

MEDUSA

ANTHROPOLOGY GRADUATE
STUDENT UNION

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WELCOME TO THE AGSU SECOND
2011/12 MEDUSA CONFERENCE
(SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY,
LINGUISTICS AND ARCHAEOLOGY)

Hosted by Cadell Last and Amber Walker-Bolton

Today's Presenters (in order of presentation)

Steven Dorland

Mark Dolynskij

Walter Callaghan

Tori Sheldon

AGENDA

The second Medusa Conference of the 2011/12 academic year is focused on topics in socio-cultural anthropology, linguistics and archaeology. The presentations cover issues related to understanding Iroquoian assemblages to the role of conspiracy theories in the JFK Assassination.



What is in the Inside is what Counts: a stylistic analysis of Middle-Iroquoian ceramic assemblages in southern Ontario. By Steven Dorland



This research project will discuss preliminary results of stylistic analyses of Antrex and Holly ceramic assemblages, two Middle Iroquoian sites in southern Ontario from the 13th and 14th century A.D. It was discovered that stylistic elements found on the interior of pots correlated with the stylistic elements found on the neck of the pot 30% percent of the time for the Antrex assemblage and 9% of the time for the Holly assemblage. Although this relation was not as prominent for the Holly assemblage, there was a relatively high occurrence in accordance with the Antrex assemblage. The results demonstrate that the classification methods that are used with pottery analysis need to be restructured to integrate the relational aspect of decorative elements. This stylistic decision does not represent an act of randomness, but rather some form of intentional behaviour that was mainly associated with certain stylistic motifs found on the rim and neck of pottery vessels. If this relation is not identified during analysis, variation that may help to understand the social organization of potting communities in Iroquoian villages may be missed. The three classificatory methods that are used in a southern Ontario context, typologies, single attribute and multi-attribute, each contribute and constrain our understanding of the archaeological past temporally and materially. If we are to better understand how style and pottery production is inter-related with social, political, and economic organizations of pre-contact southern Ontario groups, the relation of decorative elements on the interior and exterior of pottery vessels needs to be considered a point of focus.

Protecting Built Heritage in Montreal and Toronto by Mark Dolynskij

The presentation provides an introductory examination of different strategies for protecting built heritage in both Montreal (QC) and Toronto (ON), what those strategies demonstrate in civic, provincial, and national identity formation, as well as where the foundational impetus for

such current movements rests. In 2005, Montreal and Toronto both developed municipal legislation regarding the protection of archaeological and historical elements of their cities in response to continuing urban development and growth. The Montreal Master Plan (2005) continues social trends which elaborate upon a pre-existing urban identity, demonstrating a continued focus on the notion of "patrimoine", a provincial incentive with roots in the 1900s. Toronto's Archaeological Master Plan (2005), by contrast, was created in direct response to changes in the Ontario Heritage Act (2005), imposing upon municipal policy makers the need to develop a standard of archaeological and architectural heritage practice, where little existed before. These two different forms of legislation create divergent views of current heritage practice and by extension civic, provincial, and nationalistic identities. By using two different case studies to illuminate the contrarian approaches, both Montreal's Vieux Port and Toronto's Distillery District demonstrate the effects of legislation, urban planning, and identity formation within the contemporary urban context of Canada. By using two different case studies to illuminate the contrarian approaches, both Montreal's Vieux Port and Toronto's Distillery District demonstrate the effects of legislation, urban planning, and identity formation within the contemporary urban context of Canada.



One Veteran: The Rise of Grass-Roots Veterans Organizations in Canada By Walter Callaghan



The New Veterans Charter (NVC) was brought into force in April 2006, with little consultation from veteran's organizations or debate in Canada's parliament, with the stated intent of making the suite of benefits provided to disabled soldiers and veterans more modern and easier to access. The "We Support the Troops/Veterans" rhetoric put forth by members of nearly all political parties has used data provided from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) that claims to show how veterans are better off under the NVC. Despite these continued claims from Veterans Affairs, and claims from the Royal Canadian Legion that they are actively representing the best interests of all veterans, there has been a remarkable growth of grass-roots organizations of

veterans voicing their concerns and experiences to the contrary. This presentation will explore the events and reasons that led to the rise and growth of these organizations, the different types and purposes of these organizations, the remarkable multi-generational demographics of the participants of these organizations, and the resulting conflict between these new organizations and the Royal Canadian Legion.

The Cultural Role of Conspiratorial Thinking in the JFK Assassination: Power and the Conspiracy Theory Label by Tori Sheldon

My presentation will begin with an analysis of how, rather than being mere collective "paranoid delusions", conspiracy theories regarding the 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy had sense-making value at the time. Many cogent theories pointed to genuine socio-political issues involving the relationship between the American Government, its citizens, and the globalizing world. I will explore how JFK conspiracy theories invoking Soviet and Cuban communism, organized crime, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) valuably commented on political power tensions involving the often-opaque Government. Through such theorizing, the public created alternative epistemologies, making sense of genuine socio-political issues. In order to account for the modern rise in belief that the assassination was a true conspiracy, I will look into its development as a cultural industry, its reinterpretation into a historical narrative with continuity into present concerns, and the role of the Internet for proliferating alternative epistemologies. I will then respond to the claim that the "conspiracy theory" label is a tool for oppression in order to push subaltern theories that allege an official conspiracy to the margins. Modern conspiracies, including 911 theories, often strategically create parallels and continuity with the largely believed JFK narrative in order to claim truth. Thus, rather than solely being a label of oppression, the notion of "conspiracy" can be harnessed by the marginalized in order to legitimate the analysis of the truth-value of their claims. This points to the rising likelihood that, as modern controversies become prominent cultural focuses, the JFK assassination will never be "solved".

