

Macalester College

Fall 2008

History 112-01: The Global in the Local: Minnesota History in World History

MWF 9:40-10:40AM

Old Main 002

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Students are typically drawn to Macalester by two seemingly contradictory aspects of the college; 1) our urban setting; 2) our commitment to internationalism. In this course we will explore how these curricular and co-curricular features are not antithetical but are actually complementary. Thinking globally and acting locally is more than a slogan; it is an inescapable historical experience. To this end, we will use Minnesota, particularly the Twin Cities, as a lens through which to analyze and understand global historical processes, and we will enrich our classroom by extending into the metropolitan area. We will not only read scholarly books and articles, but we will also make use of local sites, neighborhoods, and organizations as resources. Our work throughout the course will be informed by Michel-Rolph Trouillot challenging little book, *SILENCING THE PAST*. In other words, we will engage the connections between the global and the local within a critical historical framework, asking not only “what happened?” and “what did it mean?” but also “how do we know what we know?” We will seek out and listen to the silences in the historical narrative as well as the dominant stories, and we will ask how these silences have been produced.

As a first year course, there is no expectation that you have prior knowledge of Minnesota history, U.S. history, or the practice of history as a discipline. I will be trying to provide context as often as possible, and I will be eager to respond to your requests for more background, from historical content to historical methodology. It is important to the success of this course that you express your needs for more context and content whenever you feel them. That is, you must not silence yourselves.

Obviously, an important goal of this course is not only to introduce you to the discipline of history, to Minnesota history and U.S. history, and to the scholarly work expected of you at Macalester, but also to introduce you to the Twin Cities. I want you to come away from this course with self-confidence about moving beyond the boundaries of the campus and with some familiarity with the neighborhoods, resources, local institutions, and transportation networks of St. Paul and Minneapolis. You will be sharing living space not only with each other, but also with students in Professor Cremer’s section of “The Global in the Local.” While their historical focus will be quite