

# Geography 607, Spring 2015

## Geography, Space, and Social Theory

### Course Description

A wide range of social science disciplines as well as the humanities (e.g. anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, and history) have turned to the importance and relevance of space (and geography) as constitutive of society, economy, ideologies, cultures, knowledge, and identity. This is clear in the use of spatial and cartographic metaphors in a wide range of social theorizations as well as in the work of researchers that focus on the materiality of spatializations, distributions, flows, borders, migrations, etc. This “spatial turn” in social theory provides new opportunities for understanding and interpreting the variety of processes that produce contemporary spatial imaginaries and space itself.

*Geography, Space, and Social Theory* will focus on social theories that both inform and have been informed by geography. It will emphasize the meanings and productions of space, its contextualization in society and science, its fixing and alignment with hegemonic social and economic structures, and the many potentials that exist for its disruption and reconstitution as a site of difference and alterity. The course will be of interest to students across the social sciences where theoretical understandings are increasingly intertwined with cartographic and spatial concerns, metaphors, and metrics.

The course is structured around several interrelated themes that emerge from the many intersections of geography and social theory. These include but are not limited to:

- The production of space
- Geographies of difference: race and gender
- Subjectivity and space
- Knowledge spaces
- Postcolonial geographies
- Critical cartographies
- Spaces/subjects of the economy

### Course Format

The course will be a readings seminar. Core readings for this year will include, but are not limited to, the following books. These will be supplemented with articles and other readings (see the Course Schedule on our Sakai site).

- Lefebvre, H. *The Production of Space*.
- Harvey, D. *Spaces of Global Capitalism*.
- Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari *One Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.
- Crampton, J. and S. Elden *Space, Knowledge, and Power*.
- Latour, B. *Reassembling the Social*.
- Massey, D. *For Space*.

*Course Requirements:*

Students are expected to fully engage with the readings, enthusiastically participate in class discussion, and work toward integrating the material into their own research interests.

Students will be expected to write brief (1-2 page) reaction papers each week (for exceptions see the Course Schedule), lead discussion, and make presentations. Weekly papers should reflect upon the readings and their usefulness or relevance to each student's own work or interests. There will be written (take-home) mid-term and final exams. Exams will be an essay format and will be based on discussion questions developed in class.

All students will be required to give at least one brief presentation of their reaction to the readings and will, each week, develop questions for discussion.

Students will be assessed according to the following scheme:

Reaction papers and presentations	25%
Mid-term exam	20%
Final exam	25%
Classroom participation	30%
Total	100%