled in/walled out" ... "inside/outside" ... exposure ... displacement*
- *the ambiguous value of home ... creative preservation ... materialization*
- *homesites of resistance ... withdrawal ... rejuvenation ... liberation*
- *the locus of personal and collective identities ... immanence/transcendence*
- *home and community ... hospitality as a form of home identity... openness*
- *home identity ... building up/tearing down ... exilic life ... home in translation*
- *homeland/nationalist identity ... the cosmopolitan site of home ... otherness*

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Writing Assignments

Journal entries:

I. Ten journal entries, each identifying and discussing an interesting facet of “home” developed in the assigned readings. Five of these entries need to explore how the facet under discussion might be relevant to efforts to cultivate the teaching/learning environment of an elementary school classroom. One entry due every two weeks, starting Tuesday, February 21st, with the balance submitted by Tuesday, May 22nd. Projected length: **250-300 words per entry**.

Study papers:

II. The **first** paper, assessing the role of “**creative preservation**” in relation to home, will be due on Friday, April 6th. Projected length: **1200 words**

III. The **second** paper, assessing the role of “**hospitality**” in relation to home, and including application to the context of the elementary school classroom setting, will be due on Tuesday, May 22nd. Projected length: **1200 words**

Guidelines for approaching the assigned readings and for writing papers that engage key ideas from these readings will be provided during class meetings, so it will be important to attend class on a regular basis.

Class sessions will emphasize analysis and discussion of central passages in the readings, and we will do our best to address questions arising in response to the assigned readings. Course grades will be determined primarily by the quality of your written work, but the impact of your participation in class discussion will influence the final determination of your grade. So it will be important for you to complete reading assignments in advance of our class discussion of assigned passages. Some papers may require revision before receiving a final grade.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of engaging in conversation with these ideas. This is pretty challenging material to absorb without engaging in some interactive discussion. If you aren't getting this connection from our class discussions, you need to seek us out during office hours to help establish a better connection to the ongoing analysis. Feel free to come by in small groups if this works better for you than coming alone.

But be ready: the object of this undertaking is the subject of our experience. What is it to think about concepts of home from the standpoint of human experience, rather than, say, from the standpoint of the definitional norms of the society or subculture in which we have grown up? Can we do so (that is, think about home from the standpoint of human experience) in a manner sufficient to establish a community of understanding? Or is the subject matter too unwieldy to establish such a base of understanding, as when e.g., we allow concepts of home to transgress stabilizing boundaries of definitional norms?

**CONCEPTS OF HOME:
Displacement. Hospitality.
Resistance and Belonging**

Part One: Homespace

**"What is familiar is what we are used to; and what we are used to is most difficult to 'know'
-- that is, to see as a problem; that is, to see as strange, as distant, as 'outside' us."**

(Nietzsche, The Gay Science)

I (reclaiming our sense of home)

February 7

Witold Rybczynski, "Nostalgia"

Jill McCorkle, "Secret Places"

Maya Angelou, "A House Can Hurt, a Home Can Heal"

Alison Deming, "Claiming the Yard"

bell hooks, "A Place Where the Soul Can Rest"

bell hooks, "Habits of the Heart"

II (walling in •~• walling out)

February 14

Sharon Olds, "Wonder as Wander"

Kathryn Harrison, "Outside In"

Raymond Carver, "So Much Water So Close to Home"

Short Cuts (film by Robert Altman)

III (boundaries of context)=>(locus •~• extent)

February 21

David Guterson, "Surrounded by Water"

Gretel Ehrlich, "Home is How Many Places"

Elizabeth Bishop, "Jerónimo's House"

John Hollander, "It All Depends"

Gary Snyder, "The Watershed"

Part Two: Homeplace

"Perhaps the first step in wandering forth is learning to 'welcome in'."

(Noddings, Starting at Home)

IV (provisional homes)

February 28

Emily Dickinson, "I Years had been from Home"

Alfred Schutz, "The Homecomer"

Louise Gluck, "Nest"

Gaston Bachelard, "the house..." from *The Poetics of Space*

Michael McClure, "Emily Dickinson's House"

Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street* (selections)

V (separations in the locus of home)

March 6

Jim Tuedio, "Ambiguities in the Locus of Home: Exilic Life and the Space of Belonging"

Mary Douglas, "The Idea of a Home: A Kind of Space"
John Brinkerhoff Jackson, "The Mobile home on the Range"

VI (affirmation through creative preservation) March 13

Katherine Platt, "Places of Experience and the Experience of Place"
Iris Marion Young, "House and Home: Feminist Variations on a Theme"

VII (embryonic community)=>(welcoming in •~• journeying out) March 20

Nel Noddings, "Places, Homes and Objects" (*from Starting at Home*)
Nel Noddings, "The Centrality of Education" (*from Starting at Home*)
Helena Holgersson-Shorter, "Helping the Homeless In School and Out"

Part Three: Home and Belonging

"What if I tell you your home is this planet of warworn children?"

(Rich, "In the Wake of Home")

VIII (displacement •~• longing for belonging) March 27

David Morley, "Belongings: Place, Space and Identity in a Mediated World"
Martin Heidegger, "Messkirch's Seventh Centennial"

IX (belonging •~• not-belonging) April 3

bell hooks, "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance"
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (last chapter)
Beloved (film by Jonathan Demme)
Adrienne Rich, "In the Wake of Home"
bell hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness"

X (hospitality •~• estrangement) April 17

Pleasantville (film by Gary Ross)
Rosemary Haughton, "Hospitality: Home as the Integration of Privacy and Community"
Salman Rushdie, "Imaginary Homelands"
Sara Ahmed, "Home and Away: Narratives of Migration and Estrangement"

XI (a planet of warworn children) April 24

Edith Wyschogrod, "Dwellers, Migrants, Nomads: Home in the Age of the Refugee"
The Weeping Meadow (film by Theo Angelopoulos)
Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (selections)

XII (the world house) May 1

Martha Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism"
Michael Ignatieff, "The Last Refuge"

XIII (wandering forth to welcome in) May 8

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (selections)
Judith Butler, "Universality in Culture"

XIV (dwelling with difference) May 15

Bonnie Honig, "Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home"