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## Oral History Project Captures Memories of a Changing Community

Students in Professor Laura Barraclough's Fall 2007 "Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods" class (a core course in the UCE curriculum) learned about oral history interviewing in the best possible way: through hands-on experience. They teamed up with Esperanza Community Housing Corporation to interview longtime residents of the Figueroa Corridor in downtown Los Angeles. Their goal? To learn how existing residents interpret the ongoing changes in downtown, such as the recent construction of the Nokia Theater and LA Live project,

tenant displacement, and the construction of loft condominiums. The students and Esperanza were particularly keen to discover how residents' sense of community, sense of place, and access to resources are being affected by downtown redevelopment and gentrification.

The students first participated in an oral history workshop led by Dr. Sharon Sekhon, Director of the Studio for Southern California History and an adjunct faculty member at AULA. Next, they visited Esperanza's offices and learned from Executive Director Nancy Ibrahim

about the changes happening in the neighborhood and the difficulties facing residents and her organization. Students then returned to class and worked together to generate interview questions, plan their interviewing strategy, and practice using the recording equipment. During the last few weeks of class, they worked in teams to interview a total of seven residents in both English and Spanish.

Though they were often nervous at first, many students were deeply moved by the personal connections

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## Students Participate in "No Borders Camp"

By Morgan Strauss

Last November, BA students Amanda Garces and Morgan Strauss attended the first US/Mexico No-Borders Camp in Calexico, CA and Mexicali, Mexico. From No More Deaths in the southern desert regions of Arizona, to the

southern Californian group Border Angels, along with various anarchist and socialist collectives from around the greater Southwest area, the camp served as an invaluable forum for the conception and fertilization of groups and networks concerned with migrant culture and freedom

of mobility. Both students received academic credit for their participation in the camp through the Urban Community and Environment concentration. Prior to the camp, they read interdisciplinary scholarship on the human and ecological issues at stake in contemporary

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# AULA Internships: Hands-on classrooms all over the city!

By Rosa Garza-Mourino M.A.

The support of multiple learning formats geared towards adult students is one of the factors that make Antioch University stand out among other universities. Just ask any AULA professor about the best part of teaching here and you will hear a common response: "the experiential caliber our adult students bring into the classroom."

B.A. Internships honor adult students by linking classroom and workplace. The program stresses an interdisciplinary perspective while combining rigorous academic standards and hands-on learning. It offers students a precious opportunity to expand their learning experiences, apply a range of new skills, play an instrumental role for a community organization, become an active part of the city of Los Angeles, and reflect academically about the whole process.

## "I for Internship" stands for ...

**Initiative:** Pick an internship site, schedule a conversation with its staff, talk to your advisor, get testimonials from Interns who have been at the same site, be on top of your paperwork and enrollment process.

**Innovation/Imagination:** Come up with an internship proposal with a brand-new angle to what is expected from you, offer fresh perspectives to your Site Supervisor and fellow site staff; record your thoughts and findings in your journal.

**Improvement:** Set internship goals that will challenge and push you to refine knowledge and skills you may already have.

**Integrity:** Remember that all the values, rules and policies we support at AULA apply at your site. We stand for proper, respectful and professional relationships, drug-free environments, and zero plagiarism.

**Independence:** Write the first draft of your learning objectives; seek to comply with all assigned schedules, deadlines and work load as though you were your own zealous supervisor.

**Intelligence:** Make it a habit to ask your Site Supervisor and AULA faculty questions about the historical and theoretical background and meaning of the tasks you are undertaking. Ask about what is embedded in what you are asked to do at a more reflective, academic level, and whether there are larger methods, theories and frameworks to explain the rationale of what you do. Develop a broader, more complex view of your site.

So what do you get as an Intern?

Academic credit, up to 4 units per quarter

State-of-the-art academic support for experiential learning

A range of sites to choose among the most progressive community organizations in Los Angeles

The possibility to work individually or in collaborative teams

Internship sites that match your academic concentration

One-on-one guidance through every step of the process

A rigorous evaluation model so future employers and/or graduate programs will clearly discern the scope of your abilities

For information about internship opportunities please contact Rosa Garza-Mourino M.A. at:  
[Rosa\\_Garza-Mourino@antiochla.edu](mailto:Rosa_Garza-Mourino@antiochla.edu)

# Voluntary Simplicity and Me

Simple living (or voluntary simplicity) is a lifestyle in which individuals consciously choose to minimize the 'more-is-better' pursuit of wealth and consumption. Adherents choose simple living for a variety of reasons, including spirituality, health, increase in 'quality time' for family and friends, stress reduction, conservation, social justice or anti-consumerism, while others choose to live more simply for reasons of personal taste or personal economy. Simple living as a concept is distinguished from those living in forced poverty, as it is a voluntary lifestyle choice.

