Roads and Road Publics
ANG 6930 sec 15CB / ANT 4930 sec 15CD
Spring 2014

Instructor: Richard Kernaghan
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30-5:30pm
or by appointment

Wednesdays 3-5
(9:35-12:35 pm)
TUR 2341

Description:
What kinds of communities emerge through the material and metaphorical construction of roads as ‘public’ works? What kinds of events and encounters do such works entail and make possible? This course examines roads and road-building for the ways in which they throw into palpable relief the inevitable tensions between ‘state’ and ‘people’ while time and again underscoring the impossible task of representing public interest or imagined futures in general.
In this class we will weigh the distinctive features and shared traits of different kinds of roads with attention to how through them place, time and space appear to coalesce. However, we will privilege major, or mega-project, highways for their inextricable connection to territorial administration, regimes of property and political belonging. In particular we will be mindful of the multiple uses and effects of new roads: how they have reconfigured urban and rural landscapes, impacted indigenous populations, shaped settler ideologies and bolstered state claims to radical title over frontiers. Asking what binds infrastructure to assertions of eminent domain will allow us to underscore the political character of roads and their potential for becoming extremely charged spaces of encounter: as nodal points of governmentality (checkpoints with their interpellations of state subjects and possibilities for various forms of profiling); as sites of popular contention (demonstrations, strikes, blockages); or as zones of “everyday insecurity” (highway robbery and traffic accidents).

Along the way we will consider the expressive culture of land transportation and travel, while assessing the affective dimensions of roads through their experience and narration as rendered in works of ethnography, literature and film. Here the challenge will be to keep the inquiry never far from the substantial: dirt and dust, stones and asphalt, but also the various modes of sense that accrue to and through the condition of the surface itself. Emphasis on materiality is crucial since much thinking about roads all too quickly flies off into abstraction and allegory. Ultimately, we want to ask how roads articulate distinct kinds of social space and time and examine the variable modes of sociality (intimacy, distance, anonymity, etc.) they produce.

**Overview of Requirements:** This class is run as a seminar with active participation in all discussions expected. Each student will be asked to prepare and present a seminar report on one or more of the assigned readings at least once during the semester. There will be a midterm exam/paper and also a final paper.

**Texts:**
Cache, B. *Earth Moves* (The MIT Press, 1995)
Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1984)
Virilio, *Speed and Politics* (Semiotext(e), 2007)

While the above books have been placed on reserve at Library West, I recommend you obtain a copy for use during class. All remaining assigned and supplemental readings will be available to download from the Sakai course page.

**Partial Filmography:**
Alice in the Cities (Wenders, 1974)
Café Lumière (Hsiao Hsien, 2003)
Central do Brasil / Central Station (Salles, 1998)
En el hoyo / In the Pit (Rulfo, 2006)
Iracema – Uma Transa Amazônica (Bodansky & Senna, 1974)
Metal and Melancholy (Honigmann, 1994)
Subida al cielo / Mexican Bus Ride (Buñuel, 1952)
Le Salaire de la peur / The Wages of Fear (Clouzot, 1953)

Attendance: Please arrive punctually and remain until the end of class. An attendance sign-up sheet will be circulated each session. If you must miss class, please inform me ahead of time (or as soon as possible) and provide appropriate documentation. In the event of an absence your responsibility to contact a classmate in order to obtain notes on the 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: More than one unexcused absence will undermine performance in the course. After the second unexcused absence the final grade will be reduced a full letter. Students with four or more unexcused absences will fail. On the other hand, bonus credit will be granted for perfect (or near perfect) attendance.

For official UF Policy on attendance and absences please consult: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Evaluations – Final course grades will be calculated according to a combination of four criteria:

Participation (20%): A grade for participation will be assessed at the end of the semester based on the degree to which you play an active, informed role in class discussions and in so doing contribute to the overall success of the course. This requires that you arrive at each session on time with the assigned materials in hand, having carefully read them all, and prepared to share your impressions, questions and interpretations. You are also highly encouraged to meet with the Instructor in office hours two or three times during the semester to talk about your progress in the course and your plans for the final project.

Seminar Report/Presentation (25%): Every student will be responsible for the preparation and presentation of one seminar report on the assigned readings of a particular week. The seminar report should not be a mere summary of the texts but rather a well-crafted, spirited interpretation that situates the readings within the ideas and concepts of the course. It should also outline specific concerns and hone questions. The student in charge of the coming week’s presentation should circulate a list of discussion points and questions at least 24 hours prior to class (that is, no later than 9:30 am on Tuesday) via Sakai.
**Mid-term paper (25%)**: The midterm is a first draft of the final paper. The required length for undergraduate students is 2000 words; for graduate students 4000 words. An initial project abstract is due three weeks ahead of the mid-term deadline.

**Term project paper (30%)**:  
For undergraduate students – The final paper is a “road ethnography” broadly defined approximately 3300 words in length. Based on a research project of your own design the paper should critically examine one of the class themes. The specific topic should be elaborated in close consultation with me (the instructor).  

For graduate students – The final paper should be an original, persuasive and creative engagement with one or more of the class concepts. Of approximately 5500-7000 words in length, it should contribute directly towards the development of a conference paper, journal article or dissertation chapter. The term paper must be handed in no later than the last day of class. A revised project abstract that clearly outlines the final objectives and framework of the paper is due in late-March.

