

# Six Pretty Good Buildings

HUMS 025

Fall 2021

Instructor: Michael Faciejew



**Class:** Tuesday/Thursday, 11:35 am – 12:50 pm

**Classroom Location:** TBD

**Lab:** Friday, 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm

**Lab Location:** HLH17 101

**Office hours:** Tuesday, 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm (online via Zoom)

**Instructor email:** michael.faciejew@yale.edu (emails will typically be answered within 48 hours, except on weekends)

**Course website:** <https://yale.instructure.com/courses/71523>

**Teaching Fellows:** TBD

## Course Description

Through the lens of “worldmaking,” this course provides an intensive introduction to studying the humanities at Yale. The course is anchored by six trans-historical spatial models for thinking about the history of ideas: the Capitol, the Library, the Ship, the Factory, the Museum, and the House. Covering a range of historical epochs and geographies—from Greek antiquity to contemporary Dakar—as well as genres and media—including philosophical treatises, the romance novel, films, and exhibition catalogues—these six building “types” provide a foundation for questions about how societies and individuals organize value systems. They also provide concrete, material frameworks for confronting theoretical proposals with the diversity of human experiences. Key texts include Homer’s *The Odyssey*, Song Yingxing’s *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature (Tiangong Kaiwu)*, and Hannah Arendt’s *The Human Condition*. Canonical texts from the traditional repertoire of the “Great Books” are constellated with nonwestern and contemporary perspectives that rethink the political and ethical imperatives of the humanities today. This course is part of the “Six Pretty Good Ideas” program.

In addition to the seminar structure, the course makes extensive use of Yale’s rich special collections and art galleries and devotes sustained attention to developing students’ academic writing skills. This is a 1.5 intensive writing course that fulfills one WR requirement. Friday sessions alternate between writing workshops and field trips to Yale collections.

## Required Texts

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007)

Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin, 1996)

Plato, *Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992)

\*\*\* All other texts will be available on Canvas. Please either print them or use them in a format that allows you to make annotations.

## Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Introductions: How Do We Build Up a World?

2 Sept (Th): Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces"  
bell hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness"  
Jorge Luis Borges, "The Library of Babel"

3 Sept (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit

### 1. The Capitol

*The Capitol is the symbolic architecture of political life, justice, and the discourses of freedom and democracy. How do we create collectivity and community? How are the values of a society enacted in governance? How are practices of exclusion and violence written into claims of equality? What is the place of dissent in democracy?*

Week 2: The Capitol, Part 1

7 Sept (T): Plato, *Republic* (Books 1, 2, and 4)

9 Sept (Th): **Short Paper #1 due**  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Books 1 and 2, Chapters 1-6 in Book 3)

10 Sept (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit

Week 3: The Capitol, Part 2

14 Sept (T): W.E.B Dubois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," "Of the Dawn of Freedom," "Of Booker T. Washington and Others" in *The Souls of Black Folk*

16 Sept (Th): Frantz Fanon, "On Violence" in *The Wretched of the Earth*

17 Sept (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit

## 2. The Library

*The Library is a site where knowledge is collected, structured, and disciplined. How do we know what we know? What is knowledge in the first place? What are the consequences of the organization of knowledge in culture and politics?*

### Week 4: The Library, Part 1

- 21 Sept (T): **Short Paper # 2 due**  
Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis* and *Novum Organum* (selections)
- 23 Sept (Th): René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*
- 24 Sept (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit

### Week 5: The Library, Part 2

- 28 Sept (T): Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, eds., *Encyclopédie*  
(Preliminary Discourse, Frontispiece and Explication, 10 plates/articles)  
\*\* Please revisit Jorge Luis Borges's "The Library of Babel" from the introductory session on Sept. 2\*\*
- 30 Sept (Th): Examine the tables of contents and graphic layouts:  
- Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*  
- Song Yingxing, *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature (Tiangong Kaiwu)*  
- Farah, *Encyclopedia of Nature*  
- Wikipedia
- 1 Oct (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit

