

Politics of Space

Tues/Thurs 1:15-3:00PM Willis 203

Professor Huan Gao

Office: Willis 413

Office hour: TuThur 3:30-5:30PM or by appointment

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Course Description

This course explores theories about space and investigates the impact of our physical environment in a broad range of social and political issues such as public trust, social movements, and governance. We will look at how parks, monuments, residential communities, and other features of our cities and towns are made, who makes them, and in turn, their effects on our daily lives. We will study theories of Henri Lefebvre, James Scott, Michael Foucault, and we will apply these theories to explore empirical questions of spatial politics, looking at issues such as gated communities, residential segregation, public space, and protest policing. The goal of this course is to encourage students to think about everyday environmental features in a more systematic and theoretic manner and to guide students to investigate one place in depth and design a social scientific inquiry into spatial issues.

Course Materials

- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. Trans. A. Sheridan. Paris, France: Gallimard (1975).
- Lefebvre, Henri, and Donald Nicholson-Smith. *The Production of Space*. Blackwell: Oxford, 1991.

Class Requirements

This course is about reading, analyzing, and criticizing classic theories and new empirical research in spatial politics, as well as leveraging things learned to pursue independent inquiries about issues in our daily environments. Therefore, it is crucial that students keep up with their readings assignments and always arrive in class having read the assigned materials and ready to discuss. This course requires two books; all other readings will be made available electronically. You are encouraged to mark up questions, reflections, and points of interest as you read, and you should bring these responses to the class discussion.

Classroom Policy

Active participation in class discussion is a crucial part of this course. It will also form a part of your grade. Participation means actively analyzing, questioning, and otherwise engaging with readings as well as comments from your classmates in discussions. You are expected to participate often and demonstrate that you consistently complete reading assignments. Participation also means contributing

to a positive classroom environment. It means being punctual for class, showing courtesy and supporting your peers in discussions, and taking responsibility in group projects and peer support activities.

Office Hours

Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, from 3:30 to 5:30PM. You should feel welcome to come to office hour with any question or concern. You can also email me for appointment time outside of usual office hours should you be busy during regular office hours.

Student Evaluations

Student evaluations will be based on five components:

- 1) Class participation 20%
- 2) Assignment 1: City sketch 5%
- 3) Assignment 2: Urban administration report 15%
- 4) Assignment 3: Urban problems report 15%
- 5) Assignment 4: Simulation debate assignment 10%
- 6) Assignment 5: Detailed final research outline 3%; peer review 2%
- 7) Final project 30%

Summary of Assignments

Participation (20%)

Your participation grade is determined by both your participation in class discussions and your contribution towards a constructive learning environment. Participation means actively analyzing, questioning, and otherwise engaging with readings as well as comments from your classmates in discussions. You are expected to participate often and demonstrate that you consistently complete reading assignments. Participation also means contributing to a positive classroom environment. It means being punctual for class, showing courtesy and supporting your peers in discussions, and taking responsibility in group projects and peer support activities. Peer evaluations for group activities will also play a part in participation grade.

Research Paper (30%+5%)

The central coursework for POSC 372 is a research paper about an urban or environmental problem in one particular place. Some potential topic areas include the impact of policing on neighborhoods, increasing surveillance, disaster prevention and preparedness, the erosion of public space, etc. You are encouraged to choose a place familiar to you that is relatively easy to research during the term, such as one's hometown, Northfield, or an area in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. All individual assignments over the course of the term will help build towards the final research paper. It is helpful to think about potential research questions, methods, and data sources for your research paper as you complete each assignment. (However, you are not bound by assignments in any way.) Students are required to submit a detailed paper outline late February/early March. This outline should lay out the research question, list some relevant literature, propose a research method to address the question, mention potential sources of data and evidence, and justify both the question and the proposed

method. Your research proposal should also ideally reflect some of your findings and ideas from earlier assignments. A workshop will be held to allow everyone an opportunity to share the research proposal and receive feedback. You will also have to produce written feedback for one assigned partner. The final paper is due on the last day of the exam period.

Assignment #1: City Sketch (5%)

Select a city (or administrative division) that you are interested in exploring. Research and compile a report of basic facts about the city, covering the topics of history, geography, demographics, and economic conditions (key industries, major corporations/largest employers, unemployment level, etc.). You should pay special attention and discuss potential data sources for research about the city. Finally, briefly discuss one thing about the city that drew your interests. You are encouraged to include maps, plans, photos, and other visualizations in the report.

Assignment #2: Administration Report (15%)

Write a case study of the planning procedures and governance structure of your selected city; apply the theory of Scott and Foucault to analyze how urban administrative structure in your city affects power relations of different social groups. Who ultimately holds the power to shape the lived environment? How do different social groups and stakeholders advocate for their knowledge and interests? You should pay special attention to the specifics of the planning process in the city. What is the typical permitting procedure like? How can developers and businesses influence the planning process, and what about individual citizens and civil society groups, how do they participate? You should also discuss government structure, looking at questions like what positions are elected, how often do elections happen, how is the city bureaucracy organized, etc.

Assignment #3: Urban Problems Report (15%)

In this assignment you will explore problems that plague your selected city/area. Your report should contain preliminary research on three administrative, governance, and/or social problems. Some examples include: the excessive use of police surveillance and violence in certain neighborhoods, the securitization of public spaces, urban sprawl that made purchasing daily necessities difficult (the “food desert” problem), among others. You should provide a basic description of the problem, discuss what populations are affected, detail current effort to find solutions, as well as analyze the impact and implications of these problems. This is an opportunity to explore some interesting urban questions for your final research project.

