Course Title: Everything Reverberates: Louis Kahn, Edward Hopper, Ernest Hemingway

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Premise: Multidisciplinary study is a response to the fact that through the (lifelong) course of our education we all encounter interesting and provocative ideas and artifacts not only within but also tangential to and even outside our respective fields of study. Because nothing exists or is created in a vacuum, these ideas may be quite relevant to our core expertise. We must explore the connective tissue that links our field of study to others if we are to imbue our own work with creativity, resonance and meaning.

Course Content: The intent of this research seminar is to explore the work of three thinkers/makers – architect Louis Kahn, artist Edward Hopper, and author Ernest Hemingway. All three lived in roughly the same time period – Hopper: 1882-1967; Hemingway: 1899-1961; Kahn: 1901-1974 – and we will study their ideas and works not only relative to one another but also amid the milieu of world events and in the context of the prevailing trends and theories in their respective art forms. We will seek to discover if and how the language and content of their works are related to one another.

This suggests our research will be wide-ranging (in part) and specific (in part), allowing students to pursue a topic or topics of their choice as we attempt to form a holistic understanding of our protagonists. For instance, we can’t understand Edward Hopper’s art unless we understand the work of the Ashcan School with which he was associated or the shift during his lifetime toward a culture of increased mechanization. Neither can we understand Hemingway’s fiction without knowledge of his journalism. At the same time, we will want to analyze more focused issues such as the ways in which Louis Kahn uses light in his buildings relative to the way Edward Hopper uses light in his paintings or the iconic imagery both Hemingway and Kahn employed.

Methodology: The class will begin with research into the work of each of the protagonists. This will provide a foundation of information that will be used by the entire class.

After this initial research the work of the semester will take the form of writing. Two shorter research essays will lay the groundwork for one longer paper. Students will workshop each other’s papers regularly as the work is emerging and going through rewrites.

Students are expected to bring the following attributes to the class: strong writing skills, the ability to form meaningful research questions, a probative curiosity, organizational and logic skills, a proactive attitude and genuine interest in the protagonists.