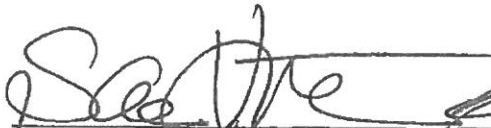


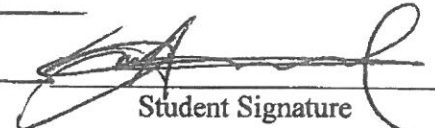
Cross-Cultural Ethics & Social Justice

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Class of 2016

Advisor: Sawa Kurotani

Graduation Contract
Johnston Center for Integrative Studies
University of Redlands


Advisor Signature


Student Signature

I came to the University of Redlands with a reputation that preceded myself. Not one based on *my* character, but upon a man I never met. It was comforting in the beginning, being welcomed into a new space like I was meant to be here, like I should inherently belong here because so many of my family members before me had too. I have aunts and uncles who came as students, my dad studied here for a year and a half; my great-grandfather, George Armacost, was the president for twenty-five years. But after the buzz about me fizzled out within the first month, I was left with this looming feeling that, 1) now I was expected to prove *my* worth and 2) the legacy bubble doesn't actually mean anything – I was still doing this on my own, just like everybody else. I was left with this daunting expectation – maybe imagined, maybe legitimate – that I had big shoes to fill.

I struggled with this. I floundered through my freshman year, excited to have access to so many fields of study but mostly terrified that none my interests would ever align to become anything 1) profitable, 2) impressive, or 3) fulfilling. I come from a family of doctors, business men and women, professors, diplomats, teachers, pastors, university presidents, professional musicians, bank CEOs, entrepreneurs. And here I was, utterly fascinated by my “Intro to Sociology” class. But then I found Johnston. Not only did I find Johnston but I found out that my great-grandfather, the man I had always understood to have been solely responsible for the inception of Johnston, actually played a much different role than what I'd been told. It turned out George's vision for the new school he and his administration were in the works of developing was actually meant to be a school for International Business studies. How Johnston's founding faculty managed to win that war and establish the eccentric and alternative, academic living and learning community is a whole story in itself, what I mainly got out of it was that I, Samantha Armacost, was a rebel. Here I was, joining the project that had slipped through my great-

grandfather's fingers and that felt good. It was subtly defiant of me. It was my chance to give my name new meaning. I got to make my name mine. And for a moment, that was thrilling and ironic and liberating. But then it dawned on me that I only felt "special" in this new community because, again, of my name. I had yet to do anything to make it count for something and the next three years would have to be my greatest effort to do just that.

I joined the Johnston Center fresh after spending a May Term in Cambodia. I was moved by the poverty I had seen and the children living in the midst of it all. I was stunned by the genocide their parents and grandparents had suffered through only forty years before and the repercussions that still affected their families. I was disturbed that that was the first time I had heard of the Khmer Rouge regime and I started to wonder what other atrocities had occurred of which I had no knowledge. When I wrote my sophomore contract, I envisioned an emphasis that would encompass my newly inspired passion to make effective and legislative change, to learn about cultural injustice, and to pursue the ability to speak foreign languages, which is what led me to the Public Policy, SOAN, REST, and language departments. I took classes like World Religions, Cultural Anthropology, and World Politics and got a taste for the values and political dynamics that shape different countries' cultures and ethics. I appreciated these new perspectives but it also felt impossible to choose which one to give my full attention to! How could I pick one and leave out all the rest? There was so much to know!

While my interests from three years ago still lie at the heart of my emphasis now, something I hadn't fully come to terms with was the cases of injustice that were going on in my own country. I was so eager to go up and arms against the social, political, and economic corruption oceans away from me but hadn't considered similar issues affecting my community in Oakland, Redlands, and even the summer camp I have been working at for the past five years. I

had gained a greater awareness for the different examples of economic and social inequalities that exist at a global scale. But the fact that I was so unfamiliar with my own country's issues compelled me to switch gears and start down the road toward studying socio-economic and racial discourse in the United States.

This transition was not a graceful one, however. While I had found a clearer direction in my emphasis, this realization didn't prompt me to join all the available social justice clubs and organizations on campus, nor did it motivate me to be the most vocal in class. For some reason, it did the complete opposite. While being a Johnston student gave me the room to pursue my academics creatively – for a year and a half, I did so very quietly. Up until the spring of my junior year, I lacked the confidence and the drive to be as bold as my interests would have demanded of me. I wondered what had gotten into me, what was I so afraid of? But because I couldn't muster an answer to *that* question, my only consolation was to retreat and absorb what I was learning, trying to draw as little attention to the fact that maybe I was in way over my head. But I was stuck in a standstill because I was convinced that I didn't have time to be unsure! I was a legacy. An Armacost. A Johnston student AND an Armacost. I had to commit to *something* or else I'd run the risk of letting my family down – not even about choosing the “wrong” major but for wasting an experience they had once advised me to only pursue once I knew what I wanted to get out of it.

