

ENVS 2200
FOUNDATIONS OF URBAN AND REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Prof. Yasir Hameed – Fall 2020

Due on October 15, 2020

Assignment #1 (10% of total grade)

Main Purpose: comparative, critical, and annotated observation

Answer the following questions in a brief paper

1. Focusing on the hidden histories of aboriginal settlement in the Toronto area, the virtual ‘Great Indian Bus Tour’ will expose you to a cross-section of central Toronto: the various residential, industrial, commercial, transportation and leisure spaces built from the middle of the 19th century to now. **How are these various ‘modern’ urban forms different from pre-colonial aboriginal settlement? How do these modern forms ‘hide’ or ‘reveal’ aboriginal history from us?** For these purposes, use the (1) notes you take during the virtual tour, (2) the lecture notes from week 2, 3 and 4 (3) the required texts for the weeks of September 24 (Freeman, Johnson) and (optional) the recommended texts of the same week.

Note: Physical observation is a difficult research method and doing it virtually makes it more complicated. While you are not required at this point to consult literatures about research methods, it is important to keep in mind that physical appearances are not self-explanatory. The meaning of physical structures is not self-evident even though we are socialized to associate images of physical forms with certain social practices and norms, positive or negative (for example: in our North American society, worn-down high rise buildings conjure up different images of social life than a tree-shaded single-family house, but these images may be deceptive). To observe **critically** is to develop an awareness of such societal preconceptions about the relationship between physical landscapes and built forms, on the one hand, and social life, on the other. This is particularly important for this assignment, which deals with physical landscapes that are bound up with the key colonial aspect of Canadian history: the relationship between European settlers and indigenous peoples.

One way to avoid premature judgment is to stick to careful and detailed descriptions of physical forms and landscape patterns.

A second way of developing an awareness of possible cultural baggage in physical observation is to consult additional sources. For this assignment, it will be essential to complement your observations with carefully chosen references from the mandatory readings for the class of September 24 and the lecture notes. **Make sure to reference these sources properly, using APA style guidelines.**

This assignment should be 5-6 pages (1000-1500 words) in length.