

Geography 420: Cultural Geography (Section D100)
Spring 2016 | Thursdays, 2:30 – 4:20 PM | HCC 2205, Vancouver
Instructor: Dr. Justin Tse
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Prerequisites: GEOG 325, 381, or 387

Course Description

In this course, we will attempt to practice cultural geography in a Vancouver setting. To do that, we will first have to figure out what we mean by ‘practice’ and who or what gets to ‘practice’ the making of spaces and places. Though we might end up having a productive disagreement as a class (unless we reach some consensus, which, given the state of human geography as a discipline, is not likely), I will propose in the second half of the class that we channel our possible tension into projects in cultural geography in Vancouver. Students will have an opportunity to choose case studies from Vancouver, including (but not limited to) geographies of affordable housing, the international property market, ethnic and migrant communities, intercultural initiatives, mediated publics, spaces of consumption, gendered spaces, simulacra, etc., and the final assignment will be a project to be submitted in some material form, either as a paper or in a creative medium discussed with the instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTS

de Certeau, Michel. 2011. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 3rd ed., trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press. ISBN 9780520271456.

Ley, David. 2010. *Millionaire Migrants: Trans-Pacific Life Lines*. Oxford: Blackwell. ISBN 9781405192927.

Journal articles to be accessed online.

Marking

Weekly Reading Reflections (20%)

Literature Review (30%)

Final Project (50% = 10% proposal, 15% presentation, 25% final form)

Course Outline

1/7	INTRODUCTORY LECTURE: What is ‘culture,’ and how do we map it?
1/14	SEMINAR READINGS: Certeau, ‘General Introduction’ and ‘Part I: A Very Ordinary Culture’; Ley, ch. 1-2 LECTURE: Cultural geography and cultural studies: theories of practice
1/21	SEMINAR: READINGS: Certeau, ‘Part II: Theories of the Art of Practice’; Ley, ch. 3-4 LECTURE: Cultural practices: race, privacy, and agency
1/28	ASSIGNMENT DUE: RESEARCH PROPOSAL SEMINAR READINGS: Certeau, ‘Part III: Spatial Practices’; Ley, ch. 5-6 LECTURE: Cultural geographies of emotion and home
2/4	SEMINAR READINGS: Certeau, ‘Part IV: Uses of Language’; Ley, ch. 7-9; Alison Blunt and Ann Varley (2004), ‘Geographies of home,’ <i>cultural geographies</i> , 11, 3-6; Joyce Davidson and Christine Milligan (2004), ‘Embodying emotion sensing space: introducing emotional geographies,’ <i>Social and Cultural Geography</i> , 5(4), 523-532. LECTURE: The future of cultural geographies: materialism and humanism (or, how to do a literature review in cultural geography)
2/11	READING BREAK
2/18	READING: Certeau, ‘Part V: Ways of Believing’ and ‘Indeterminate’; Divya Tolia-Kelly (2010), ‘The geographies of cultural geography I: identities, bodies and race,’ <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 34(3), 358-367; Tolia-Kelly (2012), ‘The geographies of cultural geography II: visual culture,’ <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 36(1), 135-142; Tolia-Kelly, ‘The geographies of cultural geography III: Material geographies, vibrant matters and risking surface geographies,’ 37(1), 153-160 LECTURE: Post-human cultural geographies: ‘the new materialism’ in Vancouver?
2/25	SEMINAR READINGS: Scott Kirsch, ‘Cultural geography I: Materialist turns,’ <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 37(3), 433-441; Kirsch, ‘Cultural geography II: Cultures of nature (and technology),’ <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 38(3), 691-702; Kirsch, ‘Cultural geography III: Objects of culture and humanity, or, re-‘thinging’ the Anthropocene landscape,’ <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 39(6), 818-826; Sarah Whatmore (2006), ‘Materialist returns: practising cultural geography in and for a more-than-human world,’ <i>cultural geographies</i> 13, 600-609 LECTURE: Debating the human in cultural geography: agency in Vancouver?
3/3	SEMINAR READING: Claire Dwyer (1999), ‘Veiled meanings: young British Muslim women and the negotiation of differences,’ <i>Gender, Place, and Culture</i> , 6(1), 5-26; Paul Cloke (2011), ‘Emerging geographies of evil? Theo-ethics and postsecular possibilities,’ <i>cultural geographies</i> , 18(4), 475-493; Kay Anderson (2014), ‘Mind over matter? On decentring the human in Human Geography,’ <i>cultural geographies</i> , 21(1), 3-18 LECTURE: Ideological (dis)continuities in cultural geography: ideology in Vancouver
3/10	ASSIGNMENT DUE: LITERATURE REVIEW NO READING FOR SEMINAR LECTURE: Ideology, ontology, and grounded theologies: Film: Sophie Fiennes and Slavoj Zizek (2012), <i>The Pervert’s Guide to Ideology</i>
3/17	SEMINAR READING: Elizabeth Olson, Peter Hopkins, Rachel Pain, and Giselle Vincett (2013), ‘Rethorizing the postsecular present: embodiment, spatial transcendence, and challenges to authenticity among young Christians in Glasgow, Scotland,’ <i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i> 103(6), 1421-1436; Justin K.H. Tse (2014), ‘Grounded theologies: “religion” and the “secular” in human geography,’ <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 38(2), 201-220; Banu Gökariksel and Anna Secor (2015), ‘Post-secular geographies and the problem of pluralism: religion and everyday life in Istanbul, Turkey,’ <i>Political Geography</i> 46, 21-30. LECTURE: On how to present cultural geography in Vancouver
3/24	CLASS CONFERENCE
3/31	CLASS CONFERENCE
4/7	CONCLUDING LECTURE: Practicing cultural geography FINAL PROJECT DUE: APRIL 23

