

Reclaiming the Commons Reflective Writing #5

The prompt relates to course goals #5-6 and the UNST goal of “Social and Ethical Responsibility.”

Commoning: “describes the social practices used by commoners in the course of managing shared resources and reclaiming the commons.” (Walljasper, p. 244)

Many of our readings and presenters have suggested that we are so steeped in our current economic and political paradigms that we operate primarily as consumers with responsibility only to ourselves. For this week’s writing prompt, I want you to explore the concept of social and ethical responsibility. Specifically, “How has your understanding of social and ethical responsibility shifted as a result of learning about the commons?”

As we discussed in class, please feel free to respond to this prompt in creative ways. Here are a few additional questions to help you frame your response. Feel free to pick and choose from these options if they are helpful to you.

- What does social responsibility look like in our current political and economic system? In what ways are we called to or discouraged from looking out for each other and future generations?
- What would social and ethical responsibility look like in a “commons based” society? How would a commons approach change our relationship to each other and future generations?
- How would your life change if you made a conscious decision to approach life as a “commoner” rather than a “consumer?” (For example, how would this shift affect your educational choices, your career, how you spent money, how you chose to spend your free time, or how you chose to interact with others?)
- Many of you may already be living as “commoners” without really recognizing it. Read the definition above and think about an act of “commoning” that you already engage in. This act of commoning could relate to the ecological, societal, or knowledge and culture commons. What is an act of commoning you already engage in? What difference does this act of commoning make in your life or the lives of others?

I look forward to your response.