

Geography 8601 Theory of Political Geography

TOPOLOGY

Thursday, 4:10-6:58pm, 1116 Derby Hall

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Topography has long been a central theoretical and methodological tool for critical human geographers. As developed by feminist geographers specifically, the term has been used to conceptualize the production of localities in relation to site-specific, as well as broader, forces and processes. For example, Cindi Katz explains topography as a way of theorizing the local and non-local aspects of place-making as well as the ongoing conflicts integral to this process—which, as she sees it, allows for a dynamic understanding of place amidst a larger uneven geography of flows and connections (see readings for Week 1).

Over the past decade, however, human geographers have begun to recast their inquiry into the production of localities via the concept of topology – or non-planar, non-linear, non-territorial, and non-distance based accounts of space and place, and their production. Using the rich debate between Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida on the borders between civilization and madness as a starting point, this seminar will explore what's at stake theoretically, as well as methodologically, in this shift from topography to topology.

Students new to the readings and thinkers listed below, as well as those more acquainted with this work, should feel equally welcome to participate in the seminar.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Regular seminar participation and attendance: 30%.
2. Seminar presentation: 30%. You will be responsible for leading discussion during one seminar (starting Week 4), along with at least one of your peers. Your goal is to highlight and discuss key arguments from the assigned texts, and which you consider worthy of extended group attention. We will review what makes for a good presentation before Week 3.
3. 2,500 word essay: 40%. Your essay can be on a topic of your choice, but should draw in detail on at least two major texts from the seminar. Our last class is December 3;

exam week runs December 11-17. I have to submit grades at the end of exam week. I'd like to receive your papers on **Monday December 15** so that I have ample time to read before submitting your grade. The essay format is open, but we can discuss 'best practices' as a group during the seminar.

GRADES

If you fulfill all the requirements for this course, as above, and if you do not fall afoul of Ohio State's academic integrity expectations (see section below), you will receive one of the five following letter grades:

A	93-100%
A-	90-92.9%
B+	87-89.9%
B	83-86.9%
B-	80-82.9%

An "A" grade indicates truly outstanding performance and top prospects for future scholarships and academic careers. An "A-" grade indicates a good student who performs at the standard expected for graduate students with no particular concerns or weaknesses. Students with clear weaknesses or generally mediocre performance will earn a "B+" or lower. A "B" or lesser grade indicates major problems.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

There is a good deal of reading for this course. **I consider reading, as well as related discussion of the readings during seminar, to comprise the bulk of work for this course.** Hence, I have weighted your regular seminar participation and your seminar presentation to count for 60% of your grade. We will talk about how to read efficiently during the first class.

My baseline expectation is that seminar participants will come every week having read the assigned readings in their entirety. I also expect seminar participants to **come prepared with something substantive to say about the week's readings.** All seminar participants should expect to be called upon each seminar.

Attendance for all seminars is required. If you miss a seminar, you must complete an essay (minimum 5 pages, double spaced) on the readings for that day. The essay should not be a summary; it should raise substantive issues. Essays for missed classes will be due the following week, at the beginning of seminar. **If you do not turn in your essay, I will automatically take 10% off your final grade.** If personal issues arise which make attendance (and active participation) difficult, please talk to me immediately.

Lastly, please **participate actively** in seminar. This will be a fun and rewarding seminar if everyone pitches in.

OFFICE HOURS

I will be holding office hours every **Friday from noon-2pm**. Please schedule a 20 minute slot with me ahead of time so that I can accommodate as many of you as possible during this two hour window. If you cannot make this 2 hour window, I will be happy to meet you at another time that fits our schedules. I encourage you to come to office hours.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research and other educational and scholarly activities. The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expects that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and in this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) (oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." **Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.** Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the COAM. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a **failing grade** in this course and **suspension or dismissal**. If you have questions about this policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me. If you have questions about how to cite sources, how to work in groups, etc, please contact me.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

I will not be ordering books. You are responsible for ordering your own copies online, or for getting the books/photocopies through our library system. If you are having difficulty locating a book, please see me immediately.

I will post articles that are available in our library system on Carmen.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON THEORY

“We can’t learn if we are unwilling to admit ignorance. In so far as the theory boy holds forth as if there were no limits to his own wisdom, he is engaged in ideological mystification. In so far as the climate of graduate school makes both men and women feel shy about admitting to ignorance and uncertainty, it encourages an intellectually destructive stance of all-knowingness. The problem, then, is how to express one’s passionate commitment to specific theories, ideas or methods without implying that those who are not equally enamored by them must be morons.”

— Toril Moi, James B. Duke Professor of Literature and Romance Studies, and Professor of English, and Theater Studies at Duke University

The point is that theoretical seminars do not need to be about narcissistic display and deafness to our peers. Please read Professor Moi’s full commentary @ http://www.torilmoi.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Moi_Arrogance-and-despair_2003.pdf before enrolling in this course.