ASSIGNMENTS

WEEKLY READING REFLECTIONS (20%): DUE WEEKLY (3% each)

Every week, we will begin with a two-hour seminar discussion and end with a two-hour lecture. At the beginning of each seminar, you will submit a reflection on the assigned readings. Because we are trying to be practicing cultural geographers, the best way to do these reading reflections will be to relate the readings to each other and to your topic of choice. The earlier weeks will likely have more to do with fiddling around with a topic, and the latter weeks will probably generate more concrete reflections. This will hopefully facilitate our discussion of the readings; if each person has a unique topic, it could spice things up quite a bit. These are marked out of 3 points: you get 1 point for completion, 2 for engaging the readings, and 3 for relating that engagement to your topic. You may also notice that we do not have any examinations in this class; that is because I expect that these reading reflections will be sufficient to test your comprehension of the material week to week.

PROJECT (80%)

As I have conceived it, this class is basically a walk through the basic steps of how to do a project in cultural geography. This is another reason we do not have any traditional examinations in this class; the exam is the project, so to speak. The project can take many forms: it could be a paper (nothing more than 25 pages double-spaced, please), a film, artwork, poster, creative writing, theatre, dance, diorama, etc. To make things easier in terms of finding sites that you can actually visit, your choice of topic is limited to Metro Vancouver, although you are free to pick any topic you wish (with discussion with me) as long as you can defend that you are doing ‘cultural geography.’ I’ve broken the project down into several steps:

Proposal (10%): DUE JANUARY 28

Pick a topic in which you will explore a cultural geography in Vancouver; the easiest way is to search for inspiration in Ley’s *Millionnaire Migrants* as well as the news. Pick a very specific cultural geography you want to research, something that will be manageable in one course. Ask a research question about it. Show me that it’s cultural geography. Outline for me how you will get this project done. Suggest a final form it could take. Think about what larger topics you’ll need to understand to make sense of your topic. Write this all up in no more than 5 pages double-spaced (shorter is preferable!). **After I have approved your proposal, you’ll have to stick to it, so take this seriously. Don’t change topics; that’s a disaster waiting to happen in such a short course.**

Literature Review (30%): DUE MARCH 10

Based on your proposal, review the current literature in geography on the topic, e.g. if it’s housing, look up housing literature; if it’s media, look up media, etc. A good review in geography usually surveys the articles in the past 5-10 years, groups them by theoretical orientation, and proposes a way forward (in this case, your project). 5-10 pages double-spaced will do; nothing more than 10 pages, please, but don’t include your references in your page count either.

Presentation (15%): CLASS CONFERENCES MARCH 24/31

In a class conference that I will organize, you will present your research findings in a 15-minute presentation. A good presentation usually includes a statement of the topic, the research question and why it matters (in terms of the geography literature), the methodology, and a discussion of the research findings. PowerPoint slides are good only if they are helpful.

Final Form (25%): DUE APRIL 23

In lieu of a final exam, you’ll submit your final project in its final form.