### 3. The Ship

*The Ship is an architecture that stabilizes the sea and makes all kinds of human movement possible. A vessel of colonialism, trade, and travel, the Ship is also an architecture of power, trauma, and mourning. How have circulation and migration affected the development of human history? How do the ship and the sea operate as a poetic channels for travel, loss, and the unknown?*

#### Week 6: The Ship, Part 1

- 5 Oct (T): **Midterm Essay Draft due**  
Homer, *The Odyssey* (Books 1-6)
- 7 Oct (Th): Homer, *The Odyssey* (Books 7-13)
- 8 Oct (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit  
Peer Review for Midterm Essay Drafts

#### Week 7: The Ship, Part 2

- 12 Oct (T): Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the African Slave Trade Route* (selection)
- 14 Oct (Th): Mati Diop, "Atlantics" (2019)
- 15 Oct (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit

**\*\*\* Fall break 19 Oct – 24 Oct \*\*\***

## 4. The Factory

*The factory is a locus for debates concerning class, labor, the body, and political economy. How do money and capitalist production regulate society? How do spaces of work organize the human experience? Can labor lead to freedom?*

### Week 9: The Factory, Part 1

26 Oct (T): Karl Marx, "Chapter 1: The Commodity" in *Capital Volume One* and "Wage, Labor and Capital" in *Capital Volume Three*

28 Oct (Th): Hannah Arendt, "Labor" in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958): 79-135

29 Oct (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit

**\*\*\* Midterm: 29 Oct \*\*\***

### Week 10: The Factory, Part 2

2 Nov (T): **Short Essay #3 due**

Leslie Chang, *Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China* (selection)

Poems by Xu Lizhi (<https://libcom.org/blog/xulizhi-foxconn-suicide-poetry>)

4 Nov (Th): Jacques Tati, "Playtime" (1967)

5 Nov (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit

## 5. The Museum

*The Museum is a place where the world is represented—where aesthetic experience becomes knowledge. How does our perception of the world translate into art and culture? What are the politics of representation? What are the ethics of collecting? How do objects and images “speak”?*

### Week 11: The Museum, Part 1

- 9 Nov (T): Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (Chapters 1, 3, and 5)
- 11 Nov (Th): Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version”
- 12 Nov (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit  
Writing the Final Paper and Prospectus

### Week 12: The Museum, Part 2

- 16 Nov (T): **Short Essay #4 due**  
*Dickinson’s Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851* (1854)  
*Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations* (1851)  
Great Exhibition Virtual Tour: <https://www.royalparks.org.uk/whats-on/the-great-exhibition-virtual-tour>
- 18 Nov (Th): Timothy Mitchell, “Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order”  
Amy Lonetree, “Introduction: Native Americans and Museums” in *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*.
- 19 Nov (F): \*\*\*No Lab – Thanksgiving\*\*\*

**\*\*\* November Recess: 19 Nov – 28 Nov \*\*\***

## 6. The House

*The House is the architecture of subjectivity and interior life. It is also a site where the economy intersects with everyday practices, where the boundary between public and private is established. How does domesticity organize systems of gender, class, and family? How does property organize society? Are the house and the home also sites of trauma?*

### Week 13: The House, Part 1

- 30 Nov (T): **Final Paper Prospectus due**  
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
- 2 Dec (Th): Ousmene Sembène, "Black Girl" (1966)
- 3 Dec (F): Writing Workshop / Collections Visit

### Week 14: The House, Part 2

- 7 Dec (T): Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny"
- 9 Dec (Th): Bong Joon-ho, "Parasite" (2019)
- 10 Dec (F): **Draft of Final Paper due**  
Writing Workshop: Peer Review for Final Paper Drafts

### Finals: 17 Dec – 22 Dec

- 20 Dec (M): **Final Paper due**  
**Writing Portfolio and Self-Assessment due**



## 1. Course Requirements and Assignments

### A. Papers with required Drafts

You will write **two papers** for this course: one mid-term essay of **5-7 pages** and a final essay of **10-12 pages** in length. You will turn in required drafts for each essay and will go through a peer review process. See schedule for due dates.