A group of Antioch faculty, students, and staff have been pursuing voluntary simplicity together, offering mutual support and guidance. Below, B.A. student Leah Hanes shares her experiences with voluntary simplicity, which she has embraced for the past nine months.

In America, shopping is how we spend a great deal of our free time. James Rouse, an architect who has designed more than 60 malls in the U.S., once said that in his malls, the business people are the new clergy. "The shopping mall, then, was to be the cathedral in this new religion, the sacred space for the 'universal' faith with a distinct spirit" (Rouse). A new faith: Consumerism.

My introduction to Voluntary Simplicity came just after a shopping spree with my daughter in LA's fashion district. I brought home a few pairs of little summer shoes and within a day I had to move them outdoors because they smelled toxic. If I felt that way about having them in the house, imagine what the person who makes them in the factory experiences.

Ethical consumers, as they are also called, are a growing community. As consumerism spreads, environmental issues grow. As developed nations (and by developed, I mostly mean the U.S.) demand more and

cheaper products, "third world" countries hungry for industry and cash flow offer their labor at wages and conditions that we would declare intolerable. The workers in those factories have fewer options. Their health and mortality rates suffer because of toxic working conditions and poor nutrition—all so that we can buy our adorable summer shoes.

It can be overwhelming for people in our consumer culture to begin to consider another option: not shopping. I understand. I started by asking myself, each time I consider a purchase, do I need this? In the last nine months I have rarely said yes to that question. I have heard the Wal-Mart story. We can't afford that bargain.

We are voting with our disposable income. Unfortunately, instead of Fair Trade, to date that vote is an uninformed vote in favor of abusive work environments, child labor and devastating effects on our global eco-system. We know it goes on but too often we think in terms of "them" and "us." Climate change affects everyone.

Do you see the draw to 'voluntary simplicity'? For me to have Wal-Mart ... someone else, my counterpart in another part of the world—what is he or she experiencing?

Millions of dollars are spent every day in an effort to make us buy. Our children are no longer the future leaders of the free world, they are a target market with a disposable income. In a recent movie by Disney a young child tells the princess she has something better than a fairy god-mother, she has a credit card. Thanks Disney.

Voluntary Simplicity is both the call of our ancestors and the cry of future generations.

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Contact Leah at [leah\\_hanes@antiochla.edu](mailto:leah_hanes@antiochla.edu) for more information or to join the movement!

## Black and Brown Unity Group Forming Now!

A student-led initiative emerging from Professor Ron Wilkins' recent course, "Black and Brown Peoples: History of Conflict and Cooperation."

First meeting:

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

6:00 p.m.

Contact Amanda Garces at [agcolumbia@gmail.com](mailto:agcolumbia@gmail.com) for more information!

# Notes on Urban Ecology

from a graduating UCE Student, Zandra Platzek

**Save the Date!**

**Howard Zinn's critically acclaimed play *Marx in SoHo* will be staged at AULA on Thursday, April 17th!**

**Check [www.antiochla.edu](http://www.antiochla.edu) or call (310) 578-1080 ext. 229 for more information**

*"We were both making history and did not know it."*

Student  
Doria Ragland

Happy New Year, UCE supporters! This winter quarter brings both endings and beginnings for me. Professionally, my three-year Antioch Internship with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) ended in December. Although my focus right now is on my last quarter here at Antioch, I miss all of the wonderful people I worked with at the MRCA. For me, being in Franklin Canyon Park is an experience unlike any other. The park itself is actually the center of Los Angeles and even has a monument to let you know you are in the exact center of the city.

Franklin Canyon Park has many park visitors during the school year. Many of them are young children seeing nature

in Los Angeles for the first time. Busloads of children arrive in the Upper Canyon parking lot and, from the nature center above, you can hear the excited children anticipating their day in the park. The children go on guided walks with trained interpretive guides who help them apply what they see to their daily lives and routines. A day in the park can influence children to appreciate nature in Los Angeles and how precious our natural resources are.

