

Comparative Studies 651:
Topics in Comparative Studies
SPACE, PLACE, GLOBALITY
Professor Timothy K. Choy
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Course Description

This advanced seminar addresses the ways we produce space and place, and the ways they produce us. We approach the matter via several crucial, and intimately related questions: how useful is a cultural analysis to understanding processes of space/place production? How are space and place implicated in the production of power asymmetries, and vice versa? How do we understand place-making and other spatial processes in the context of what some call "globalization?" To unravel these mysteries, we will engage conversations among – and produce conversations between – philosophers, anthropologists, and geographers. In doing so, we will be concerned not only with understanding different scholars' theorizations of space, place, and globality, but also with gleaning what certain theorizations say –whether implicitly or explicitly– about the workings of culture and power. At times, it will be clear that various scholars are primarily pursuing questions of culture, power, and politics, and that it is those concerns that animate their concern with space and place. We will also discern in discussions of space and place the traces of other theoretical debates, such as that concerning the relation between universality and particularity. Ultimately, we will strive to locate how the abstractions called 'space' and 'place' are materialized – as much in politics, society, and culture as in the buildings, landmarks, and landscapes we routinely navigate.

Course Requirements

Perfect attendance, preparedness for class, and participation in discussion are crucial to the seminar's success. Students with more than one unexcused absence, and/or who are consistently unprepared for class, will see these aspects of their performance prominently reflected in their letter grades.

1. **Keep up with the reading.** As I've mentioned, this is a reading-intensive seminar, and our seminar discussions will focus on specific arguments in the readings. It is imperative that students complete the readings for each week before class.
2. **Participation – Informed speaking and listening.** The success of the course hinges on your participation. That said, talking does not necessarily mean that one is participating. I understand participation to require thoughtful speaking and listening. Your comments should thus reflect a solid engagement with our readings. Those of you who are very comfortable speaking in

class: be sure to monitor how much "air-time" you take up and be attentive to whether you're fostering an environment conducive to everyone's participation. Listen attentively and respectfully to your colleagues.

3. **Presentation and Group Facilitation.** Beginning in Week Two, two or three students will be responsible each week for giving a brief presentation about the session's readings and facilitating discussion. Groups should begin by surveying some of the key points in the readings, ideally situating the reading or the author within an intellectual discourse, and then raise questions and actively facilitate discussion and participation. The presentation should evidence collaboration as well. Students will be given the opportunity to sign up for a group on the second day of class.
4. **Writing requirements.** The writing requirement is 20-25 pages of writing (double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman or equivalent, standard margins), due by Monday, March 15, 2004 . *You may choose how you wish to space out your writing, i.e. weekly short critical response papers, a substantial seminar paper at the end of the term, occasional 5-page papers, etc.* Your writings should engage the readings in an explicative, comparative, synthetic, and/or theoretical manner. If you choose to write a longer piece, you may use this paper as an occasion to interpret materials from your own research in light of the themes raised in this course. However, you must still address the readings in a rigorous fashion.
5. **Consultation.** You are required to consult with me briefly or extensively about your writing goals for the quarter. I want to meet and/or speak with each of you at least once by the end of Week 5.

Evaluation

Students' final evaluation will be based on the quality of student's written and oral work.

- 35% - Attendance, active and informed participation
- 15% - Quality of group presentation/facilitation
- 50% - Writing

Required Texts (Books available at SBX, articles will be on eReserve)

- Bachelard, Gaston. 1994. *The poetics of space*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Feld, Steven, and Keith H. Basso, eds. 1996. *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1979. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by A. Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.
- Harvey, David. 1990. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Cambridge: Blackwell. (Pages 3-65; 119-323)

Sebald, Winfried Georg. 1997. *The emigrants*. New York: New Directions.
Yoneyama, Lisa. 1999. *Hiroshima traces : time, space, and the dialectics of memory*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Outline of Course Schedule

UNIT 1. ORIENTATIONS

Week 1. (Jan 7)
Introduction to the Course

Week 2. (Jan 14)
Spatializing Power

Foucault, Michel. 1979. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by A. Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.
(selections TBA)

Week 3. (Jan 21)
Footsteps, Practices

de Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. (pp. xi-xxiv, 91-130)

Rofel, Lisa. 1992. Rethinking Modernity: Space and Factory Discipline in China. *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1):93-114.

Rodman, Margaret. 1992. Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality. *American Anthropologist* 94:640-656.

Week 4. (Jan 28)
Phenomenology, Poetics

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*.

UNIT 2. POLITICS OF SPACE AND PLACE

Week 5. (Feb 4)
Globality and the question of Place

Harvey, David. 1990. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Cambridge: Blackwell. (Pages 3-65; 119-323)

Week 6. (Feb 11)

Harvey, David. 1992. "From Space, to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity." in Bird et al, eds. *Mapping the futures : local cultures, global change*. London ; New York: Routledge.

Massey, Doreen. 1994. "Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place." in Bird et al, eds. *Mapping the futures : local cultures, global change*. London ; New York: Routledge.

Massey, Doreen. 1994. "Flexible Sexism." in *Space, Place and Gender*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota.

Tsing, Anna. 2000. "The Global Situation." *Cultural Anthropology* 15 (3):327-360.

Dirlik, Arif. 1999. Place-based Imagination: Globalism and the Politics of Place. *Review XXII* (2):151-87.

UNIT 3. MAKING AND WRITING PLACES

Week 7. (Feb 18)
Senses of Place

Feld, Steven, and Keith H. Basso, eds. 1996. "Introduction." *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
Basso, Keith. 1996. "Wisdom Sits in Places." in *Senses of Place*.
Feld, Steven. 1996. "Waterfalls of Song." in *Senses of Place*.
Casey, Edward S. 1996. "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena." In *Senses of Place*.
Stewart, Kathleen. 1996. An occupied place. In *Senses of Place*

Week 8. (Feb 25)
Memory, Space, Power

Yoneyama, Lisa. 1999. *Hiroshima traces : time, space, and the dialectics of memory*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
(Selections TBA)

Week 9. (Mar 3)
And again, Memory

Sebald, Winfried Georg. 1997. *The emigrants*. New York: New Directions.

Week 10. (Mar 10)
To be discussed

Some Possibilities:

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization..* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Massey, Doreen. 1994. *Space, Place and Gender*. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota.
Raffles, Hugh. 2002. *In Amazonia : A Natural History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Stewart, Kathleen. 1996. *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an "Other" America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Soja, Edward W. 1989. *Postmodern geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory*. New York: Verso.
Frank, Andre Gunder. 1998. *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*. Berkeley: California.

Suggestions?