



Open
College
of the Arts

Formative feedback

Normally to be written by the student, and endorsed by the tutor with **additions/ amendments in red.**

Student name	Andrew Fitzgibbon	Student number	513879
Unit	PH3: Contextual Studies	Assignment number	1
Type of tutorial	(eg <u>video/audio/written</u>)		

Key points

Persevere with the current theme to my BoW and broaden it to consider related aspects beyond the length of canal that has been my focus to date. This might include: class divides around a contested space; 'heritage culture'; the transformation of a landscape originally defined by industry to a landscape of leisure.

Yes. The material you've considered re semiotics certainly has its uses, but I think the broad aim for the time being should be a close critical examination of the various ways that canals can be made sense of as distinct socio-cultural and 'political' spaces/ places. Equally, look at the 'cultural politics' of canals and how they are contested spaces: the CRT is a key stakeholder in this regard, one that's attempting to 'fix' certain meanings and encourage/ proscribe certain uses. But the key point is that canals are given over to lots of different uses by contrasting groups. I think it'd be worth looking into this and getting a sense of how the CRT positions itself. You've obviously already started doing this with some of your visual research, so see where this takes you and give some thought to 'opposition' to the CRT's mandate. This, as I'm sure you'll find out with further research, is a highly charged 'political' area!

Look behind the obvious - how the canal has become something else.

Definitely. By one reading, the CRT sums up how canals have undergone a slow and gradual process of gentrification: from working space to leisure space, although they are still sites of work for certain stakeholders.

Summary of tutorial discussion

- In the introductory paragraph, unpack the basic idea and draw focus onto the main theme (in this case, the canal). *Yes. You could have been a bit more direct in this regard.*
- Regarding the connotation of canals, consider the 'tourist gaze'. I'd been trying to avoid revisiting this, but realise that it perhaps inescapable in the context I'm now working. *Tourism and leisure seem to be the key uses of canals in the 21st century, so this is definitely something to look at more carefully.*
- As well as Alec Soth (as inspiration), consider the work of Richard Mishrach (Petrochem America) and similar. Canals as an industrial artefact that are subsumed in the tourist gaze and the urban-pastoral? *Like it! Both of these projects take bodies of water as their focal point, so also use this as a way to direct future research, or at least one aspect of it.*
- Consider visiting the canal at different hours and observe how its use changes. I'd thought about this and am now encouraged to take this aspect on (particularly as I currently have less available time during daytime hours!) *Yep. Canals are clearly places for subcultural activities - eg, the preponderance of graffiti - that will often take place under cover of darkness.*
- Research the Canal and River Trust and its organisational aims and objectives / what observers have to say about it in journal articles. Ultimately consider meeting the CRT and interviewing them. What is relationship to broader social interests and concerns – housing crisis, policing the canal, restriction of permanent moorings. *Yes. Whether or not this material ends up in the final draft is less important at this stage than these being strategies that help you to widen your research and narrow your focus.*
- Consider the various uses of canals internationally and the nuances of how they are used. Look at book 'geography of heritage'. *Yes. Think this one will be pretty useful. It seems that canals are spaces whose contemporary usage depends on a certain 'heritaging' of history. This book is essential stuff in this respect.*
- See if there new periphery industries necessary to sustain the tourist industry (eg the boat yards). *They're not completely finished as working spaces- the leisure activities that canals feature still require some sort of infrastructural 'base'.*

Any other notes

This is work with plenty of potential, but I can understand your slight frustrations and loss of enthusiasm after A1, which is a little on the prescriptive side! In essence, at this point you should focus on unpacking and making sense of canals as distinct physical spaces that provide sites for an array of cultural practices. With this, I'm confident that you'll have more than enough to go on.

Re literature, also take a look at Rob Shields' Places on the Margin: an alternative geography of modernity. It's challenging stuff but should give you plenty to think about.

Tutor name	Andrew Conroy
Date	22/7/19
Next assignment due	Tutorial on Tues Sept 3rd at 11am

Assessment Criteria

Demonstration of subject based knowledge and understanding

Demonstration of critical and evaluation skills

Demonstration of research skills

Communication