Although my internship with the MRCA is officially finished, I still am a trained volunteer and interpretive guide and can work in any of the parks in many types of volunteer positions. This will come in handy after graduation, when I start to feel the tug of the

Santa Monica Mountains and the wish to be in the green and the peaceful again.

I want to thank all of the wonderful instructors and supporters of the Urban Community and Environment concentration who have worked with me and helped foster this incredible love and reverence for nature in Los Angeles (you know who you are!). It has influenced my decision to apply to the Urban Planning Graduate Program at the UCLA School of Public Policy. The degree has a concentration in sustainability and urban ecology. I've enjoyed my time at Antioch and, with all of your help, I have created a path for myself I can be proud to follow.

Thank you!  
Zandra Platzek  
Graduating class of 2008

## Oral History Project, *cont'd from p. 1*

they developed with interviewees. Students chose interviewees, out of a list of referrals provided by Esperanza CHC and Pastor Brian Ecklund of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, because of shared experiences. Reflecting on how her interviewee's stories mirrored her own family's experiences with racism and civil rights movements in South Los Angeles during the 1960s, for example, student Doria Ragland remarked, "In the mid sixties, our families

moved [to L.A.] for many of the same reasons: job opportunities and less racism ... We were both making history and did not know it." Another student, Amanda Garces, works in immigrant rights in Los Angeles. She chose to interview two Latina neighborhood activists, who inspired her with their commitments to their communities. Garces noted that "these stories are more important than statistics, because one day we will no longer see what existed, and

our job is to preserve those memories so that we do not forget."

The interview recordings and transcripts will be shared by AULA and Esperanza CHC. This project's success is largely due to the gracious support of Nancy Ibrahim and the Esperanza CHC staff, Pastor Brian Ecklund of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, and Dr. Sharon Sekhon of the Studio for Southern California History.

# No Borders Camp, cont'd from p. 1

debates about immigration and border enforcement.

The participants of the camp united around a collective belief that crossing borders is a very basic human right—not unlike eating—that lobbyists and policy makers confuse under banners of economic and physical security. For five days they camped on both sides of the tall steel border fence in an effort to bring new ideas to the immigration debate. The camp was completely self-enclosed, with no media coverage other than regional

indy-media groups. In order to raise awareness on a variety of border related issues the group staged daily actions, all peaceful, and all using principles of passive de-escalation. The autonomous nature of the camp promoted workshops throughout each day of the camp.

In the back of many participants' minds was and is the utopian idea of a world without borders. More in the forefront, however, was the immediate concern generated by the looming 700- mile expansion of the physical border.

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Amanda and Morgan, along with friend and fellow compa Andrew Burrridge, presented a report back to the Antioch community. Burrridge discussed the history and development of the international No-Borders movement and screened a short documentary film produced by Lars Howlett, another camp participant. All three discussed how the experience had shifted their perspectives on immigration policy, the border wall, and the range of social movements emerging in protest.

## Snapshots from the No Borders Camp 2007



Top left: Arriving at the camp.  
 Top right: The camp at night, with floodlights.  
 Left: De-escalating confrontations with the Border Patrol.

All photos by Morgan Strauss, used with permission



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Concentration in Urban Community and Environment:  
Developing a New Way to Understand the Urban  
Dynamic

Urban Community and Environment (UCE) Students in the Urban Community and Environment concentration, the equivalent of a major within the B.A. degree completion program, study the urban setting from an interdisciplinary perspective that emphasizes the dynamic interplay between the arts, histories, systems, environment, and peoples of the city. The unique dynamics of Los Angeles become our lens to understand and analyze a broad range of urban communities, past and present, from a global perspective. Through engagement with community organizations working in urban arts, services, and economic and environmental justice, students develop theoretical and practical tools for creating a more equitable and livable region.



# Check out our spring courses!

The spring quarter begins Monday, April 7, and ends Saturday, June 14. Applications are still being accepted!

Ten-week, three-unit courses:

Social Theory of the City  
Identity, Community, and Social Change  
Race and Racism  
Environmental History of Los Angeles  
Urban Environmental Crisis & Ethics  
Action Research for Economic Justice

One-day, one-unit workshops:

Queer History of Los Angeles  
The Cultural Shades of Downtown Los Angeles  
Wetlands Ecology

Featured Internships:

Popular Education Institute of Southern CA (IDEPSCA)  
Unusual Suspects Theater Company