Looking back now, I feel like I should have known all along what was behind that crippling fear to be seen or heard because I think it's something so many of us feel in the midst of our college education. I had been given the tremendous opportunity to create my own major and work towards a degree that I had envisioned for myself and I was still caught up in the fear that it would not be good enough. I was so hesitant to state my own opinions because I knew I

would have to defend them to the death against my peers and my family – and I didn't believe I had it in me. I had chosen a route that none of my family members had ever gone before and there I was, left alone feeling around in the dark. I thought I had wanted to be a rebel or at least just "Sam," but that was proving to be much harder than I thought. It was hard when I no longer had familial footsteps to follow – a long history of successful professionals. I was supposed to redefine success for myself and I couldn't help but ask myself, wait, am I wrong about everything? Am I wasting my college career? Can I really make a difference? Will my family ever take me seriously, doing something that is not their kind of serious?

Forgive me for walking you through every step of my collegiate identity crisis. There will be redemption to come. But like any story, there is a turning point that must come before there is a resolution. And that turning point came when I received an email from the study abroad office and learned that my petition to go abroad for a year had been denied. I was devastated. But it was a blessing in disguise because, after a week of being infuriated with the University, I put that anger toward mapping out a semester abroad that I would do by myself. I chose Chile, Argentina, and Japan – so that I could practice each respective language, work on a few farms, meet my extended family, explore alone, explore with strangers. But mostly, I did it to really just be Sam for awhile, with no strings attached. I was part of no program, so I needed no credentials. I was Sam living in present tense. I got to be vulnerable and curious and enamored with my surroundings, and I had myself and myself alone to internalize and interpret each cultural experience that presented itself before me. *That* felt like being Sam: trusting my own judgment, making deep connections with new people, going on a few questionable whims that would end up paying off in the best ways. When I came home eight months later, I felt restored with a feeling that I could accomplish something that not just anyone could do. I came back to school

not with a sense of dread but rather of urgency to actually be *present* my senior year – and it changed everything. All the floating pieces of information and interest from past courses that ranged from Intro to Sociology, Native American Studies, Race & Science, Economy of Race, Class, and Gender, to Charity & Helping Others, finally were falling together and I was beginning to see my place in it all. I could pin-point this deep desire to empower those who have been subjected to the destructive mechanisms of colonialism, racism, and systemic oppression and I wasn't going to hide it anymore.

Academically, I was able to funnel this passion into my senior capstone project, taking my observations of Chilean indigenous culture and comparing Chilean history to that of the Anishinaabe Indians, native to Northern Minnesota. I chose the Anishinaabe tribe because of a personal connection I have to their culture. The summer camp that I've been working at for the past five years is heavily influenced by Anishinaabe ideology and rituals. But in more recent years, this has grown more and more questionable to me, as I've come to learn that we have no Anishinaabe representative at any level of our program to authenticate our practices. I sought out Professor Larry Gross to help guide me in addressing this instance of cultural appropriation by creating an independent study in which I would study the history and values of the Anishinaabe. While doing this, the main goal was to then find ways to translate that back to my camp so that we could find appropriate ways to incorporate their traditions into our camp culture, if at all. It was helpful to be working on these two projects at the same time because I was able to gain a well-rounded sense of what the clash between native populations and early colonialists looked like when it first started. And I also came to see how cultures of oppression that were started back then are still engrained in the treatment of indigenous societies today, from conflicts that range from cultural appropriation, land preservation, racial discrimination, to vastly unequal

economic opportunities. This was a special project for me because I could use the historical research I was gathering to help me make sense of my personal observations made abroad as well as with the racial tension I faced in a community I hold dear. The most rewarding part of this project is that I can take what I've learned and use it to better prepare me for the dialogue I will have in the future with my camp's director and board members. Larry has helped me even further by putting me in touch with an Anishinaabe woman and community leader who is now working with me to improve my camp's cultural approach.

Socially, however, there was another racially fueled discourse happening on our very own campus. It started with the sale of sombrero hats and snowballed from this collective outrage to a response that came from all across our campus and beyond. We went from having the largest forum in school history on race and diversity in November, to forming an university-wide council on inclusiveness and community for President Kuncl. And now, I have the great pleasure to be a part of a team that is organizing an academic conference on race and diversity for May Term. Its aim is to bring together student leaders from Southern California college campuses together to share our experiences and build a stronger network among us as we continue to fight discrimination in these institutions and in our country as a whole. It's hard to fully articulate all the ways this movement has been so important to me. For one, it is the first time I have had something to feel proud about while being an active member of this university. Two, it's the first time I've felt that my racial identity and the collective experiences of people of color on our campus have been recognized. Before all of this, I always felt like the Asian girl trying to fit into a white college culture, with the occasional token minority in one of my classes as my only silent ally. But that was the problem: the silence. And this year, we've found the grounds to undo that. With our student leaders at the front lines and our dedicated supporters

right behind them, we've made so much noise! I am that girl who "is always talking about race." I get to exist within this pulsing environment of frustration, pain, anticipation, pride, and anger that gives me and so many others a space to express how racism has hurt us and what we plan to do about it. I say with profound gratitude and pride that Johnston has been the pumping heart of this movement. While nowhere near perfect, we are loud and unapologetic. Because of our efforts, I think most of our campus has been made aware of this "race conversation," and whether or not they accept it, I feel like we have at least forced them to *see* us and the many faces of our struggle. And that is powerful. It also exposes how much work there is yet to be done, in this institution and in all the others. The task is overwhelming and unfair. But I choose to see it as a welcoming challenge, one in which I now know that I will never be alone to fight.

