

PLACES, THINGS & BODIES

Marko Zivkovic
Office: Tory 13-28
E-mail: zivkovic@ualberta.ca

Tu 2:00 PM-4:50PM T 1-108
Office hours: Monday 1:30PM-2:30PM
or by appointment (e-mail only)

This course is a companion to the *Fieldschool for Ethnographic Sensibility*. It will incorporate some of the exercises in close observation and minute description of the most boringly familiar places and objects that are used in the *Fieldschool*. Our task will be to try to make such “infraordinary” background to our everyday lives stand out by poaching from the bag of tricks artists have been using to achieve the same effect. These exercises require careful limits in order to restrict our tendency to be overwhelmed by sensory detail. We will explore three main heuristics that will frame our exploration of ethnographic sensibility – places, things, and bodies. The course will proceed by exposing students to most exemplary uses of these heuristics in classical anthropology, on the one hand, and the phenomenological-cultural-poetic studies of urban spaces/objects on the other. The way Australian Aborigines and Apache encode their social imagination in their landscape, for instance, will be related to the way urban spaces are probed by Bachelard, Benjamin and others in the manner of archaeologists of modernity. One aim is to develop in students a facility in transposing heuristic models developed in one discipline and in one domain to other domains and other disciplines. Finally, the course will encourage us to both practice and reflect on the art of inquiry, in particular on the modalities of flexibility. We will thus think in a systematic manner about what it means to improvise and glean, train oneself in “elastic rigour” or “delicate empiricism” and “botanize the asphalt.” Ethnographic method, bolstered by sensorium training developed in arts will then become a way to explore flexible methodologies across arts and sciences.

Requirements will include two *short exercises* (20% of grade each) and a *final paper* (50% of grade). The students will have to submit a *short written proposal* for the final paper topic by April 4. Contribution to class discussions will carry 10% of the grade.

The following books are available for purchase in the bookstore:

- Baker, Nicholson. 1990. *The Mezzanine: A Novel*. New York: Vintage.
- Chatwin, Bruce. 1988. *The Songlines*. Penguin Books.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

WEEK I: GLEANINGS

JANUARY 10

- Agnès Varda. 2000. *The Gleaners and I*. Zeitgeist Films. 82 min. HD 1549 G54 2002

WEEK II: SAVOURING THE INFRAORDINARY & CONJECTURAL SCIENCES

JANUARY 17

- Perec, Georges. 1999. Approaches to What? In *Species of Space and Other Pieces*. London and New York: Penguin, pp. 209-211.
- Stilgoe, John R. 1998. *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places*. New York: Walker and Company. Chapters 1 & 2.
- Yi-Fu, Tuan. 2001. Life as a Field Trip. *Geographical Review*, 91 (1/2):41-45.
- Ginzburg, Carlo. 1984. Clues: Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes. In *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*, edited by U. Eco and A. S. Thomas. Bloomington: Indiana U Press pp. 81-118.

WEEK III: PLACES OF ANTHROPOLOGY I: AUSTRALIA & APACHE LANDSCAPE

JANUARY 24

Chatwin, Bruce. 1988. *The Songlines*. Penguin Books.

Munn, Nancy. 1970. The Transformation of Subjects into Objects in Walbiri and Pitjantjara Myth. In R. Berndt, ed. *Australian Aboriginal Anthropology*. Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press. pp. 141-63.

Basso, Keith. 1996. Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape. In Steven Feld and Keith Basso, eds. *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press. pp. 53-90.

WEEK IV: PLACES OF ANTHROPOLOGY II: KALULI & SERBIA

JANUARY 31

Feld, Steven. Waterfalls of Song: An Acoustemology of Place Resounding in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea. In *Senses of Place*. pp. 91-136.

Živković, M. 2011. Serbian Landscapes of Dreamtime and Catastrophe: Clear Springs, Stones of Prophecy, St. Sava's Ribs, and the Wooden City of Oz. In Erika Dyck and Christopher Fletcher, eds. *Locating Health: Historical and Anthropological Investigations of Health and Place*. London: Pickering & Chatto Publishers. pp. 169-185.

WEEK V: POETICS OF SPACE – THE FRENCH (BACHELARD, PEREC & DE CERTEAU)

FEBRUARY 7

Bachelard, Gaston. 1969. *The Poetics of Space*. Boston, Beacon Press. Chs. 1, 3 & 7. pp. 3-37, 74-89 & 148-182.

Perec, Georges. 1999. *Species of Space and Other Pieces*. London and New York: Penguin. 5-96.

Certeau, Michel de. 1988. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 34-39 & 91-130.

Certeau, Michel de, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol. 1998. The Neighborhood & Propriety. Chapters 1 & 2 in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 7-34. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

WEEK VI: RAGPICKERS (Germans) BOTANIZE ASPHALT & BOURGEOIS INTERIORS

FEBRUARY 14

Gunning, Tom. 2003. The Exterior as *Intérieur*: Benjamin's Optical Detective. *Boundary 2* 30 (1): 105-130.

