ADVANCED POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY  
Power, Place, Identity: 
Geographies of Identification and Differentiation

Geography 518  
Spring 2017  
M 4:00-6:30  
350 Science Hall  
Professor Robert Kaiser  
430 Science Hall  
rkaise1@wisc.edu  
Office Hours: TR 11-12, or by appointment

COURSE OUTLINE

The purpose of this course is to explore the main concepts and research themes in political geography today. As one of the primary perspectives within the field of human geography, political geography represents a broad engagement with the interactive relationships between power and place, and the construction, contestation and reconfiguration of political geographic spaces that result. Processes of identification and differentiation are integral to this dynamic interaction between power and place, in some cases resulting in the creation of more inclusive multicultural socio-spatial places and practices, while in others leading to more exclusionary settings. During the semester, we will investigate the various intersections and interactions among power, place and identity; review the reconceptualizations of borders and bordering in political geography; examine the specific case of nationalism and the place and identity discourses and practices that result from it; explore the cultural politics of memoryscapes; and consider the geographies of resistance through which subaltern political actors seek to empower themselves and their communities. Finally, we will assess the post-national political geographies associated with diasporas and globalization, and discuss the new spaces of citizenship identification that are said to be resulting from these processes.

Performativity  
Spaces of exception  
Citizenship and statelessness

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Readings

No texts are assigned for this course. Our readings will consist of journal articles and book chapters, which are listed in the course schedule below. I have also provided a list of supplemental readings for most of the weekly topics.

Articles and book chapters: available at our learn@UW page – under “content”

Current affairs will be discussed in the context of course concepts and themes
throughout the semester, as an applied complement to more general readings.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Critically assess engagements related to power, place, identity, and difference, particularly those from geographers.
- Evaluate major trends, themes, and approaches that have emerged in the field of political geography, especially as they are related to geographies of identification and differentiation.
- Be able to use a performative approach in understanding processes of place-making, bordering and identification.
- Engage theoretical debates through the in-depth analysis of a case study.
- Express major themes and approaches related to questions of power, place, identity, difference, and nationalism.
- Be able to identify research questions related to course themes in ways that are responsive to major debates in the literature.

To accomplish these goals, various assignments will be employed, in addition to weekly readings and discussions. These include:

- **Weekly critical analyses of readings** – All students will be asked to write **EIGHT** critical assessments of the weekly readings throughout the semester, distributing these via learn@UW to other class members the day before the class—by Sunday noon (this means that there will be several weeks you will not have to turn in the assessments, at your discretion). A separate sheet will provide guidelines for these write-ups.

- **Participation in seminar discussions** – This course will be run as a graduate level seminar. This means active participation in discussion by all class members is critical to the success of the course and your own learning. Additionally, all students will sign up to facilitate at least one class discussion (given our class size, most weeks will have multiple discussion facilitators. For the day you have signed up to lead discussion, you should come to class having read all of the critical summaries circulated the day before, as well as some of the recommended readings suggested for that week. At the beginning of class, you should plan to speak for about ten minutes, highlighting the major points and themes of the week, with a one-page summary of key issues, debates, and questions to distribute to the entire class. In your discussion, it would be helpful if you could provide background information on the authors to share and close with several questions to stimulate discussion.

- **Research paper based on case study** – All students should select a case study early in the semester that you will use as a vehicle to engage the varied theoretical discussions we consider, also interrogating other empirical works comparatively with your own case. You will be expected to write a research paper of approximately 15 pages on your case study, with a topic to be developed in consultation with me, and related to at least one of the course themes. Please turn
in a one-page summary of your proposed topic, listing at least ten possible sources by the sixth week of class, March 1. Final papers are due in class April 26.

- **Presentation of case study to class** – All students will present their research to the class during weeks 14 and 15. Details on timing and scheduling of presentations to follow.

**Basis for Grade:**
Weekly analyses: 25%
Seminar participation: 35%
Research paper: 30%
Presentation: 10%

**SCHEDULE OUTLINE**

Week 1 (1/23): Introducing Power, Place, Identity
Week 2 (1/30): Identity as Practice/Narrative; Geographies of Identity and Difference
Week 3 (2/6): Territorializations: B/Ordering Space
Week 4 (2/13): Performativity: B/Ordering Identity
Week 5 (2/20): Performativity of Place, Space, Scale
Week 6 (2/27): Embodying the Nation-State; The Performative State
Week 7 (3/6): Citizenship/Statelessness
Week 8 (3/13): Asylum Seeking/Domopolitics

**Spring Recess, March 18 – 26**
Week 9 (3/27): Spaces of Exception
Week 10 (4/3): Geographies of Resistance
Week 11 (4/10): Globalization, Governmentality and New Spaces of Citizenship?
Week 13 (4/24): Student Presentations
Week 14 (5/1): Student Presentations

**DEADLINES!**

February 27: Paper Proposals Due in Class
April 24: Papers Due in Class
## DETAILED SCHEDULE

### Week 1 (1/23)  Introducing Power, Place, Identity

**Readings:**

### Week 2 (1/30)  Identity as Practice/Narrative; Geographies of Identity and Difference

**Readings:**

### Week 3 (2/6)  Territorializations: B/Ordering Space

**Readings:**
- Etienne Balibar, *We, the People of Europe?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), chapter 1 (1-10).
- Stuart Elden, *The Birth of Territory*, Introduction.
Recommended:

Anssi Paasi, “The changing discourses on political boundaries,” in *B/Ordering Space*, edited by Henk van Houtum et al. (Ashgate, 2005), chapter 1 (17-31).


Week 4 (2/13) Performativity: B/Ordering Identities

Readings:


Week 5 (2/20) Performativity of Place, Space and Scale

Readings:


Recommended:


Thomas, M. “Pleasure and propriety: teen girls and the practice of

Week 6 (2/27) Embodying the Nation-State; The Performative State

Other readings TBA

PAPER PROPOSALS DUE IN CLASS

Week 7 (3/6) Citizenship/Statelessness


Week 8 (3/13) Asylum Seeking/Domopolitics

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 18-26

Week 9 (3/27) Spaces of Exception

Readings:
G. Agamben, selected readings.
A. Mountz, “Stateless by geographic design,” in Seeking Asylum (Minneapolis UP, 2010), Chapter 5.

Week 10 (4/3) Geographies of Resistance

Readings:

Recommended:

Week 11 (4/10) Globalization, Governmentality and New Spaces of Citizenship?

Readings:


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**Readings:**

M Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended!* Select Chapters.


Other readings TBA.

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**Weeks 13-14 (4/24, 5/1) STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS**

**PAPERS DUE IN CLASS 4/24.**

**ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL TOPICS:**

Sites Of Memory – Cultural Politics Of Memoryscapes
Race, Space, Race Wars (*Society Must Be Defended!*)
Homeland Politics - Geographies of Nationalism
Governmentality and Biopolitics
Politics of Scale