

Dislocation: A symposium on the ever-shifting concepts of place, belonging, and identity

The topic of 'dislocation,' made so famous through Edward Said's work on cultural displacement and issues of diaspora, has new currency and relevance with recent wars, revolutions, and financial crises. While these new and current events are not the exclusive focus of the symposium, they provide a vital context for the exploration of the larger theme of dislocation. For this symposium, we are interested in how and why objects, beliefs, people and animals, boundaries—both real and imagined—are physically and/or conceptually dislocated. Who and what are the agents and patients of these displacement processes and what are the ramifications of these practices? What new meanings, ideologies, and beliefs are generated? During five meetings throughout the term, we will attempt to answer these questions by exploring themes including exile and diaspora, boundaries and the transgressions of boundaries, nationalism and national identity, environmental shifts, and finally the recreating and re-envisioning of location. Short readings to accompany each session will be announced.

Wednesday, January 25: 12:20 to 1:15 (Hillel House, seminar room)

Does Globalization Locate or Dislocate the Nation? Jonathan Eastwood (Sociology)

- Considers the definition of national identity, how national identity relates to the state, and examines the relationship between globalization and national identity over the long haul.

Wednesday, February 15: 12:20 to 1:15 (Hillel House, multi-purpose room)

Diaspora, Identity and Media – Indira Somani (Journalism)

- An analysis of how Asian Indians maintain their cultural and ethnic identity through satellite television after relocating to the United States.

Wednesday, March 7: 12:20 to 1:15 (Hillel House, multi-purpose room)

The European Starling as an American Citizen -- Paul Cabe (Biology)

- Discusses introduced species in general by highlighting the European Starling; examines the various ways that biologists think about species distributions, anthropogenic species introductions, and invasive species.

Wednesday, March 21: 12:20 to 1:15 (Hillel House, seminar room)

Transgression -- Melissa Kerin (Art History) & Andrea Lepage (Art History)

- Addresses the transgression of political and religious boundaries by examining two diverse case studies of artistic production (in colonial Ecuador and contemporary Tibet).

Wednesday, April 4: 12:20 to 1:15 (Hillel House, seminar room)

Reimagining Location – Lesley Wheeler (English)

- Moves us away from the notion of loss and disenchantment to consider renewal and recreation. Examines how contemporary poets engage with place, particularly how they re-envision damaged or endangered locations.

All sessions will be held in the Hillel House at 12:20pm and will include lunch. Try to arrive at noon or earlier to allow time to pick up lunch at the Hillel House E Café (mention the College Symposium). Please contact Andrea Lepage for additional details and to sign up for the Symposium (lepagea@wlu.edu or x8305).