Assignment #4: Urban Issues Simulation Debate (group) (10%)

For this debate assignment, each student will be assigned the role of a real estate developer, a local NGO organizer and issue advocate, or a city planner. Together you will negotiate the future fate of a derelict city park.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

January 6	Introduction: Cities and Planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qian, Zhu. "Without zoning: Urban development and land use controls in Houston." <i>Cities</i> 27, no. 1 (2010): 31-41. • Scott, James. <i>Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Failed</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. Introduction. • Harvey, David. "The right to the city." In <i>The Urban Sociology Reader</i>, pp. 443-446. Routledge, 2012.
January 11	Seeing Like a State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seeing Like a State</i>, Chapter 1-2
January 13	Seeing Like a State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seeing Like a State</i>, Chapter 3-4
January 18	High Modernist Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, Benjamin. <i>Roots of the state: Neighborhood organization and social networks in Beijing and Taipei</i>. Stanford University Press, 2012. Chapter 1-2, 5 • Assignment 1: City Sketch due
January 20	Discipline and Punish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foucault, Michel. <i>Discipline and Punish</i>. Trans. A. Sheridan. Paris, France: Gallimard (1975). Part Three 1-2
January 25	Discipline and Punish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foucault, Michel. <i>Discipline and Punish</i>. Trans. A. Sheridan. Paris, France: Gallimard (1975). Part Three 3; Part Four 1.
January 27	Contemporary Panopticon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koskela, Hille. "'Cam Era'—the contemporary urban Panopticon." <i>Surveillance & Society</i> 1, no. 3 (2003): 292-313. • Glitsos, Laura. "COVID-19 and the 'perfectly governed city'." <i>Journal for Cultural Research</i> (2021): 1-17.
February 1	Urban Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Speaker • Assignment 2: Urban Administration Report due, presentations
February 3	Protest Policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbert, Steve. "The "Battle of Seattle" revisited: Or, seven views of a protest-zoning state." <i>Political Geography</i> 26, no. 5 (2007): 601-619. • Gillham, Patrick, Bob Edwards, and John A. Noakes. "Strategic Incapacitation and the Policing of Occupy Wall Street Protests in New York City, 2011." <i>Policing and Society</i> 23, no. 1 (2013): 81-102. • Zajko, Mike, and Daniel Béland. "Space and protest policing at international summits." <i>Environment and Planning D: Society and Space</i> 26, no. 4 (2008): 719-735.
February 8	Revolutionary Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gunning, Jeroen, and Ilan Zvi Baron. <i>Why occupy a square?: People, protests and movements in the Egyptian revolution</i>. Oxford University Press, 2014. Chapter 7-8, Conclusion • Documentary viewing in class: <i>Gate of Heavenly Peace</i>

February 10	Production of Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lefebvre, Henri, and Donald Nicholson-Smith. <i>The Production of Space</i>. Blackwell: Oxford, 1991. Introduction.
February 15	Production of Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Production of Space</i>. Chapter 2, "Social Space" Assignment 3: Urban problems report due—brief presentations
February 17	Gated Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Webster, Chris, Georg Glasze, and Klaus Frantz. "The global spread of gated communities." <i>Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design</i> 29, no. 3 (2002): 315-320. Blakely, Edward J., and Mary Gail Snyder. <i>Fortress America: gated communities in the United States</i>. Brookings Institution Press, 1997. Chapter 1. Marx, Benjamin, Thomas Stoker, and Tavneet Suri. "The economics of slums in the developing world." <i>Journal of Economic perspectives</i> 27, no. 4 (2013): 187-210.
February 22	Slums and Ghettos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hagen, Erica. "Open mapping from the ground up: learning from Map Kibera." (2017). Debate preparation
February 24	Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simulation debate Invited speaker/field trip
March 1	Research Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final research detailed outline due; presentations
March 3	Introduction to GIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research outline peer edit due
March 8	Spatial Segregation and Spatial Identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enos, Ryan D. <i>The space between us: Social geography and politics</i>. Cambridge University Press, 2017. Chapter 3-4.
March 10	Disaster-proof Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leong, Karen J., Christopher A. Airriess, Wei Li, Angela Chia-Chen Chen, and Verna M. Keith. "Resilient history and the rebuilding of a community: The Vietnamese American community in New Orleans East." <i>The Journal of American History</i> 94, no. 3 (2007): 770-779. Li, Wei, Christopher A. Airriess, Angela Chia-Chen Chen, Karen J. Leong, and Verna Keith. "Katrina and migration: Evacuation and return by African Americans and Vietnamese Americans in an eastern New Orleans suburb." <i>The professional geographer</i> 62, no. 1 (2010): 103-118.
March 16	Exam Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final project due

Resources for Students

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Office of Accessibility Resources (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact OAR@carleton.edu or call Sam Thayer ('10), Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources (x4464), to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Assistive Technologies: Technological Resources for Students

The Assistive Technologies program brings together academic and technological resources to complement student classroom and computing needs, particularly in support of students with physical or learning disabilities. Accessibility features include text-to-speech (Kurzweil), speech-to-text (Dragon) software, and audio recording Smartpens. If you would like to know more, contact aztechs@carleton.edu or visit go.carleton.edu/aztech.

Library

Library staff can help you find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. [You can make an appointment with a librarian](#), get help via chat 24/7 from any page on the library's website, [email](#), or [call](#). The Library building has lots of great study spaces, and we'd love for you to visit! For more information and our hours, visit the Gould Library website at carleton.edu/library.

Writing

The Writing Center

The Writing Center a space with peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the [writing center website](#). You can reserve specific times for conferences by using their [online appointment system](#).

The Term-Long Program for Multilingual Writers

If English is not your first language and you believe you might benefit from working regularly with a writing consultant this term, email Melanie Cashin, [Multilingual Writing Coordinator](#), at mcashin@carleton.edu. She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.