



CWL 242: MODERN MASTERPIECES OF WESTERN CULTURE

INTRODUCTION

HA!



HA!

**WESTERN CULTURE
IS BETTER THAN ANYTHING ELSE!**



EVERYTHING
COVERED
BUT HER EYES,
WHAT A CRUEL
MALE-
DOMINATED
CULTURE!

NOTHING
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CULTURE!

Elias

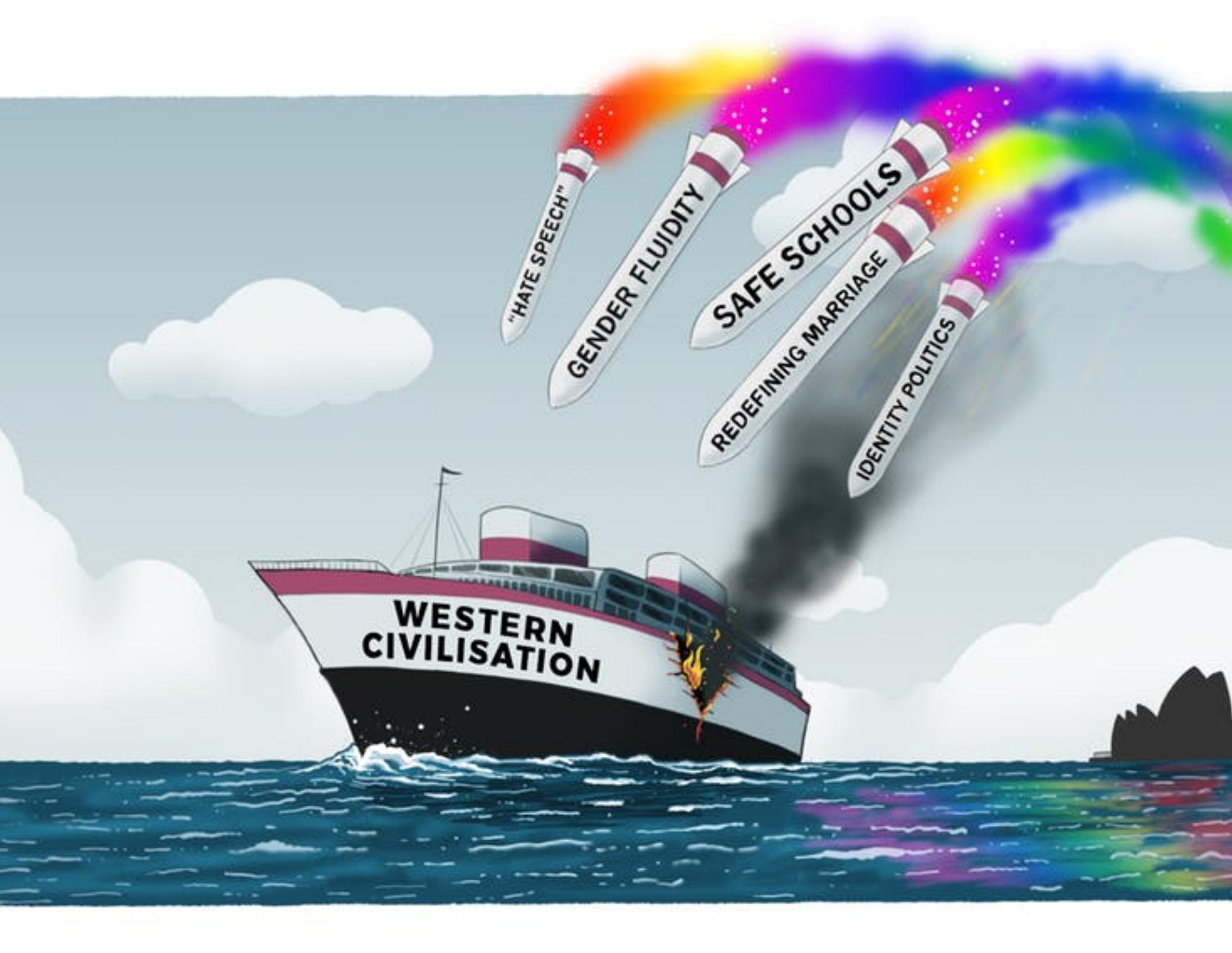


THE WRECK OF
WESTERN
CULTURE

Humanism Revisited



JOHN CARROLL



**WESTERN
CIVILISATION**

"HATE SPEECH"

