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## **SPACE & POWER**

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### **A CRITICAL APPROACH TO POLITICAL GEOGRAPHIES**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course focuses on the two-way relationship between space and power. It investigates how political processes shape human geography, and conversely, how assumptions about geography underscore global politics. We will examine the key themes, concepts, and theories that define the study of politics from a geographical perspective. Students will gain a critical understanding of and appreciation for the historical and contemporary challenges of sovereignty, territoriality, governmentality, identity, citizenship, difference, violence, genocide, colonialism, neoliberalism and war. The course culminates with the themes of resistance and emancipation, which will allow students to consider alternative configurations of space and power in keeping with the paper's critical approach.

As a fourth-year seminar, our approach to political geographies will be largely theoretical, where you are required to think critically about the concepts we explore through your engagement with the readings and during our meetings. This course is run as a seminar, which means that it requires your active participation and is thus necessarily reading-intensive. In addition to reading materials, occasional films will be shown during class time.

**KEYWORDS:** discourse; identity; colonialism; power; resistance; sovereignty; space

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#### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings are available through UVic libraries.

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#### **EVALUATION**

Participation	10%
Short Written Responses to three of the weeks readings	15%
Seminar Activity and Facilitation	20%
Essay	30%
Final Take-Home Exam	25%

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**PREREQUISITE:** One of GEOG 332, 347B, 344 or 386.

## **COURSESPACES**

I will post the course syllabus, outlines of slide presentations, and any additional relevant materials on the course's COURSESPACES website.

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## **POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

- Assignments submitted **ON TIME** will receive my full attention & useful feedback.
- Please speak with me well in advance if you anticipate a delay in submitting your work, particularly when dealing with illness or family conflicts.
- 10% per day penalty for late assignments including weekend days. For example, 10% will be deducted from the assignment (due in class) *if the assignment is submitted later in the day*. If the assignment is submitted the next day, 20% will be deducted from the assigned grade, and so forth.

\*\* All assignments must be done exclusively for this course.

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism in writing term papers will not be tolerated. Plagiarism detection software will be used in case of doubt. Plagiarism means representing someone else's work as your own. It is a serious offense, punishable by academic sanctions. When you incorporate the words, ideas, graphics, or other products from someone else's work into your projects, you must give credit by providing a citation and reference to the source work.

It is your responsibility to:

- understand what plagiarism is,
- be familiar with and understand the information on plagiarism outlined in UVic Libraries' plagiarism policy at <http://library.uvic.ca/instruction/cite/plagiarism.html>
- be familiar with UVic's policies on student responsibilities, conduct, discipline, and academic offenses, as described in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Students are reminded that submitting for credit any academic work which has been submitted (or where credit has already been obtained) in another course is listed among academic offenses as academic dishonesty.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) as soon as possible. The RCSD staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

## **POSITIVITY AND SAFETY**

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

Discriminatory language is not welcome or tolerated in lectures, seminars, tutorials, or written work. This includes but is not limited to sexist, racist, ethnocentric, ageist, homophobic, or transphobic language.

## **GRADING SYSTEM**

As per the current Academic Calendar:

Grade	Grade point value	Grade scale	Description
<b>A+</b> <b>A</b> <b>A-</b>	9 8 7	90-100% 85-89% 80-84%	<b>Exceptional, outstanding</b> and <b>excellent</b> performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.
<b>B+</b> <b>B</b> <b>B-</b>	6 5 4	77-79% 73-76% 70-72%	<b>Very good, good</b> and <b>solid</b> performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.
<b>C+</b> <b>C</b>	3 2	65-69% 60-64%	<b>Satisfactory</b> , or <b>minimally satisfactory</b> . These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
<b>D</b>	1	50-59%	<b>Marginal</b> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
<b>F</b>	0	0-49%	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.

### COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

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## OUTCOMES & RESPONSIBILITIES

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### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This course has three primary objectives:

- To understand that there is a distinct relationship between space and power, and to gain an appreciation for how this association functions.
- To develop a deeper understanding of the key theoretical concerns and debates that inform and continue to shape political geography as a sub-discipline.
- To allow students to develop a critical appreciation for the complex roles and multiple ways in which political geographies are implicated within and woven through our everyday lives.

You can expect to acquire the following skills:

- Critical Thinking: by applying seminar discussions and readings through weekly reflections, students will develop an ability to think critically about the geopolitical ideas that have historically shaped and continue to inform political events.
- Communication: to develop written communication skills through written work, and to develop verbal communication skills and self-confidence through seminar discussions and co-facilitation as well as student presentations.
- Time Management and Personal Responsibility: by attending seminars and by handing in assignments on time.

