

Alexis Cruz

Class story

Story #3

What is home? What do you think of when you think of home? Home: Dwelling and

Belonging a class offered at Drake University, explores the concept of home.

According to the course catalog, “the course explores the idea, experience, representation, and feeling of home as a site of intimate belonging and of social status.”

“This class is a place to concentrate on the central theme and question and problem - What is home? Where is home? And how do we dwell and belong differently,” said Professor McAllister, the instructor.

The ideas that the students are grappling with allow the students to draw on their personal experiences to explain and process what exactly the concepts course is working with.

The catalog adds that the class “draws on theories, philosophies and critiques of diverse versions of home from different times and spaces, examining the cultural, historical, material and political dimensions of this key place of everyday life.”

“We get a chance to reflect on our personal experience but also see it refracted in through someone else's experience,” said Professor McAllister.

The class itself meets different requirements, listed as an honors class. It also meets requirements for the Rhetoric Media and Social Change major, as well as the AOI global and cultural understanding.

“It has drawn a really diverse group of students, from different years, from different majors, from different countries, different regions, from very different social locations, and that makes the conversation so great,” said Professor McAllister, “I had to open more seats.”

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The class usually begins with a large group discussion. On Tuesday Sept. 12 for example, everyone shared a home sense post they were required to make. This post was to be a picture and explanation of what gives each student a sense of home.

A few choose their beds, one had a fireplace, dinner tables, other's had images that spoke of their own experiences.

At least two students commented that that they don't have a particular location that reminds them of home adding that they've each moved around a lot.

One, Nya Makaza, has a black and white tapestry of an elephant. She has moved from Zimbabwe to the United States multiple times. And this has affected her sense of home. The last time she moved she said, she got the tapestry, that way it can go with her where she goes.

"Home is what is familiar to me, something that doesn't change, it can be moved," Makaza said.

From there, the class generally breaks into a student-led a discussion. Tuesday's discussion was led by Clio Cullison it focused on three readings the class had for that day.

Cullison, a junior majoring in Rhetoric Media and Social change, took the class because she needed it for her major. The class, does a good job to translating the rhetoric to everyday lives, she said.

"I would recommend the class" she added.

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Cullison had her peers split into three small groups, each discussing a different reading.

Afterwards, the group came back as a whole to discuss.

Cullison added, "It is a very personal class, we talk about very personal things in our lives. Things we would not share normally. The class is a nice environment for it."

When you walk into room 112 in Howard you don't expect a big class, it is a small room. The classroom located in basement level of Howard. It has stained glass windows and chocolate brown chairs with just over 25 seats available the classroom is packed.

But in the class Home: Dwelling and Belonging that is exactly what you get.

"A sense of loss of home, longing for home, what we love or fear about home, students of any level of any background could bring insights," McAllister said

A big class of diverse people willing to share their own experiences in discussing a key place in our lives -- home.