GENDER FLUIDITY

SAFE SCHOOLS

REDEFINING MARRIAGE

IDENTITY POLITICS

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- ▶ How to read texts, analyze their content and write clearly and meaningfully about what you've read
- ▶ Where the contemporary world comes from – and what makes us definitively modern
- ▶ Contemporary culture comes from somewhere, and its roots run deep. There are always causes, connections and history



WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- ▶ What we'll read and see this semester has vibrant and immediate connections to now. For instance, we'll see...
- ▶ why you have to read Marx, Nietzsche and Freud to understand *Fight Club*
- ▶ how Jane Austen was recycled to create "chick lit" detective novels and vampire-themed Jane Austen fanfic
- ▶ how both *Battlestar Galactica* and political advertisements are indebted to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*
- ▶ How Calvino's *Invisible Cities* inspired generations of artists, architects, community activists – and computer programmers



WHY THIS CLASS?

- ▶ Sure, great books. But why the humanities?
- ▶ Studies show that the humanities are a sound investment in your future earnings (according to *Forbes*, not *Humanities Today*)
- ▶ Unemployment rates in the humanities? Same as math. Highest unemployment rate? Business (according to *Business Insider*, not *Humanities Insider*). Psych, comm, biology – not so great. See *The Atlantic*, 8/23/18. Choice of major doesn't matter very much (less than gender, race, location, and more)
- ▶ *Academically Adrift*
- ▶ The humanities are not vocational, but *this is a good thing* (viz. the MBA and architecture; the perils of monoculture; can't be automated; coming STEM glut)
- ▶ Look at data; analyze; synthesize; write well; speak well; broad cultural knowledge

