

Call for Papers

Culture, policy, urban space and the city

A graduate mini-conference presented by
Faculty of Information and Media Studies

*with support from the Public Humanities project, the Rogers Chair for Studies in Journalism and
New Media Technology, and the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism*

UCC 224A, 1:30-4:30 PM, March 21st, 2012

In recent decades, culture has become one of the main objects of interest and resources for policy makers. With the “creative city” movement becoming part of the dominant paradigm in urban planning, new local development strategies are increasingly focusing, for example, on fostering cultural institutions, heritage regeneration, tourism, and so-called “creative industries.” In a competitive world, city councils around the country try to brand their municipality and promote its image in order to bring in new investments and encourage new qualified workers to move in and become stakeholders. On the other hand, while government expenditures on culture grow at a slow but constant pace, the incomes of artists and cultural workers remain lower than national averages for similarly educated and experienced white-collar workers.

At the same time, cultural policy also orients social development in urban space. Regional senses of “identity” and “belonging” are often related to cultural policy in many ways, going from the construction of local identity with the arts and heritage, through diverse educational programs using cultural institutions – sometimes with the aim of changing the practices of some marginalized parts of the city’s population.

The rise of the global division of labour has impelled cities to attribute greater importance to creativity and the knowledge-based economy in fostering the implementation of R&D centres, information technologies businesses and institutions for higher education. For example, the University of Western Ontario has been recently invited to prepare a business plan (due upcoming March) for the creation of a new campus in downtown London. This, like other instances of urban regeneration, could be regarded as different articulation of culture, spatiality and prosperity that may perhaps has some effects at the way we relate to the city.

UWO graduate students from all disciplines are invited to participate in this mini-conference, part of a four-part series of events designed to explore issues of culture and the city in the contemporary moment. Please submit your abstract of maximum 300 words by February 6th 2012 to culturalpolicy@hotmail.ca.