

topographies of law
ANT 4930 Section 8098

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-4pm
or by appointment

Tuesdays 8-9
(3:00 - 4:55pm)
Thursdays 9
(4:05 - 4:55pm)
TUR 2333

Description:

How does law acquire substance through spatial metaphors and seem to attach itself to physical terrains? In this course we will consider the topographic dimensions of law as they manifest through territorial regimes and prohibited places but also through controls imposed on circulations of human and non-human beings (and things), images and other kinds of signs. This will require us to train our initial focus on states and on the everyday ways people learn to navigate their political margins. We will also consider social processes through which some areas or zones may appear as if they were situated beyond legal protections or constraints.

As law fuses with place strong affects often result. They may intensify ordinary encounters, charge situations with threat, or quietly insist as a sinister potential. Registering their textured pulsations calls for an ethnographic approach, relentlessly descriptive yet subtle in tone. Therefore, one of our main objectives will be to inquire how ethnographic writing can contribute to documenting the force of law as it inhabits particular landscapes and locales.

We will ask: how is law expressed, sensed and practiced depending on the place? For instance, how does enforcement vary between cities, towns, rural areas or roads, seas with their pirates, forts and fortifications, islands or even island prisons? Holding fast to the deliberate open-endedness of such questions we will work towards building a semester-long dialogue which is rigorous, energetic and creative.

The writings of Michel Foucault, Charles Tilly, James Scott, and Franz Kafka, among others, will provide theoretical support and inspiration. We will weigh their importance for legal anthropology as we bring them into conversation with recent ethnographies of law, state and the affects of place.

Overview of Requirements: This class will be run as a seminar. Active participation in all discussions is expected. Each student will be asked to keep an ethnographic journal, write three short response papers and participate in a team presentation. There will be a take-home mid-term exam as well as a final research paper.

Objectives:

1. to grasp critical concepts and thematic concerns of spatial approaches to law
2. to hone skills of textual analysis and interpretation
3. to enhance understanding of ethnographic modes of research and representation
4. to become better writers

Required Texts:

Chalfin, B. *Neoliberal frontiers* (University of Chicago Press, 2010)
Foucault, M. *Security, territory, population* (Picador, 2009)
Heller-Roazen, D. *The enemy of all* (Zone Books, 2009)
Kafka, F. *The castle*. trans. Mark Harman. (Schocken, 1998)
Scott, J. *Seeing like a state* (Yale University Press, 1999)
Virilio, P. *Bunker archeology* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2008)

Copies of the above texts will be placed on reserve at Library West. All remaining class readings can be downloaded from the Sakai course page.

Attendance: Arriving punctually and remaining until the end of each class is required. An attendance sign-up sheet will be circulated at the beginning of each session. If you must miss a class session, please inform the Instructor ahead of time (or as soon as possible) and provide appropriate documentation. In such cases the student is responsible for contacting a classmate to obtain notes on materials covered while away.

Absences for reasons of religious holiday, illness, and official university business are excused; however, proper notification must still be provided.

Please note: Any more than *two unexcused* absences will undermine performance in the course. With the *fourth* unexcused absence the final grade will automatically be reduced a full letter. Students with *five or more* unexcused absences will fail. On the other hand, bonus credit will be granted for perfect (or near perfect) attendance.

Evaluations – Final grades for the course will be calculated according to five criteria:

Participation (10%): Students are expected to play an active, informed role in class discussions and in so doing contribute to the overall success of the course. Please arrive at each session on time with the assigned materials in hand, having carefully read them all, and prepared to share impressions, questions and interpretations. You are also encouraged to meet with the Instructor in office hours at least two times during the semester to talk about your individual progress in the course or plans for the final project.

Ethnographic Journal (10%): For this assignment choose a place (or a route) which in some respect is infused by explicit laws, unwritten norms or simply an odd sort of charge. You should spend two hours a week there, observing. What do you see and sense in or around this place? Whatever it is do your best to document it. Then, reflect further upon your observations in writing. You may wish to supplement what you write with images (drawings, photographs, video) or sound recordings and even analyze those images and sounds as a means of enriching your journal.

For the journal a completion grade will be given at the end of the semester. You will be asked, however, to incorporate materials or reflections from your journal into the final project paper, making it a crucial resource for thinking about space, place and law.

Short Commentaries (10%): 300 words each, 3 in all.

Team Presentation (15%): In collaboration with two or three fellow classmates each student will have an opportunity to participate in a group presentation on one of the assigned texts. Individual team members should study the text closely, taking extensive notes, and then meet with the group outside class to draw up a list of crucial themes. Each member will pick one of those themes and then write a 500-word discussion about it and share that interpretation as part of the team's class presentation.

The purpose of the group presentation is less to summarize the readings than to situate them within the ideas and concepts of the course. It should also outline specific concerns and hone questions. Theme discussions written by individual team members are due following the presentation.

Mid-term Exam (25%): The mid-term will be a take-home exam distributed two weeks before the due date.

Term Project Paper (30%): Building upon the materials from the ethnographic journal the final paper should critically examine one of the class themes. The specific topic of the project must be elaborated in consultation with the Instructor. Approximate length: 3000 words.

A concise 250-word abstract that clearly outlines the objectives of the project will be due in late October. The term paper itself must be handed in no later than the last day of class.