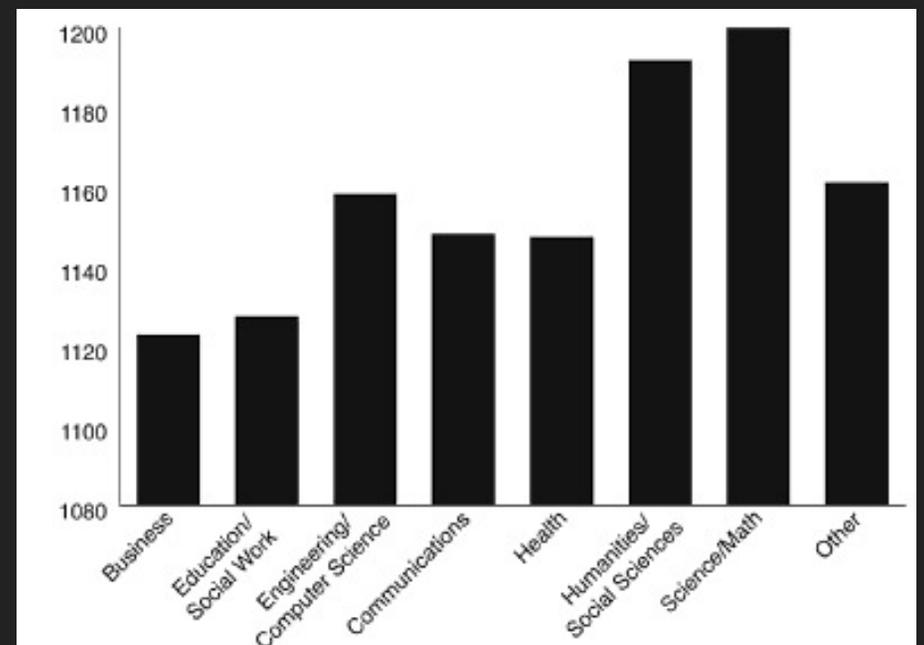


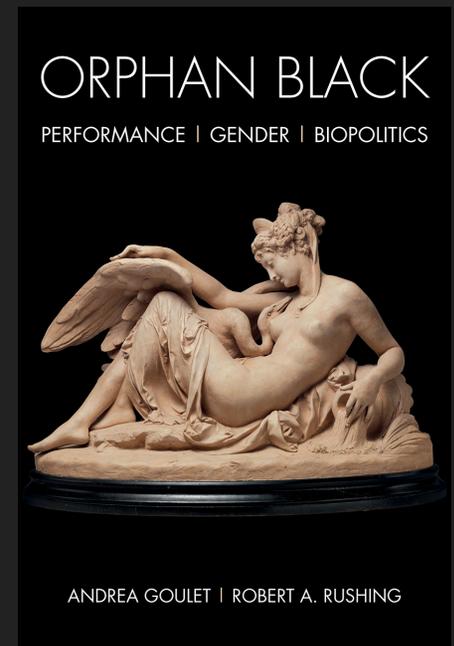
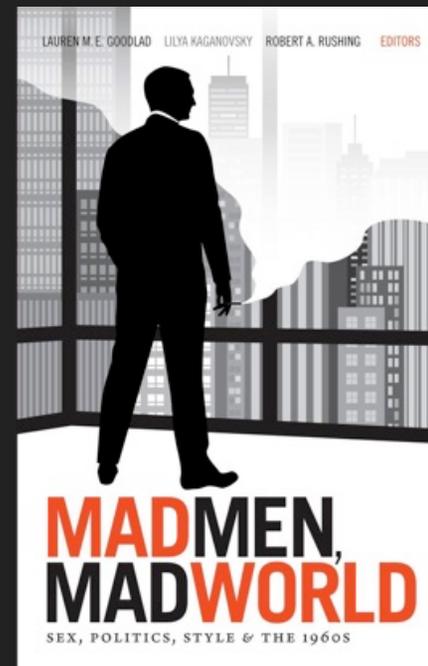
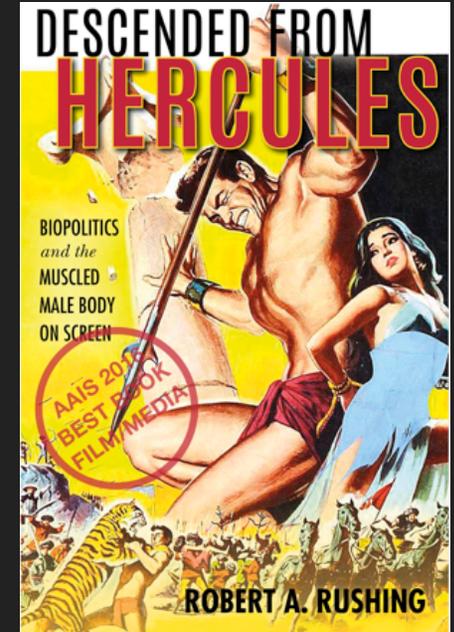
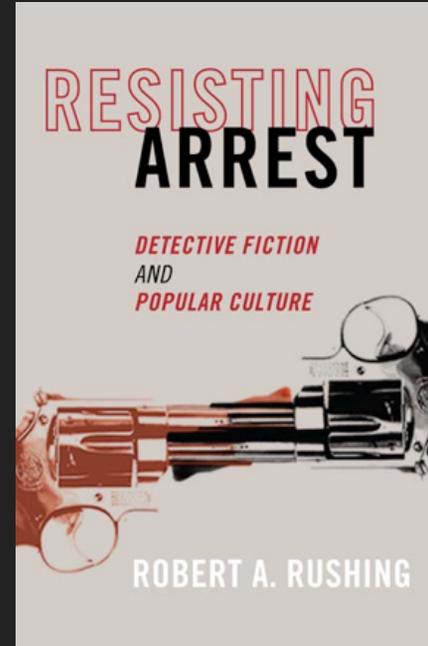
Figure 4.4. Predicted 2007 CLA scores, by college major (based on table A4.3, controlling for 2005 CLA scores)

SURE, BUT IN THE REAL WORLD?