Kracauer, Siegfried. 1995. On the Writings of Walter Benjamin. In *The Mass Ornament*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. pp. 259-264.

Benjamin, Walter. 1989. One-Way Street Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century & Naples. In *Reflections*. New York: Schocken. pp. 61- 94 & 146-173.

WEEK VII: POWER & AGENCY OF THINGS (GELL'S WAY)

FEBRUARY 28 (FIRST EXERCISE DUE IN CLASS)

Gell, Alfred. 1998. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp. 1-27, 66-72, 80-83, 94-104, 121-137 & 221-258.

Gell, Alfred. 1996. Vogel's Net: Traps as Artworks and Artworks as Traps. *Journal of Material Culture* 1 (1):15-38.

WEEK VIII: DESCRIBING AND TRACKING THINGS (ST. BRUNO & THE LATOURIANS)

MARCH 7

Latour, Bruno. 1992. Where are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artifacts. In *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociocultural Change*, edited by W. E. Bijker and J. Law. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. T 14.5 S58 1992. pp. 225-258.

Akrich, Madeleine. 1992. The De-Description of Technical Objects & Akrich, Madeleine, and Bruno Latour. A Summary of a Convenient Vocabulary for the Semiotics of Human and Nonhuman Assemblies. In *Shaping Technology/Building Society*. pp. 205-224 & 259-264.

de Laet, Marianne, and Annemarie Mol. 2000. The Zimbabwe Bush Pump: Mechanics of a Fluid Technology. *Social Studies of Science* 30 (2):225-63.

Connor, Steven. 2011. Introduction, Bags and Plugs. In *Paraphernalia: The Curious Lives of Magical Things*, pp. 1-22 & 161-170. London: Profile Books.

WEEK XI: LET US PRAISE SHOELACES, STRAWS AND STAPLERS

MARCH 14

Baker, Nicholson. 1990. *The Mezzanine: A Novel*. New York: Vintage.

WEEK X: BODY TECHNIQUES

MARCH 21

Polhemus, Ted. 1975. Social Bodies. In *The Body as a Medium of Expression*, edited by Jonathan Benthall and Ted Polhemus, pp. 13-35. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc.

Mauss, Marcel. 1979. Body Techniques. In *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*, 97-119. London: Routledge.

Myers, Natasha. *Anthropologist as Transducer in a Field of Affects*. n.d

WEEK XI: BODIES IN SPACE AND EVERYDAY INTERACTION I

MARCH 28

Goffman, Erving. 1967. On Face-Work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction. In *Interaction Ritual: Essays on face-to-face behavior*. New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 5-45.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Chapter III. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books.

Goffman, Erving. 1989. On Fieldwork. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 18 (2):123-132.

WEEK XII: BODIES IN SPACE AND EVERYDAY INTERACTION II

APRIL 4 (ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF FINAL PAPER PROPOSALS)

Hall, Edward T. 1990. Space Speaks. Chapter 10 in *The Silent Language*, pp 158-180. New York: Anchor Books.

Goffman, Erving. 1963. Tightness and Looseness. Chapter 13 in *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*, pp. 193-215 Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Richardson, Miles. 2003. Being-in-the-Market Versus Being-in-the-Plaza: Material Culture and the Construction of Social Reality in Spanish America. In *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*, edited by Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, pp. 74-91. Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell.

WEEK XIII: PRESENTING SECOND ASSIGNMENT

APRIL 11

Policy about course outlines can be found in '23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

Academic Integrity “The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Learning and working environment: The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to: Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or, if that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department. For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice: (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>). Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures can be found in the GFC Policy Manual, section 44 available at <http://gfcpolicymanual.ualberta.ca/>

Plagiarism and Cheating: All students should consult the “Truth-In-Education” handbook or Website (<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>) regarding the definitions of **plagiarism** and its consequences when detected. An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Before unpleasantness occurs consult <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>; also discuss this matter with any tutor(s) and with your instructor.

Recording of Lectures: Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the instructor.

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components: Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Policy for assignment extensions: Please do your very best to complete your assignments on time. If you absolutely need more time you have to e-mail me at least 24h before the deadline and state your new deadline (for practical reasons, it should not be more than a day or two beyond the original deadline). You don’t have to provide any reasons, but you HAVE to abide by your new, self-imposed deadline. If you don’t I will need a note from a doctor or the equivalent proof of unforeseen calamity.

Grading Criteria: The University of Alberta uses a letter grading system with a four-point scale of numerical equivalents for calculating grade point averages. Grades reflect judgments of student achievement made by instructors. These judgments are based on a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class.

Contact policy: Please don’t hesitate to visit me even if you don’t have any particular problem. If you cannot make my official office hours, please make an appointment by e-mail only (not by phone!).

Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS): If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Specialized Support & Disability Services, contact their office immediately (2-800 SUB; Email ssdsrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssds.ualberta.ca).