

**E59.1002: Space and Place in Human Communication- and the Environment**  
**Department of Media, Culture, and Communication**

Summer Session II (June 28 - August 4)

Mon/Wed 1:30-4:45pm

Room: Tisch Hall LC 4 (40 W 4th St btw Washington Sq E & Mercer)

Instructor: Max Liboiron

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Office hours by appointment

Course Description and Overview

New York City is home to America's first public park and oldest super fund site; the world's largest landfill and some of the nation's cleanest drinking water; infamous rats and wild Quaker Parrots. This course will use New York City, and particularly its unique urban ecosystem to investigate how space socially organizes human meaning and how space is inscribed with meaning to become place.

How do people, through their practices and their being in the world, form relationships with the locales they occupy (both the natural world and the build environment)? How do they attach meaning to spaces to create places? How do the experiences of inhabiting those places shape their meanings, ecosystems, communicative practices, cultural performances, memories, and habits? And how can we self-consciously use space to create messages for others or solve environmental problems?

Learning Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete the course will be able to demonstrate:

- advanced skills in the application of critical and interpretive skills
- developed research, writing, and communication skills
- knowledge of critical vocabularies, methods of analysis, and concerns focused on space and place and how they relate to the environment
- the ability to apply this knowledge to create intentional messages about the environment

Course Format & General Requirements

Class time: Each class will be discussion-based with small sections of lecture lead by both the professor and students. Because active participation in discussion is the cornerstone of the class, you should come prepared for discussion and with copies of the reading. The discussion will be followed by a student presentation, and end with a small lecture that will prepare students for the next set of readings. Sometimes readings will come with a guiding question. Because this is a seminar course, regular class attendance is required. **Two missed classes without prior notices (and my acceptance of that notice) will result in your grade being dropped by one half letter. Two lates equal one absence.**

Exams: Both the final and the midterm exam will be take-homes. The midterm will have short answer questions and an essay. The final exam will consist of a choice of two or three case studies. You will have to describe one of these case studies in terms of space and place using vocabulary from the course. Then you will posit solutions (through campaigns, actions, or other communication strategies that involve place) that can address the problem. Some research may be required and some research sources will be provided. Exams will not be rescheduled.

Written work must be typed, double-spaced, and paginated. Multiple pages should be stapled. You are expected to follow a formal style manual for guidelines on citations, quotations, etc. Purchasing a

style manual is encouraged, as it will help you improve the organization and composition of your written work and ensure the proper citation of sources. Whatever citation style you choose, use it consistently throughout your writing. A recommended style manual is: *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Another resource is the Writing Center: 269 Mercer Street, Room 233.

**Presentations:** Each student will present a case study that exemplifies the concepts in the readings for that class session. These presentations are not summaries or explanations of the reading, but a new and unique case study that is *not* covered by the readings that nonetheless furthers (or challenges) the argument in the reading. In other words, the case study will *extend, complicate, nuance, discredit, or exemplify* the argument. When presenting their case study, students will use concepts and vocabulary developed in class and in the readings. **Students are encouraged to contact the professor regarding their case studies at least two classes in advance of when they are scheduled to present.** A missed presentation results in a zero.

A case study refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular, well-defined space or event, such as “the Greenwood cemetery,” or “Diesel’s Climate-Ready advertisements from 2001.” A form of qualitative descriptive research, the case study looks intensely at an individual instance, drawing conclusions only about that instance and only in that specific context. Researchers do not focus on the discovery of a universal, generalizable truth, nor do they typically look for cause-effect relationships; instead, emphasis is placed on exploration and description (using the issues, themes, arguments, and vocabulary in the readings to narrow down this exploration). Ask “how” and “why” questions about your case study. How is space and time used to create the particular place in your case study? Is it the same place for everyone? Why or why not? Why and how is the atmosphere/feelings/message of a place generated and sustained? How is it challenged?

**Field Trips:** Most field trips are to be done as homework on your own time.

**Assignment:** There is one assignment on cognitive mapping. It will be explained in class.

Before class begins, please turn off all cell phones, pagers, and any other items that might ring, buzz, play music, or otherwise call attention to themselves and disrupt class.

#### Grading and Evaluation:

Attendance and Class Participation: 10%

Mapping Assignment: 15%

In-class Case Study Presentation: 25%

Midterm exam: 25%

Final exam: 25%

**A= Excellent**

This work is comprehensive, complex and detailed, integrating themes, vocabulary and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

**B=Good**

This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent

and thoughtful.

C=Average

This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate or sparse.

D= Unsatisfactory

This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared, or off topic.

F=Failed

This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or understand course material.

Plus and minus grade indicate the standing within the above grades. Any discussions of midterm or presentation grades will be entertained *after 24 hours* of receiving the grade. Note: grades are earned, not negotiated.

#### Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism or cheating on any assignment will not be tolerated under any circumstances and will result in a failure of the assignment and possibly failure of this class. "You violate [academic integrity] when you cheat on an exam; submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors; receive help on a take-home courses without prior permission from your professors; receive help on a take-home that calls for independent work; or plagiarize. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following: copy verbatim from a book, article, or other media; download documents from the Internet; purchase documents; paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis, and/or conclusions..." (see School of Education Bulletin, 2004-6, p. 174)

#### Religious Observances

Students who follow special religious holidays that may interfere with the class schedule need to see me at the beginning of the semester to talk about your schedule.

#### Students with Disabilities

**Please do not wear any scented products such as perfumes, colognes, body sprays, or use heavily scented soaps before class. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Any student wearing such products will be asked to leave class, shower, and return. This will count as a late.**

Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212 998-4980, [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd).