- ▶ Mitt Romney: English
- ▶ Carly Fiorina: medieval history and philosophy
- ▶ Peter Thiel, CEO PayPal: philosophy
- ▶ Ken Chenault, CEO American Express: history
- ▶ Carl Icahn, investor: philosophy
- ▶ Eric Shinseki, 4-star U.S. Army General: English
- ▶ Michael Eisner, CEO Disney: English and theater
- ▶ Hank Paulson, Treasury Secretary: English
- ▶ Sheila Bari, Chair of FDIC: philosophy
- ▶ Most U.S. Supreme Court Justices: Thomas: English; Breyer: philosophy; Sotomayor: history; Kagan: history and philosophy; Scalia: history; Roberts: history; Souter: philosophy; Stevens: English; Kavanaugh: history
- ▶ Harold Varmus, Nobel Prize in Medicine: English (B.A. and M.A.)
- ▶ George Soros, investor: philosophy
- ▶ Ted Turner, founder of CNN: classics
- ▶ Anne Mulcahy, CEO Xerox: English and journalism
- ▶ Brian Moynihan, CEO Bank of America: history

INTRODUCTIONS

- ▶ Who am I?
 - ▶ Comparative Literature—what *is* that?
 - ▶ Italian
 - ▶ Film, television, popular culture
- ▶ What about your TA?
 - ▶ Noah Taxis: English, Spanish, French, and Ancient Greek; the American Renaissance, the Gothic, European modernism, surrealism, cinema, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis
- ▶ Course website



VITAL INFORMATION

- ▶ You must come to lecture; section (5 weeks, section or lecture = auto-fail)
- ▶ Course website:
 - ▶ schedule for papers
 - ▶ rough drafts (3 pp)
 - ▶ final papers (4-5 pp)
 - ▶ **draconian plagiarism policy**
 - ▶ final exam: Monday, 5/6: 7:00-10:00 PM
- ▶ No laptops, phones, tablets, or wetware neural implants. Paper and a pen.
- ▶ Upcoming (9/5): "Darmok" (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*: season 5, episode 2)

The Information	The Information
The Information	The Information
The Information	By James Gleick
The Information	By James Gleick
The Information	By James Gleick
A History,	By James Gleick
The Information	By James Gleick
A Theory,	By James Gleick
The Information	By James Gleick
A Flood	By James Gleick
The Information	Author of <i>Chaos</i>

HISTORY

- ▶ Antiquity (3000 BC-500 AD)
 - ▶ pre-Christian, polytheistic or animistic, illiterate, slaves vs. citizen, pervasive sexuality, emphasis on beauty, order
- ▶ Middle Ages (450 AD-1450 AD)
- ▶ Modernity (1400 AD-present)



HISTORY

- ▶ Antiquity (3000 BC-500 AD)
- ▶ Middle Ages (450 AD-1450 AD)
 - ▶ Between the ancient and the modern (hence, *middle* ages); the West as Christian; feudal, traditional; universe as a precisely organized, hierarchical machine
- ▶ Modernity (1400 AD-present)



