From the Māori to Middle Earth: 
Communicating Colonization through Contemporary Work in New Zealand

Boston College Summer Course Proposal 2016
Professor Celeste Wells

Tē tōia, tē haumatia.

Nothing can be achieved without a plan, workforce and way of doing things.

Māori proverb

Course overview:
Aotearoa/New Zealand is a country full of contradiction. With the first people setting foot on “the land of the long white cloud” only 800 years ago, the country is home to enduring Māori traditions but also grapples with intractable issues of post-colonialism. Strong identifications with “Kiwi identity” nestle alongside a growing immigrant population and meaningful multiculturalism. Lush biodiversity contrasts with some of the most pressing climate change issues, including the depletion of the Ozone layer over Australasia. And New Zealand companies are responsive to local interests while simultaneously making global headlines in agribusiness, technology, and other innovative markets. Such contradiction means that New Zealand is a different country for different people, and it is this broad diversity that makes it an excellent site for the study of organizational communication.

The field of organizational communication, coming to prominence in the late twentieth century, examines organizational cultures and environments in order to understand meaning-making and subjective life experience. To develop a robust understanding of the field, students engage in the study of organizational socialization, conflict, leadership, communication networks, ethics and theories of human resources, human relations and classic management. Yet, what students often miss in the study of these theories is an engaged interaction with the topics of which they learn.

This four week summer course will provide the opportunity for students to study organizational communication within the contexts and cultures in New Zealand. The course will begin with historical background of the colonization of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the Māori experience, transition from this rich entwining of people and land to a study of the country’s biggest export earner, the dairy industry, which boasts “annual exports in excess of NZ$13.7 billion” (DCANZ, 2015) and then move to exploration of the country’s burgeoning high-tech and start up ecosystem.

We will read a variety of scholarly works on organizational communication within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, including scholarship by the leading organizational communication scholars who regularly teach and research in and around Auckland, including at Massey University, University of Auckland, and Waikato University. These articles will cover theory,
method, application, and “real world” experiences. Readings will be supplemented by guest
lecturers and site visits.

Learning objectives:

By the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Capably identify and name key organizational communication theories and concepts and
explain how they are exemplified in New Zealand’s history of colonialism as well as
contemporary organizational practices.

2. Recognize the communicative practices Māori people use to maintain their social and
cultural history and present community by visiting the Māori cultural center as well as
meeting with Māori leaders.

3. Generate a substantial scholarly essay on communication, labor and land in New
Zealand.

Course requirements:

1. Participation (30% total): Student participation is evaluated using the following criteria:
daily attendance, timely attendance to class, daily completion of course readings, active
engagement with the course material, constructive contributions to class discussions,
and willingness to participate in class activities.

2. Reflection papers (30% total): There are three reflection papers due in this course.
Papers are due each Wednesday of Weeks 2, 3 and 4. Papers are 3 pages and double-
spaced. Students will use course material and lectures to complete these papers.

3. Final paper (40%): Students must submit a 12-15 double-spaced page cogent analysis of
an aspect of organizational communication in New Zealand. The final paper is due
August 3rd.

Course Readings:

Assigned reading will consist of scholarly and journalistic articles along with extended portions
of several core texts. A preliminary list would include:

Readings:

contemporary implications of the Māori-Pākehā relationship in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
Cheney, G., Christensen, L.T. & Zorn, T.E. (2010). Organizational communication in an age of
Frederick, H., & Monsen, E. (2011). New Zealand’s perfect storm of entrepreneurship and
Paper proceedings from Organisation, Identity and Locality (OIL) V Exploring the local within the Aotearoa/New Zealand locality A symposium on critical organisation studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand (2009).

The Details
Housing: Ideally, students will live in or around dorms at either Massey University or the University of Auckland. The below contact at Massey may be able to help advise and perhaps assist in this endeavor.
The goal would be to negotiate with Massey University for a classroom during this period. I have a connection with the Chair of the School of Communication, Journalism, and Marketing at Massey University, Dr. Shiv Ganesh, and would ask for his assistance or advice on alternative arrangements.

Transportation: I would check with Kelly Manning about this and find out if there is someone to whom I should speak.

Course Schedule

Classes will meet each morning from 9am-12pm. On days of site visits the class will meet again in the evening to debrief the visit. Guest speakers from the area will meet with the class each week to discuss course topics and provide in-depth information regarding the topic of study in New Zealand.

**Week 1:**
- **Class 1.** Arrival
- **Class 2.** Introduction to field of study
- **Class 3.** Contemporary Organizational Communication and *Tentative Guest Lecture - Current state of Organizational Communication, Ted Zorn, Pro Vice-Chancellor - College of Business, Massey University.*
- **Class 4.** Organizational Communication Theory
- **Class 5.** History of New Zealand

**Week 2:**
- **Class 6.** History of New Zealand and the colonization of a people
- **Class 7.** Site visit to Te Hana Te Ao Marama – Māori Cultural Center
- **Class 8.** Contemporary colonization and the protection of indigenous land and people
- **Class 9.** Guest Lecture: Social Justice in New Zealand, The Social Justice Commission of Guest the Anglican Church of Aotearoa & Polynesia
- **Class 10.** Social Justice and Organizational Communication and Guest lecture on Activism/Collective Action in New Zealand, Shiv Ganesh, Massey University.

*Wells: The Māori to Middle Earth*
Week 3:

**Class 1.** Site visit to Auckland Museum - Māori and Pacific Island Collections

Class 2. From Native People to Rural Lands – discussing the diversity of organizing in New Zealand

Class 3. From Native People to Rural Lands – discussing the diversity of organizing in New Zealand

**Class 4.** Guest Lecture: Organizational Communication and Entrepreneurship in New Zealand, Rebecca Gill, Massey University. Site visit with Dr. Gill to entrepreneurial sites within Auckland.

Class 5. Site visit to Waikato – dairy and sheep farming province with visits to several farms.

Week 4:

Class 1. Organizational socialization and leadership

Class 2. Guest Lecture: Organizational Leadership in New Zealand, Helen Nicholson Delaney, University of Auckland

Class 3. Site Visit to “Middle Earth” (Waikato & Taupo Regions) to discuss how the film industry is playing an enhanced role in organizational experience today.

Class 4. Making sense of organizational communication in New Zealand

Class 5. Departure for Boston

**Cultural and Academic Activities in New Zealand**

Each week the class will visit sites in Auckland and surrounding areas that will connect with the course material. These sites may include:

- Te Hana Te Ao Marama – Māori Cultural Center
- Auckland Museum - Māori and Pacific Island Collections
- Waikato – dairy and sheep farming province with site visits to several farms
- Auckland Central Business District
- Waikato & Taupo - Regions used during the filming of the “Lord of the Rings” series
- Waitomo – geothermal sites
- Howick Historical Village
- Voyager New Zealand Maritime Museum

*Wells: The Māori to Middle Earth*