All papers, exams and reports should be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins and pages numbered. In addition to handing in a hard copy of the assignment, *you are required to submit an electronic version to the Instructor via Sakai using the turnitin.org function to ensure proper attributions and acknowledgments.*

Written assignments will be judged on content (the extent to which they succeed in explicating course material and relevant themes) but also in terms of style (coherence, persuasiveness and creativity).

Assignment Deadlines:

- 1) Short Commentaries: 8/30, 9/11, and 9/27
- 2) Mid-term Exam: 10/15
- 3) Team Presentation: TBA
- 4) Term Paper Abstract: 10/25
- 5) Final Paper: 12/6

Late policy: Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Mid-term exams, presentation reports and commentaries handed in late but still within one week of the original due date will be docked the equivalent of a full letter grade. After that they will no longer be accepted. No extensions will be granted for the term paper.

Academic Honesty:

All work submitted by a student for a grade must be completed by that student and free from unauthorized assistance or deliberate misrepresentations. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating is a grade of zero points on the assignment in question; in such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. These are available online at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php> - [academichonestyguidelines](#).

ADA Statement: “Students with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to complete assignments successfully and otherwise satisfy course criteria, are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible to identify and plan specific accommodations. Students will be asked to supply a letter from the Disability Resource Center to assist in planning accommodations.”

Grading Scale: The following scale will be used for grades on all assignments and exams: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 79-82=B-; 76-78=C+; 72-75=C; 69-71=C-; 66-68=D+; 62-65=D; 59-61=D-; 58 and below=E (failing).

Regarding university grading policies, be advised that a grade of C- is not valid for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or for college basic distribution credit. For questions about minus grades, please see <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>.

You may consult current UF policy on how grade point averages are calculated at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

Health and Counseling: The University offers the following health and counseling services for students in the event personal problems threaten to hinder academic performance:

University Counseling Center (301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575),

Student Mental Health (Student Health Care Center, 392-1171), and

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (Student Health Care Center, 392-1161).

Please note: The Instructor may make minor adjustments to class readings or assignments during the course of the semester. Any and all modifications will be announced ahead of time.

Course Schedule

week 1 introductions

8/23 opening remarks: why topographies of law?

8/25 Foucault, "Of Other Spaces"

Benda-Beckman et. al., "Space and Legal Pluralism"

week 2 lands of no one

8/30 Kernaghan, "Shooting in Pacae"

commentary due

- 9/1 Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth* (selections):
- “Pre-Global International Law”
 - “Land-Appropriation as a Constitutive Process of International Law”
 - “Freedom of the Seas”

supplemental reading:

Merry, “Legal Pluralism”

week 3 what is a state?

- 9/6 Tilly, “War-making and state-making as organized crime”

- 9/8 Scott, *Seeing like a State*: Chap.1

supplemental reading:

Abrams, “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State”

week 4 administrative simplifications

- 9/13 Scott, *Seeing like a State*: Chap.2 commentary due

- 9/15 Scott, *Seeing like a State*: Chap.7

week 5 ethnography and border controls

- 9/20 Chalfin, *Neoliberal Frontiers*, Part I & Part II: 3

- 9/22 Chalfin, *Neoliberal Frontiers*, Part II: 6 & 7

week 6 the illegibility of state margins

9/27 Poole, "Between Threat and Guarantee" commentary due

9/29 Roitman, "Productivity of the Margins: the Reconstitution of State Power in the Chad Basin"

week 7 island (prisons)

10/4 Deleuze, "Desert Islands"

Comaroff, "Terror and Territory: Guantánamo & the Space of Contradiction"

10/6 Taussig, *My Cocaine Museum* (selected chapters)
 ■ "Gorgona"
 ■ "Islands"
 ■ "Underwater Mountains"
 ■ "Sloth"

week 8 a theory of 'security'

10/13 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*: lectures 1 & 2

10/15 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*: lecture 3 mid-term due

week 9 thinking through fiction

10/18 Kafka, *The Castle*

10/20 Kafka, *The Castle*

week 10 what is a territory?

10/25 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*: lectures 11-13

Sack, "Human Territoriality: A Theory" final paper abstract due

10/27 **Film:** *Monsters* (dir. Gareth Edwards)

week 11 fortresses and passageways

11/1 Virilio, *Bunker Archeology*, pp. 9-180

Weizman, *Hollow Land*: Chap. 2 "Fortifications"

11/3 Tawil-Souri, "Qalandia Checkpoint as Space and Non-place"

Weizman, *Hollow Land*: Chap. 6 "The Wall"

week 12 pirates

11/8 Heller-Roazen, *The Enemy of All*

11/10 Heller-Roazen, *The Enemy of All*

week 13 *res nullius*

11/15 Milun, *The Political Uncommons*: Chaps 1-2

11/17 **Film:** TBA

week 14 whales and outer space

11/22 Milun, *The Political Uncommons*: Chaps 3-5

11/24 No class: Thanksgiving Holiday

week 15 affectations of 'nature'

11/29 Raffles, *In Amazonia*: Chaps. 1-4

12/1 Raffles, *In Amazonia*: Chap. 7

week 16 ethnographic sketches

12/6 project presentations

term paper due