THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF SPACE AND LANDSCAPE

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WINTER 2013
2 CREDITS (4 ECTS)

OVERVIEW
The spatial dimension of the social world is a major part of sociological and anthropological research; places and landscapes serve as containers of individual memories and peoples’ histories; they cause fears and hopes, evoke emotions or trigger violence; they are at the heart of shared identities and they are tools of power. This course opens and discusses the analytical toolbox available to the investigation of socially constructed space, exploring the development and the potential of spatial studies from a variety of angles: psychological, sociological, linguistic and anthropological models that ultimately challenge our own notions of “what goes without saying.” The texts address questions of environmental perception as well as visions of cultural landscapes; they trace these perceptions through time and investigate how these views are cross-culturally communicated.

COURSE CONTENT
The course starts by looking at fundamental aspects of human spatial perception and behavior, and linguistic and cognitive representations of space. We then explore texts that look at how western ideals of space and landscapes have reflected the social, moral and political standards and how they changed over time. We discuss how images of colonial landscapes drove the western conquest of the world and how environmental and development politics today are influenced by imaginative landscapes. The study of local perceptions of landscapes opens a new arena for anthropological investigation, debating perspectives for intercultural dialog over differential interpretations of environment. Finally the course turns to the theoretical and methodological tools to scrutinize political space and the question of state power.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING
Reading the key texts for each class and preparing notes for the discussion is obligatory. You will also give a presentation on a selected topic in class. The presentation is accompanied by a paper, which should be circulated one week in advance. Each presentation is complemented by a short (5 minute) critical statement by a fellow student. Each participant should prepare at least one such critical contribution in this course. You are also expected to actively contribute to the classroom discussion. The papers should be 8-10 pages, double spaced, 1.5 inch margin on the left. Presentation and papers together count 70% towards the final grade. The critical statement scores an additional 15%, and active participation accounts for a further 15%.
A) Space, place and territoriality

1. Introduction: Space and place in anthropological description.

2. The spatial boundaries of social groups: Territoriality, Property and Control

B) Spatial thinking, spatial behavior

3. Mental mapping and senses of place
   Basso, Keith and S. Feld. 1996 *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press: 3-12 (Introduction )

4. The body in space

5. Linguistics / cognitive anthropology:
   McNamara, Timothy P. (1986), 'Mental Representations of Spatial Relations', *Cognitive Psychology*, (18), 87-121.

C) Cultural landscapes

6. Discovering the ‘European landscape’
   Green, Nicholas "Looking at the Landscape. Class Formation and the Visual in Hirsch, O’Hanlon (eds.) *The Anthropology of Landscape. Perspectives on Place and Space*: 31-42 )
   Christopher Pinney: "Moral Topophilia: The Significations of Landscape in Indian Oleographs" (in Hirsch, O’Hanlon: pp 78-113)

7. Landscape and the politics of belonging


8. Lecture: African market landscapes

9. Landscape, cosmology, and social order


Caroline Humphrey: "Chiefly and Shamanist Landscapes in Mongolia" in Hirsch, O’Hanlon (eds.) 135-162

Leach Melissa “Women’s Crops in Women’s Spaces. Gender Relations in Mende Rice Farming” in Elisabeth Croll and David Parkin (eds.) *Bush Base, Forest Farm: Culture, Environment and Development*. London: Routledge: 76-96

D) Spatial order, social control, and the state

10. Deciphering cities and settlements: Space syntax approach


11. The state and spatial control


James Scott: (Scott 1998) Seeing Like a State (*Introduction and Chapter 1*)

12. Postcolonial and developmental spaces