### B. Four short assignments

You will write **four creative OR critical short papers** (500-750 words). More information to follow in class. See schedule for due dates.

### C. Writing Portfolio

You will keep a writing portfolio of ALL your written assignments and revisions over the course of the semester. The portfolio will be submitted at the end of the term with a self-reflection on your growth as a writer.

### D. Participation and Required Chat

To enable everyone to participate consistently throughout the semester, you will be required to post weekly responses to the class chat forum. More information to follow in class. These will count towards your participation grade.

### Requirements for written assignments

All written assignments must be typed in a regular 12-point font, 1.5 pt spacing, with 1-inch margins, proofread and carefully revised. Please be meticulous with your work and avoid sloppiness. You will be penalized for persistent technical errors (spelling mistakes, large font, short length, etc.) up to a third of a letter grade (i.e. a “B” instead of a “B+”).

## 2. Grading

Participation:	15%
Short Paper (4):	25%
Midterm Paper:	25%
Final Paper:	35%

For an explanation of grades, see “Grading Rubric” (handout and online)

### 3. Class Resources

The online site for this course will contain supplementary materials to help you enrich your understanding of the topic, its key philosophic questions, and major literary responses. Please check the site regularly.

### 4. Student Responsibilities

**Attendance:** This course will rely on lively interchange: attendance and full participation are required synchronously. This means having read the texts and watched the films carefully before arriving in class, having specific responses to them that you are willing to share, being sufficiently alert to join in a lively conversation, and being willing to participate in readings and exercises. More than 4 unexcused absences will result in a lower grade for the course. **After 6 absences, you will receive an F.** Active participation is a significant component of your grade. To make the discussion useful and enjoyable for everyone, you are expected to have done the reading and posted a comment on the online forum in a timely manner. If you have to miss a class, please email us at least 24 hours in advance to let us know.

**Lateness** is disruptive and disrespectful. Please make sure you get to class on time.

**Communication:** You are required to check your school email. From time to time, we will send emails to the class. Please ensure that we have the correct email for you.

**Meetings:** We have (virtual) office hours so that we can talk to you outside of class time. Please make an appointment with us at least once this semester.

### 5. Accessibility Needs

Your experience in this class is important, and we are committed to providing a welcoming and accessible learning environment. If you have registered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS), we are happy to develop a plan for moving forward that both meets your needs as a student and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course. If you have not yet registered with SAS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but are not limited to: mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact them at 203-432-2324 to make an appointment. General information for students can be found on the Student Information page of the SAS website.

## **6. Miscellaneous Policies**

### A. Extensions and Late Work

We'd like to get comments back to you as soon as possible but can only do this if we receive your work promptly. Please email us in case of any extenuating circumstances that prevent you from finishing an assignment on time. Do not email us for an extension the night before unless you have an officially sanctioned excuse or a very creative explanation. A good paper takes time and forethought, so please pace yourself as you work through the assignments. Late assignments will be penalized by a third of a letter grade per day (one day late=highest possible grade of A-; two days late=B+, etc.).

### B. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Yale considers plagiarism, or academic dishonesty of any kind, a serious offense. Plagiarism is disrespectful not only to your source, but to your own intellectual integrity. Forms of plagiarism include submitting papers, or portions of papers, written by other people as your own, as well as presenting someone else's ideas as your own without acknowledging the source. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty and avoiding it. We encourage you to review the following resources so that you understand what exactly constitutes plagiarism – when in doubt, or if you have questions, don't hesitate to speak with a course instructor:

<http://yalecollege.yale.edu/content/cheating-plagiarism-and-documentation>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

<http://hnn.us/articles/514.html>

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