#### Required Texts:

Cresswell, T. (2004). *Place: a short introduction*. Malden, MA, Blackwell Pub.

McKibben, B. (2010). *Eaarth: a survivor's guide*. New York, Time Books.

Weisman, A. (2007). *The World Without Us*. New York, Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press.

Readings are in Document Section of Blackboard site

Course Schedule:

(Subject to change. All changes will be announced in class)

**Mon, June 28: Introduction to Space, Place, and Communication.**

No advanced readings required (but feel free to start on readings for next class).

**Wed, June 30: How Space, Place and Communication Relate to the Urban Environment**

Readings for this class:

Chapter One, in Cresswell (at bookstore). Reading question: Is “nature” a place?

Chapter Two, Cresswell (bookstore).

Definition of “Communication,” “Environment/Ecology,” “Nature,” “Place,” and “Space” (blackboard)

Reading question: How are place and communication related?

**Mon, July 5: No class.**

**Wed, July 7: Modernity (and post-modernity)**

Readings for this class:

Colin Jerolmack. (2008). “How Pigeons Became Rats: The Cultural-Spatial Logic of Problem Animals.” *Social Problems*, Vol. 55, Issue 1, pp. 72–94. (not on blackboard—use Bobst’s online databases to find this)

Definition of “Modern,” “City” and “Postmodern”(blackboard)

Reading Question: How can the gradual definition of pigeons as “rats with wings” be told through the lenses of modernity and post modernity and the spaces *and* places of each? What do you think the repercussions of post/modernity are for spaces/places of urban environmentalism?

**Sat/Sun, July 10/11: Optional (but highly recommended!!) Field Trip to Dead Horse Bay**

Bring good solid shoes, cameras, and notebooks. We will be beachcombing and there will be broken glass. Dr. Robin Nagle, a garbage anthropologist, will accompany us.

**Mon, July 12: Urban Planning (Violence and Norms)**

Reading for this class:

Definition of Urban Planning: <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-urban-planning.htm> and

[http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Urban\\_planning](http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Urban_planning)

Introduction to CPTED:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime\\_prevention\\_through\\_environmental\\_design](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime_prevention_through_environmental_design)

Parts of first and last chapter from Make Davis (1998). *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*

**Wed, July 14: Mapping: perception, space, and meaning**

Readings for this class:

Definition of Identity

“Mapping” from Irit Rogoff. (2000) *Terra Infirma: Geography’s Visual Culture*. New York: Routledge.(blackboard)

Woodward David. (1984). “Reality, Symbolism, Time and Space in Medieval World Maps.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 75 (4): pp 510-521. (blackboard)

Take home exam (due Saturday, July 17 at noon).

### **Mon, July 19: Modernity and Space/Time Compression**

Readings for this class:

Wolfgang Schivelbusch (1986). "Panoramic travel" from *The Railway Journey: The industrialization of time and space in the 19<sup>th</sup> century*. University of California Press. (blackboard)

Definition of "Time" (blackboard)

Definitions of "Cognitive mapping:" <http://intraspec.ca/cogmap.php>

<http://www.d.umn.edu/~cstroupe/ideas/cognitivemap.html>

<http://www.erzwiss.uni-hamburg.de/Personal/Lohmann/Lehre/wint1-2/cogmap.htm>

Example of a case study of cognitive mapping (abstract only):

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a914548346>

Website for Janet Cardiff's Sound walk in Central Park (listen to excerpts):

<http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/longhair.html#>

Solo field trip & experiment: DUE Mon, June 26. Using a metro day-pass, take your subway route into school (or some other familiar place) in three different ways: first, take the subway the whole way. Then, take the subway but get off at each subway stop and look around above ground. Then, walk the subway route above ground the whole way. Compare how senses of place (especially in terms of your start and end places) change with each one. Assignment: make a map/diagram/short journal of each journey.

### **Wed, July 21: Utopia, Dystopia/ Alternative Futures, Alternative Presents**

Readings for this class:

"Newer York, New York," *Wired*, January 2000. (blackboard)

Definitions of "utopia" and "dystopia" (blackboard)

Solo field trip to The Center for Architecture: Our Cities, Ourselves: The Future of Transportation in Urban Life. <http://cfa.aiany.org/index.php?section=center-for-architecture>

### **Mon, July 26: Imagination and Place**

Readings for this class:

Weisman, A. (2007). *The World Without Us*. New York, Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press.

Definition of "Sociological Imagination": <http://joshmaher.wordpress.com/2007/01/07/sociological-imagination/>

Reading Question: What role does imagination play in place and environmental communication & advocacy?

Subway "Map" Due.

### **Wed, July 28: Local versus Global in a Global Economy**

Readings for this class:

Cresswell, chapter 3.

Definition of "globalization" (blackboard)

Definition of "Bioregionalism": [http://www.diggers.org/freecitynews/\\_disc1/00000017.htm](http://www.diggers.org/freecitynews/_disc1/00000017.htm)

Definition of glocalization: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glocalisation>

Website: Eve Mosher's *High Water Line*: <http://www.highwaterline.org/>

Reading question: how can these different models of place help describe or even solve environmental problems?

### **Mon, August 2: Using place in environmental communication and advocacy**

Readings for this class:

Chapter 4 of Cresswell

Read: Chapter TBA from Pezzullo, P. C. (2007). *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and*

*Environmental Justice*. Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press. (on blackboard)  
Grant Kester. (1993). *Out of Sight is Out of Mind: the Imaginary Space of Post Industrial Culture*.  
*Social Text*. 35:

**Wed, August 4: Eearth: A case study**

Readings for this class:

McKibben, B. (2010). *Eearth: a survivor's guide*. New York, Time Books.

Receive final take home exam. Due Saturday at noon.