All papers, exams and reports should be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins and pages numbered. In addition to submitting a hard copy of the assignment, you are also required to send an electronic version to the Instructor via Sakai.

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

**Assignment Deadlines**:
1) mid-term project abstract: February 5  
2) mid-term paper: February 26  
3) final paper abstract: March 26  
4) final paper: April 23

**Late policy**: Assignments are due at the beginning of class of the calendar deadline. Mid-term papers and seminar reports 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 final term paper.

**Academic Honesty**: Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. All work submitted for a grade must be free from unauthorized assistance or deliberate misrepresentations of one’s own effort. 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/studenthandbook/studentrights.php#academichonestyguidelines](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studenthandbook/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:** 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](http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html).

You may consult current UF policy on how grade point averages are calculated at [https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#calculating](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#calculating).

**Additional UF Resources:**
Reading & Writing Center (Broward Hall, 392-0791)
Career Resource Center (Reitz Union, 392-1601)
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:** I may make minor adjustments to class readings or assignment requirements during the course of the semester. Any and all modifications will be announced ahead of time.
Course Schedule

week 1
introductions: what’s the public of a public work?

1/8
Larkin, “the Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure”

week 2
theorizing things public

1/15
Kafka, “The Great Wall of China”
Winner, “Do artifacts have politics?”
Kharkhordin, “Things as res publicae”

Warner, Publics and Counterpublics, Chapter 1: “Public and Private”

Pedersen & Bunkenborg, “Roads that Separate”

supplemental reading:
Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, Ch. 1-2
Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere”

week 3
chronotope, take 1

1/22
Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel” (excerpts)
Star, “Ethnography of Infrastructure”
Dalakoglou, “The Road: An ethnography of the Albanian-Greek cross-border motorway”

Cresswell, On the Move, chapter 1: “The Production of Mobilities”

supplemental:
Roseman, “How we built the road”
Earle, “Routes through the landscape”
week 4  multiplicities

1/29  Brighenti, “Tarde, Canetti, and Deleuze on crowds and packs”
     Deleuze, “Many Politics”
     Tarde, “The Public & the Crowd”
     Canetti, *Crowds & Power* (excerpts)
     Canetti, *The Torch in My Ear* (excerpts)

supplemental:
Harvey and Knox, “Impossible Publics? Enthusiasms, Refusals and Confrontations around a Peruvian Road Building Project”
Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*: lecture one (excerpt)

week 5  chronotope, take 2

2/5  Arguedas, *Yawar Fiesta*
     Kosok, “Transport in Peru”

supplemental:
Masquelier, “Road mythologies”

mid-term abstract due

week 6  road events

     Fairhead, “Paths of Authority”
     Lombard, “Navigational Tools for Central African Roadblocks”
     Klaeger, “Rush and Relax”
**week 7**

**city terrains**

2/19

Kittler, “City as medium”

Cache, *Earth Moves*

Melly, “Ethnography of the road”

**week 8**

**scales and speeds of state-space**

2/26

Lefebvre, “Space and the State”

Virilio, *Speed and Politics* (excerpts)

Lamont, “Speed Governors”

Khan, “Flaws in the Flow: Roads and their modernity in Pakistan”

Harvey & Knox, “The Enchantments of Infrastructure”

*supplemental:*

Perz, “Unofficial Road Building in the Amazon”

**mid-term papers due**

**3/5**

**SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS **

**week 9**

**perceptual transformations**

3/12

Bergson, “The Perception of Change”

Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey* (selected chapters)

Schnapp, “Crash”

Williamson, “The Fluid State: Malaysia’s National Expressway”
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>infrastructural voids</td>
<td>Salvatore, “Imperial Mechanics”</td>
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<td>Rabinow, <em>French Modern</em> (excerpts)</td>
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<td>Carse, “Nature as Infrastructure”</td>
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<td>Campbell, “Between the Material and Figural Road: The Incompleteness of Colonial Geographies in Amazonia”</td>
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<td>Starostina, “Engineering the Empire of Images”</td>
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<td>ruins</td>
<td>Simmel, “The Ruin”</td>
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<td><em>term paper abstract due</em> Stewart, “Mimetic Excess in an Occupied Place”</td>
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<td>Gordillo, “Ships Stranded in the Forest”</td>
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<td>Navaro-Yashin, “Affective Spaces, Melancholic Objects”</td>
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<td>sense and surface</td>
<td>Ficek, “Calle Principal”</td>
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<td>Kernaghan, “Furrows and Walls”</td>
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<td>Mrazek, “Asphalt as Language”</td>
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<td>Zardini, “Surface of the City”</td>
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<td>Perz et al., “Global Economic Integration &amp; Local Community Resilience: Road Paving &amp; Rural Demographic Change in the Southwestern Amazon”</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td><strong>the road: topology or topography?</strong></td>
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<td>Lash, “Deforming the Figure”</td>
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<td>Harvey, “Topological Quality of Infrastructural Relation”</td>
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<td>Deleuze, <em>The Fold</em>: Chapters 7-9</td>
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