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Communication and Culture (COM 320) City as Classroom Project Report

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Cultural Experience Package

Using the City and Region as an Instructional Resource



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Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide students with the theoretical tools necessary to understand the reciprocal link between communication and culture: how communication practices create, reflect, and maintain cultures, as well as how culture influences communication practices. Focus will be on intercultural, cross-cultural, and interethnic communication.

Project Description

As part of a larger project, students selected a microculture within the city to explore. After attending, students wrote a reflection on the experience, and then wrote a larger summative paper on numerous cultural experiences and synthesized the content from the course with the experiences.

Outcomes

The microcultures visited included:

- Homeless shelter—3 students
- Religious service other than their own (Jewish, Muslim, Quaker, etc.)—12 students
- Homosexual parade and/or restaurant/store—5 students
- Meeting for those who are homeless—1 student
- “Little India”—1 student
- Chinatown—1 student

Student Feedback/Comments

“I used to think that intercultural communication was only communicating with a culture that existed far away, like the Middle East or Europe. In reality, intercultural communication happens on a daily basis, here in Philadelphia.”

“Yes I learned about the subculture that is in our urban communities in Philadelphia; but I learned more about the culture I was brought up in. I grew up in a house that was sheltered, sometimes racist, and way too safe to prepare me for the real world.”

“I can honestly say that this part of my cultural experiences package has caused the most growth in my personal life because it has changed my outlook on an entire group of people.”