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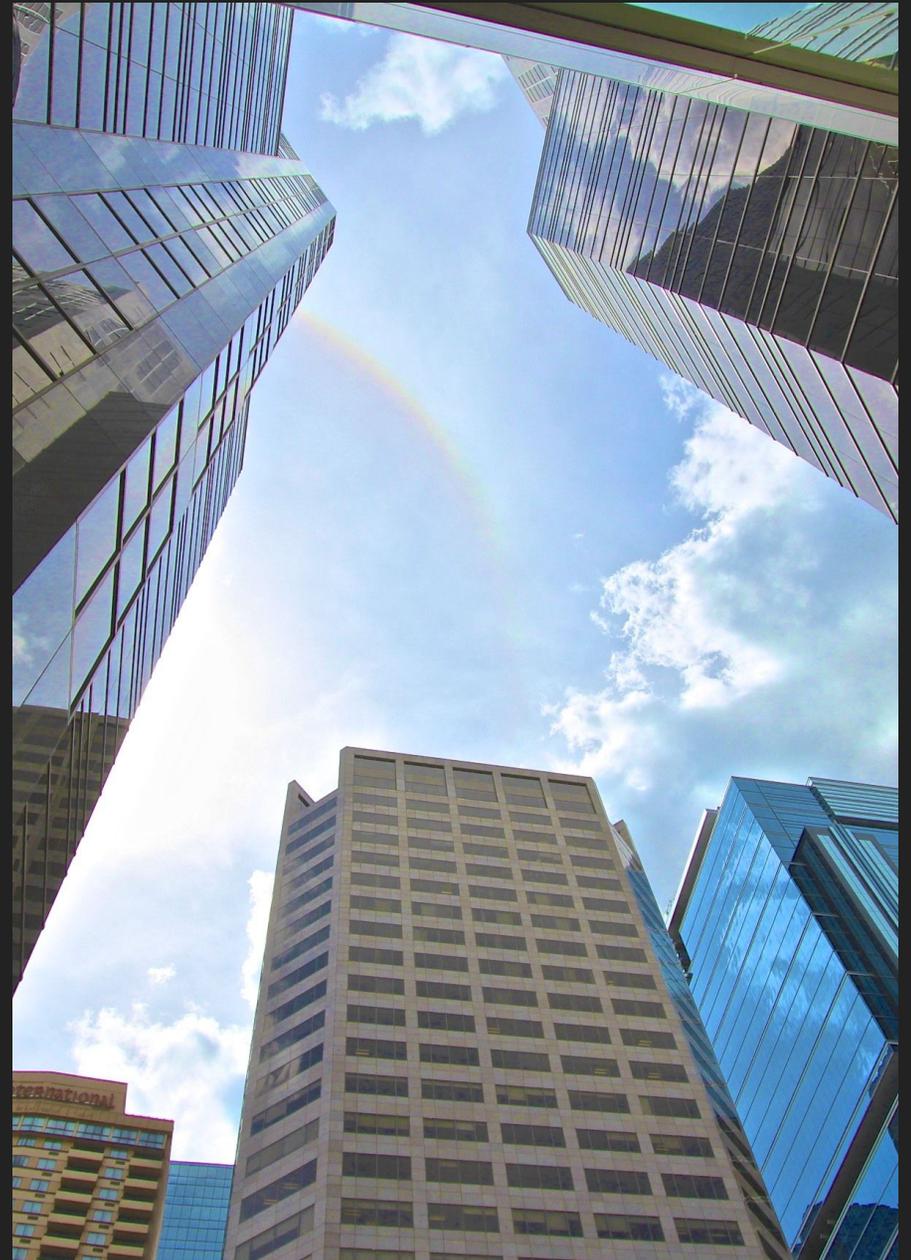
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· *Handwritten text, possibly a name or title, possibly 'Sitha'.*



HISTORY

- ▶ Antiquity (3000 BC-500 AD)
- ▶ Middle Ages (450 AD-1450 AD)
- ▶ Modernity (1400 AD-present)
 - ▶ secular, rational, scientific; industrial, technological, urban; individual expression, experimentation; sometimes experienced as a loss; the emergence of the culture industry (“popular culture”)



HISTORY

- ▶ Antiquity (3000 BC-500 AD)
- ▶ Middle Ages (450 AD-1450 AD)
- ▶ Modernity (1400 AD-present)
 - ▶ Early Modern (the Renaissance and Baroque, about 1400-1700)
 - ▶ Modern (1700-)



THE MODERN WORLD

- ▶ The Enlightenment (1700-1800)
- ▶ Romanticism (1800-1860ish)
- ▶ Realism and naturalism (1860ish-1900ish)
- ▶ Modernism (1900ish-1945ish)
- ▶ Postmodernism (1945ish-2000? Now we're just guessing)
- ▶ The Contemporary

