

topographies of law

ANG6930-2125 /ANT4930-23FF • Spring 2016



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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-4pm

Thursdays 3-5
(9:35am - 12:35pm)
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Description: How do places become saturated with prohibitions or altered through controls imposed on the circulations of human and non-human beings, images as well as other sorts of signs? How does law acquire substance through spatial metaphors and attach itself to actual physical terrains? What social processes come into play when some areas or zones appear as if they were situated beyond legal protections of any kind at all?

In this course we examine how legal phenomena come to be expressed, sensed and practiced depending on the material setting. We inquire into how the enforcement of specific laws may vary across distinct topographies and topological formations: for instance, between cities, towns, rural areas or roads; seas with their pirates; forts and fortifications; islands or even island prisons. Indeed, one of our guiding objectives will be to ask how ethnographic writing can contribute to documenting the force of law as it inhabits particular landscapes and locales.

Holding fast to the deliberate open-endedness of such questions we will work towards building a semester-long dialogue that is rigorous, energetic and creative. Writings of Michael Taussig, Nancy Munn, Michel Serres, Gilles Deleuze, Elizabeth Povinelli, and Franz Kafka, among others, will provide some theoretical support and inspiration. We will weigh their contributions to legal anthropology as we bring them into conversation with recent ethnographies of law, infrastructure and affects of place.

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 term paper with a first draft due by mid-semester.

Required Texts:

Cache, B. *Earth Moves* (The MIT Press, 1995)
Gordillo, G. *Rubble* (Duke University Press, 2014)
Harris, M. *Life on the Amazon* (Oxford University Press, 2000)
Heller-Roazen, D. *The Enemy of All* (Zone Books, 2009)
Kafka, F. *The Castle*. trans. Mark Harman (Schocken, 1998)
Serres, M. *Rome: The First Book of Foundations* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015)
Starosielski, N. *The Undersea Network* (Duke University Press, 2015)
Virilio, P. *Bunker Archeology* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2008)

The above books have been placed on reserve at Library West. However, you will need a copy for use during class. All remaining assigned and recommended readings will be available to download from the Canvas course page.

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, don't forget 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 risk failing. Bonus credit will, however, 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 course's overall success. Please arrive at each session on time with the assigned materials in hand and prepared to share your impressions, questions and interpretations. You are also highly encouraged to meet with me in office hours two or three times during the semester to talk about your progress in the course and your on-going work on the final project.

Seminar Report and Presentation (25%): You 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 merely summarize but offer 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. Student(s) in charge of the coming week's presentation must circulate a list of discussion points and questions *at least 24 hours* prior to class (that is, no later than 9:30am on Wednesday) via Canvas.

Mid-term paper (25%): The midterm is a first draft of the final paper. The required length for is 4000 words.

A concise 250-word abstract that clearly outlines the objectives of the project is due on February 10.

Term project paper (30%): 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 itself must be submitted no later than the last day of class.**

All papers handed in for a grade should be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. *Please staple and number the pages.* In addition to a hard copy of the assignment, *you are also required to submit an electronic version via Canvas*, using the Turnitin review service.

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) seminar paper: TBA
- 2) term paper abstract: 2/11
- 3) mid-semester draft of final paper: 3/10
- 4) final paper: 4/14

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. Except for extenuating circumstances, no extensions will be granted for the term paper.

Academic Honesty: As you are well aware, 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

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>

also

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/seminars-modules/academic-integrity-module>

Accommodations for students with disabilities: The University of Florida is committed to providing academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, a student should present his/her accommodation letter to me supporting a request for accommodations. The University encourages students with disabilities to follow these procedures as early as possible within the semester.

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>

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>

Additional UF Resources:

The Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall (864-1138) <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/for-students/>

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union (392-1601) <http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>

Student Health Care Center (392-1161) <http://shcc.ufl.edu/>, and

University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road (392-1575)
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>

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

C o u r s e S c h e d u l e

week 1

why topographies of law?

1/7

introductions

film: *La Bestia* (Ultreras)

Kafka, "The Burrow"

Kernaghan, "Furrows & walls"

week 2

islands

1/14

Deleuze, "Desert Islands"

Taussig, *My Cocaine Museum* (selected chapters)

- "Gorgona"
- "Islands"
- "Underwater Mountains"
- "Sloth"

Carter, "Gothic Sovereignty"

supplementary reading:

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

week 3

taboo, territory, milieu

1/21

Munn, "Excluded Spaces"
Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape"
Brighenti, "Of Territorology"

Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*: "Of the Refrain"

week 4

native lands

1/28

Deborah Bird Rose, "The Long Transitive Moment"
Povinelli, "At Home with the Violence of Recognition"

film: *Two Laws*

(Borrooloola Aboriginal Community with C. Strachan & A. Cavadini)

supplementary reading:

Belmessous (ed.), *Native Claims: Indigenous Law against Empire*

week 5

proper marks

2/4

Serres, *The Parasite*: "Stercoral Origins of Property Rights"

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*: Chapters I-V
Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (excerpts on justice & property)

Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*: "Property," "Contract"

Waldron "Property and Ownership" (SEP entry)

supplementary readings:

Cristi, "Hegel on Property and Recognition"
Waldron, "Advantages & Difficulties of the Humean Theory of Property"

week 6

pirates and the high seas

2/11

Cohen, "Fluid States"

Heller-Roazen, *The Enemy of All* (selected chapters)

Gaynor, "Piracy in the Offing"

paper abstract due

week 7

rivers

2/18

Harris, *Life on the Amazon*

film: Radio Belen (Annicchini)

week 8

perspective | prescription

2/25

Cache, *Earth Moves*

film: Godard, "Lettre à Freddy Buache"

Spring Break

3/3

NO CLASS

week 9

towers and corridors

3/10

Kafka, *The Castle*

mid-term paper due

Deleuze & Guattari, *Kafka*, ch.8: "Blocks, Series, Intensities"

week 10

forts and fortresses

3/17

Virilio, *Bunker Archeology*, pp. 9-180

week 11

below the waves

3/24

Detienne, "Old Man and the Sea"

Starosielski, *The Undersea Network*

week 12

ruins

3/31

Gordillo, *Rubble*

week 13

founding cities

4/7

Livy, *The History of Rome*, Book 1

Serres, *Rome: The First Book of Foundations*

week 14

final remarks

4/14

project presentations

final paper due