

Assignment: 48 Hours of Trash

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Part of an in-archives exercise at <http://www.teacharchives.org/exercises/rubbish>

At our next class meeting (Sept. 28), you will bring to class all the trash you generate in 48 hours. The clock starts at 6:00 p.m. Monday, Sept. 26, and runs till class time on the 28th. Use the black plastic bag distributed in class.

What goes in the bag:

Everything you would normally put in a trash can. Everything. If you eat out or get food to go, put the leftovers, wrapping, etc. into your bag.

What does not:

Anything you recycle or compost.

You do not have to carry the bag with you everywhere, but you will need to carry the trash you create away from home back to your black bag.

In Class (Sept. 28)

I will cover the seminar table with newspapers and ask for volunteers to share what's in their bags. As a class we will describe, discuss, and interpret the trash.

Response Paper (due Oct. 5)

Write 3 - 4 pages reflecting on the experience of keeping your own garbage and discussing it in class. Think about the amount of trash you made and the kind of things in it. How did you feel about keeping it? About showing it to the class? What would an urban archaeologist learn about you and the society you live in? Did this exercise prompt you to examine your trash habits?