

Onondaga Belt of Peace (from syracuse.com)



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Spaces of Alterity: The Long House

“Haudenosaunee is an ancient name that means ‘people of the long house’. People of the long house, in this term, when we talk about the word, means a group of people, and a philosophy, and a way of life, and customs that stretch over hundreds and hundreds of miles, and that’s our Long House, Haudenosaunee...”

Guhnawiyoshtha’ – Sidney Calfrobe, Deer Clan, in Haudenosaunee or Iroquois, video by the New York State Museum.

As the climate crisis deepens, we realize solutions will only be effective if associated to structural change: we will need to go beyond the surface to question the socio-spatial ecosystems underlying the environmental issues we need to address.

The way we envision property, individual rights, nature, time, space, are all interrelated into our conception of how “reality” should be, or what Charles Taylor has referred to as our *imaginary*. It shapes what we are, how we think and act. Under this perspective, if we were able to distance ourselves from what is inherently “right”, we would be able to question underlying systems and free ourselves to reimagine them. This seminar is an invitation to research, map and discuss the Finger Lakes region under this optics.

In analyzing experiments and built knowledge that represent alternative social-spatial logics, we will seek to reinterpret the chronological and geographical region. We will discuss ideas, events and projects that have subverted underlying aspects of our imaginary to propose new constructs, from alternative definitions of ownership to traditional farming knowledge and circular economies. We will specially look into the indigenous presence in the region and how this *other imaginary* could help us envision how we see and represent the territory.

Classes will be structured around lectures, readings and interaction with guest speakers. We will build-up a common information platform fed by “micro research assignments” along the semester. An individual final assignment will be due at the end of classes in the form of a storymap, addressing alternative narratives and representation techniques derived from our common journey.

* This seminar will help lay the foundation for my spring option studio. Students interested in balloting for a thematically related spring option studio are encouraged to enroll.