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### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attending and participating in seminars
  - Reading the required materials. Seriously, you **MUST** do the readings. Seriously!
  - Actively participating in class discussion
  - Leading student presentations, and co-facilitating seminars.
  - Writing three reflections on the assigned readings.
  - Writing a final essay
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## ASSESSMENT & ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

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### **PARTICIPATION - (10%) – ONGOING THROUGHOUT TERM**

- This includes engaging in discussion, asking questions, offering answers, and active listening. This is not an attendance grade, however, if you don't attend it is impossible to participate.

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### **SHORT WRITTEN RESPONSES TO THE READINGS (3 WEEKS) - (5% EACH X 3 RESPONSES = 15%) – DUE THROUGHOUT TERM – IN CLASS**

**LENGTH: 1 PAGE (approximately 250 words)**

- You are responsible for handing in 3 responses, which means that some weeks out of our meetings you get a free pass and are not required to hand in an assignment. It's up to you to choose what weeks you don't want to hand in an assignment, but you are still responsible for doing the readings that week.

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### **SEMINAR ACTIVITY FACILITATION - (25%) – IN TEAMS, ONCE DURING THE TERM,**

**LENGTH: 60 MINUTES**

- In groups, students will be asked to prepare an activity to facilitate discussion and deeper understanding of the readings assigned for the week. Your activity will occur after the break, before which we will have a more traditional seminar/lecture.
- In essence, your role is to reflect thoroughly on the topic under consideration, offer some critical reflections on the readings, and engage the class with an activity, some questions of importance that you have drawn from these readings.
- The activity you choose to deliver to the class is entirely up to you, and I encourage you to be as creative as possible. You might want us to get out of the classroom on a short field trip around the university to show us how a concept applies within the university setting itself. Another idea is to bring in a short film and then ask us questions that help us to think about the topic or concept. You might want to read poetry (possibly even your own!) or do a short play that helps us think about the idea. You can make a poster presentation, or present a piece of art or music you have created in response to the concept, or that someone else has created, but that helps you (and hopefully us) to think about and understand an idea. You can bring a video game that you enjoy (or maybe not enjoy), have us play it in class and discuss how it might exemplify a concept. You can bring personal photographs, home videos, scrapbooks, stamp collections, and use them to explain and demonstrate the idea under consideration.
- Your options are limited only by your own imagination, and I encourage as much creativity as possible! Wherever your interest and talent lies, I'm all for it! The only fixed criterion is that you have approximately 60 minutes to share your creativity, reflections, and ideas about the topic with us. This will allow for a debrief at the end of class.
- A sign-up sheet will be provided after the first class, although there may be some flexibility should individuals join or withdraw from the class.

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### **ESSAY – (30%)**

- Throughout the course, you are encouraged to think critically about the theoretical and empirical relevance of the issues we will explore, as this will prepare you for your final essay.
- Although the thesis and aim of the essay is up to you, you will need to demonstrate your critical engagement with (at least) two of the course's major themes.
- You will need to demonstrate that you have gone beyond the actual readings in your reflections by considering the discussions we have had in class, and hopefully, by doing some additional outside reading and thinking on the topics, you choose to tackle here.
- In this essay I want you to demonstrate that you understand the two concepts you have chosen at a theoretical level, I want you to indicate how these two topics are interrelated, and you will need to also

to show me some 'real world' application of the concepts by giving me empirical examples, or a case study

- Empirical examples may include drawing on a newspaper article, a TV show or film, a song or music video, or some other life experience, which should put the theoretical concept at an 'everyday' level to you. Make the theoretical material!

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**FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM – (25%) – DURING EXAM PERIOD (EXACT DATES TBD)**

- Your take-home exam will consist of short answer questions and one essay question.
- Your essay question will ask you to reflect on your own personal journey through this course by discussing what your assumptions were at the beginning of the course (i.e., assumptions about a particular concept, about the world, about what a course should be, about your role as a student, about my role as a professor, about human behavior, or assumptions about power and space more generally, etc.) and how that changed after completing the course. In other words, I want you to tell me what was the most profound thing you learned (or 'unlearned').

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**IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT NOTES:**

**Assignment:** For all assignments use 12 pt. Font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, number pages, and a list of references. **DO NOT include a title page** (save paper!), but **DO** include your title, your name, my name, the course number, and the date at the top of the first page. Staple your paper in the top left corner (**NO FANCY BINDERS!**). Please follow the word length requirement.

**Referencing:** Students are required to follow the APA style guide posted on CourseSpaces.

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## WEEKLY CALENDAR

(Subject to revision as the course proceeds)

WEEK	SEMINAR TOPICS
1	Course Introduction & Critical Pedagogy
2	Geographic Theories of Space
3	Space, Power, & Political Geographies
4	Gendered Spaces
5	Neoliberalism
7	Spaces of Control
8	Hegemony, Territoriality, & the Spaces of Empire
9	Spaces of Exception
10	Postcolonialism and the Colonial Present
11	No Class – Reading Break
12	Decolonizing Space
13	Migration and Cosmopolitanism
14	Resistance & Emancipation