Week 1 (August 27): Topology vs topography? I

- Katz, Cindi. 2001. On the grounds of globalization: A topography for feminist political engagement. *Signs* 26(4), pp. 1213-1234.
- Nagar, Richa, Victoria Lawson, Linda McDowell & Susan Hanson. 2002. Locating globalization: Feminist (re)readings of the subjects and spaces of globalization. *Economic Geography* 78 (3), pp. 257-284.
- Allen, John. 2011. Topological twists. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 1 (3), pp. 283-298.
- Blum, Virginia & Anna Secor. 2011. Psychotopologies: closing the circuit between psychic and material space. *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space* 29 (6), pp. 1030-1047.

Week 2 (September 3): Topology vs topography? II

- Marston, Sallie. A., J. P. Jones III, & Keith Woodward. 2005. Human geography without scale. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30 (4), pp. 416-432.
- Woodward, Keith, J. P. Jones III, & Sallie. A. Marston. 2010. Of eagles and flies: orientations toward the site. *Area* 42 (3), pp. 271-280.
- Woodward, Keith, J. P. Jones III, & Sallie. A. Marston. 2012. The politics of autonomous space. *Progress in Human Geography* 36 (2), pp. 204-224.

Week 3 (September 10): History of Madness I

Foucault, Michel. 2006 [1972]. *History of Madness*. Oxford: Blackwell.

NB: We will not be meeting this week. You will need a full two weeks to work through *History of Madness*.

Week 4 (September 17): History of Madness II

Foucault, Michel. 2006 [1972]. *History of Madness*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Gutting, Gary. 1989. The archaeology of knowledge. In *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 227-260.

Week 5 (September 24): Foucault-Derrida debate I

Derrida, Jacques. 1978 [1963]. Cogito and the history of madness. In *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago, pp. 36-76.

Foucault, Michel. 2006 [1972] Reply to Derrida. In *History of Madness*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 575-590.

Foucault, Michel. 2006 [1972] My body, this paper, this fire. In *History of Madness*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 550-574.

Derrida, Jacques. 1994. "To Do Justice to Freud": The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis. *Critical Inquiry* 20(2), 227-266.

Canguilhem, Georges & Porter, Catherine. 2005. The death of man, or exhaustion of the cogito? In *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault (2nd Edition)*, Gary Gutting ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 74-94.

Week 6 (October 1): Foucault-Derrida debate II

Grosz, Elizabeth. 2001. *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Writing Virtual and Real Space*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1988. Topology: thinking otherwise. In *Foucault*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 47-123.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. Theatrum philosophicum. In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, Donald F. Bouchard ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 165-198.

Week 7 (October 8): Borders I

Mezzadra, Sandro, & Brett Neilson. 2013. *Border as Method, or the Multiplication of Labor*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Balibar, Étienne. 2002. What is a border (Ch 4) & The borders of Europe (Ch 5). In *Politics and the Other Scene*. London: Verso, pp. 75-103.

Week 8 (October 15): Borders II

Weizman, Eyal. 2007. *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*. London: Verso.

Sacco, Joe. 2009. *Footnotes in Gaza*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Week 9 (October 22): Dispositif

Foucault, M. 1980 [1977]. The Confession of the flesh. In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, C. Gordon, ed. New York: Pantheon, pp. 194-228.

Deleuze, Gilles. 2007. What is a dispositif? In *Two Regimes of Madness*,. New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 343-352.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2009. *What is an Apparatus? And Other Essays*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2014. "What is a destituent power?" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 32(1), pp. 65-74.

Week 10 (October 29): Geontology

Povinelli, Elizabeth. A. 2006. *Empire of Love*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Yusoff, Kathryn. 2013. Geologic life: prehistory, climate, futures in the Anthropocene. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 31 (5), pp. 779-795.

Week 11 (November 5): Temporality

Povinelli, Elizabeth. A. 2011. *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Week 12 (November 12): Producing space and place

Shields, Rob. 2013. *Spatial Questions: Cultural Topologies and Social Spatialization*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Lefebvre, Henri. 2002 [1961]. The formal implements. In *Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday (Volume 2)*. London: Verso, pp. 100-179.

Week 13 (November 19): Culture and topology

Braidotti, Rosi. 2013. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Week 14 November 26)

THANKSGIVING, NO SEMINAR

Week 15 (December 3): Territory

Grosz, Elizabeth. 2008. *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Yusoff, Kathryn, Elizabeth Grosz, Nigel Clark, Arun Saldanha, & Catherine Nash. 2012. Geopower: a panel on Elizabeth Grosz's *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30 (6), pp. 971-988.