Canadian Metropolis 2
Last Time

• Issues of the power and function of Canadian cities
• The idea of landscapes within the city connecting to the broader space-economy of the city, changing as it changes
This Time

• The role of the city as a *centre of creativity* and innovation
  – Economic creativity
  – Cultural creativity

• Important to its economy, culture and landscapes
Reading

- Hracs et al (2011) on musical talent in Toronto and Halifax
- Richard Florida et al (2010) on the creative urban economy
- Hall & Khan (2008) on high-tech immigrant wages
- Cummins-Russell & Rantisi (2012) on Montreal’s music industry
Urban Creativity

• Cities generate innovation, generate change
  – The most advanced parts of the economy tend to be found somewhere urban
  – Cities trigger change in their urban fields, their rural hinterlands
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Urban Creativity

- A key figure in this debate is Richard Florida
  - US urbanist and consultant, now based in Toronto
- Argued that the creative side to the city is vital to its economic and cultural survival, prosperity
- How to measure, stimulate urban creativity?
Richard Florida

- Argues that creativity is a key attribute of the urban economy
- Suggested that the more bohemian and cosmopolitan cities are more creative
  - More open to innovation
  - Attempted to gauge urban creativity by looking at a city’s gay bars
• Most big North American cities have comparable infrastructure
  – Acceptable communications networks
  – Adequate education systems and facilities
  – Adequate shipping and transportation
Richard Florida

• But to land and keep footloose high-tech industries you need something extra
  – An attractive lifestyle
  – An interesting urban nightlife
  – Fulfilling ways to live
Richard Florida

• This suggests that to build economic creativity you need
  – To build and maintain the ordinary infrastructure which other cities will have too
  – To foster a good quality of life, night-life, lifestyle
Toronto’s Entertainment District
THERE ARE NO SINS BELOW THE EQUATOR.
Premier Mike Harris

• In the 1990s argued that Ontario needed to build the Internet
  – Argued that universities should be turning out engineers, computer geeks
  – Not geographers, philosophers, musicians, etc.,

• Saw no value in creative culture, just engineering
Po Shy

do much less
...and so,
my heart

saved my life.
Richard Florida

- Argues that “creative workers” are becoming key figures in the present-day urban economy, a ‘creative class’
  - Knowledge-workers
  - Artists, musicians, artisans, cartoonists
  - Social scientists, planners, architects
- Suggests we keep these people happy, entertained, productive
The Creative Class

• Toronto’s public intellectuals who now mainly live downtown were keen on the idea of the creative class
  – They belong to it
• Early versions of the thesis saw little creative about Jane & Finch, or Scarborough
The Creative Class

• Christopher Hume in the Toronto Star derides Scarborough as a wasteland
  – Offers nothing creative in his opinion
  – A place were old strip plazas go to die
The Creative Class

• But Scarborough’s strip plazas accommodate
  – Afghan grocers
  – Indian clothing stores
  – Pakistani restaurants

• Vibrant ethnic creativity
  – But Christopher Hume and Richard Florida can’t see it
Jane & Finch

• Has plenty who know how to fill a dance hall with music for youth
  – Another kind of creativity
The Creative Class

• In its original form Richard Florida seemed to mean
  – “Inner-city upper income people who think their jobs are cool”

• Not surprising that Christopher Hume and the city’s public intellectuals often liked Florida’s ideas

• But ‘creative class’ is problematic class-situated language
But more Generally

- Florida is probably right to draw our attention to the creative side of the urban economy
  - Even if he gets some of it wrong
Toronto

• The Creative Economy is vital to Toronto:
  – A world-class role in mining finance and expertise.
  – Important knowledge-based financial, bio-tech, medical, and aerospace industries
  – Big computer animation and mobile-app industries
Toronto

- Has become a major centre for cultural creativity and entertainment
  - The capital of Canada’s Anglophone print and electronic media
  - Huge musical and arts scene with fertile connections to multicultural, major festivals
  - Huge new media scene, games design, mobile App design
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Creative Downsides of Toronto

- Expensive real estate prices artists, musicians out of the market
  - Studio, rehearsal space expensive, difficult to find
- Some evidence of artists, musicians being displaced to Hamilton and elsewhere
  - Will Halifax, St John’s, Thunder Bay benefit?
Creative Downsides of Toronto

• Expensive real estate raising costs of high-tech and creative labour
  – Some of the high-tech relocating to secondary cities: Kitchener-Waterloo-Guelph-Cambridge
Creative Downsides of Toronto

• A tendency for many in Ontario, Toronto to see arts and culture as a frill
  – Nice to have, but not vital
• Quebec better at funding culture and the arts
  – Gives Montreal an advantage over Toronto
Creative Economy Strategies

- There are various ways of putting cultural creativity to work
Thunder Bay ON

- Needs to attract and retain highly-qualified talent despite being a small and somewhat remote city
- Maintains a symphony orchestra, despite its small population size
  - Using culture to retain/attract the creative talent
Winnipeg MB

- Trying to revitalise its inner city, and reconfigure its urban economy
- Building a new-media and knowledge economy on its centrality as a communications hub
  - Return of the Winnipeg Jets
  - New museum of Human Rights a showcase of the inner city
Toronto

• Decline in manufacturing created derelict zones along railway corridors
• 1990s Mayor Barbara Hall allowed redevelopment and re-use of these zones
• Rail corridors included two major telephone hubs vital for Internet data centres:
  – King & Parliament
  – King & Strachan
Toronto

• Toronto’s inner city industrial land, grouped around the Two Kings became the basis for a condo-loft-conversion dot-com-new media landscape
  – Distillery District
  – Liberty Village
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Creative Toronto

- Did not invent **Nuit Blanche**, but probably now defines this festival
- Toronto produces **mobile gaming** apps
- Toronto is **important for EDM**
- Toronto
Critique

• The city as innovator is a well-established concept
• Creativity is part of its economy, culture
  – And the two support each other
• But how powerful is it?
• Bankers and the politicians still control the real power of the urban economy
  – Not the musicians and cartoonists