So here I am. I'm happy. I'm happy I stayed. I'm happy I hid. I'm happy Johnston took me in. I'm happy I suffered through this process because without it, I wouldn't be presenting to you what I have to show for myself right now. I'm reconciling that dark cloud of expectation and pressure behind being "Samantha Armacost" and pushing it to the wayside. I can do that because while the issues I want to tackle might seem so much bigger than me, in the end I want to be bigger than them. I am *proud* to be the first in my family to pioneer my way into the world of activism and out of the safety net that has harbored me my whole life. I no longer have a doubt in my mind that this is where I want to begin because I can rest assured that this endeavor will be more meaningful than what my last name could ever evoke.

Course List by Semester

Freshman

First Semester:

JPNS 201 01 2nd Year Modern Japanese
SOAN 100 03 Intro to Sociology
REST 130 01 Intro to Native Am St
FS 100 07 Beyond Killing Fields: Cambodia

Second Semester:

REST 120 01 Intro to Race & Ethnic Study
JPNS 202 01 2nd Year Modern Japanese
MUSI 124 01 Introduction to Voice
REL 125 03 World Religions
MATH 101 01 Finite Mathematics

May Term 2013:

CSAC 360 06 TRVL:Service in Cambodia

Sophomore

First Semester:

GOVT 123 01 Intro to World Politics
SOAN 102 02 Intro to Cultural Anthropology
SPAN 101 08 First Year Spanish
JPNS 301 01 3rd Year Modern Japanese

Second Semester:

GOVT 209 01 Foundations of Public Policy Analysis
PHIL 100 01 Intro to Philosophy
ECON 250 04 Intro to Microeconomics
SPAN 102 05 First Year Spanish

May Term 2014

ENGL 161 01 Mark Twain & The Gilded Age

Junior

First Semester

SPAN 201 06 Second Year Spanish
ECON 360 01 Economy of Race & Gender
REST 245 01 Race and Science
REL 120 01 Religion & Ethics

Second Semester
Leave of Absence

May Term 2015:
Leave of Absence

Senior

First Semester
SOAN 460 Power, Marginality & Exclusion
SOAN 326 Charity and Helping Others: Humanitarian Assistance
JNST 000D Millennials
POLI 202 Statistical Analysis & Mapping
REST 370 Applied Anishinaabe Culture
JNST 000A Senior Workshop

Second Semester
POLI 345 International Law & Organization
PHIL 160 Interdisciplinary Perspective: Medicine
ENGL 130 Literature of the Americas
REST 330 Race in the City
REST 220 Ending Oppression
REL 450 Jameson Center Colloquia

May Term 2016:
JNST 000A-1 Race on Campus: Student Conference

Course List by Discipline

Language

JPNS 201 01 2nd Year Modern Japanese
JPNS 202 01 2nd Year Modern Japanese
JPNS 301 01 3rd Year Modern Japanese
SPAN 101 08 First Year Spanish
SPAN 102 05 First Year Spanish
SPAN 201 06 Second Year Spanish

Race & Ethnic Studies

REST 130 01 Introduction to Native American Studies
FS 100 07 Beyond Killing Fields: Cambodia
REST 120 01 Introduction to Race & Ethnic Studies
REST 245 01 Race and Science
REST 370 01 Applied Anishinaabe Culture (Independent Study)
REST 220 01 Ending Oppression
REST 330 01 Race in the City

Sociology

SOAN 100 03 Introduction to Sociology
SOAN 102 02 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
SOAN 460 01 Power, Marginality & Exclusion
SOAN 326 01 Charity and Helping Others: Humanitarian Assistance

Religion

REL 125 03 World Religions
REL 120 01 Religion & Ethics
REL 450 01 Jameson Center Colloquia

Philosophy

PHIL 100 01 Introduction to Philosophy
PHIL 160 01 Interdisciplinary Perspective: Medicine

English

ENGL 161 01 Mark Twain & The Gilded Age
ENGL 130 Literature of the Americas

Johnston

JNST 000D Millennials
JNST 000A 01 Senior Workshop
JNST 000A 1 Race on Campus: Student Conference

Government

GOVT 123 01 Introduction to World Politics
GOVT 209 01 Foundations of Public Policy Analysis

Economics

ECON 250 04 Introduction to Microeconomics

ECON 360 01 Economy of Race & Gender

Political Science

POLI 202 01 Statistical Analysis & Mapping

POLI 345 01 International Law & Organization

Music

MUSI 124 01 Introduction to Voice

Math

MATH 101 01 Finite Mathematics

Community Service

CSAC 360 06 TRVL: Service in Cambodia