

2017

How Not to Be a Sh#%ty Tourist

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Recommended Citation

Muldoon, Meghan L. (2017) "How Not to Be a Sh#%ty Tourist," *Critical Tourism Studies Proceedings*: Vol. 2017 , Article 48.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.library.tru.ca/cts-proceedings/vol2017/iss1/48>

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Title: How Not to Be a Sh#%ty Tourist

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Session Type: Workshop

Abstract:

In this workshop, I propose to bring together conference attendees for an empowering and productive discussion on how to engage with the world as tourists in ways that are meaningful and do not Other, essentialize, or re-colonialize. I often find myself at a loss when asked by students and friends on how to do tourism better. This workshop is intended to provide attendees with ideas and inspiration for how engage with our students about the harms of tourism in ways that will empower them to do tourism better, rather than having them go away feeling overwhelmed and powerless in the face of all the harm that tourism does.

The workshop will involve a discussion of the harms of tourism and how we engage with these issues in the classroom. Participants will then be broken up into smaller working groups and be asked to brainstorm three questions related to one particular tourism problematic:

1. What are the issues related to this touristic practice? Also, what are the positive aspects of this touristic practice?
2. Why does this practice persist? In other words, who is benefitting from or relying on this particular practice?
3. What are some of the ways that we can take action to mitigate the negative impacts of this practice?

Touristic practices to be explored will include animal tourism, poverty tourism, mass tourism, volunteer tourism, and the environmental impacts of tourism, among others. Following these breakout sessions, I will then facilitate a large group discussion and aim to come up with some strategies for how to bring these ideas back to the classroom and our own personal lives. Far from being a despairing retrospective on the destructive nature of tourism, my objective is that workshop participants will come away inspired to have the difficult discussions about sh#%ty tourism in ways that are productive and hopeful.