

Psychogeography (IMA 780.24)

IMA, Department of Film and Media, Hunter College

Spring 2013, Friday, 2:10-5:00, HN 544

Prof. Rachel Stevens, racheljstevens@gmail.com, Office hours by appt.

Course website: <http://post-post.net/psychogeography/>

Guy Debord and the Situationist International developed the concepts “psychogeography” and “dérive” as tools for critically examining the psychological effects of urban spaces and to enable fresh perspectives. Devising ideas and actions poetic, playful and political they countered what they understood as restrictive, ideologically inscribed, overly Cartesian space in search of something more utopian. Through readings, examples of creative projects, fieldwork, games and projects made for class this course will explore possibilities of navigating and occupying space, ways in which space is constructed, organized, scripted, narrated and experienced and how media and technologies old and new alter our experience of space. We will look at cities and urban spaces, cultural geographies, architectures, neighborhoods, gardens, frontiers, territories, topologies, ecologies, international borders, hidden and elastic geographies, political and social space, public and private space, the commons, networked spaces, vectors, “dot com dot place,” maps and cartographies, the local and the global.

Projects developed in class can include walking tours, augmented reality, place-based storytelling or documentary, urban games, situated or networked media and other forms that enable a re-imagining of our relationship to urban spaces.

ASSIGNMENTS

During the semester each student will:

- Read all assigned material and come to class ready for discussion
- Lead the discussion on two texts. (Give a VERY brief overview or synopsis and a little background or context, provide some open ended questions for the group and offer critical responses to the text)
- Participate in in-class exercises and experiments
- Participate in one or more field trips
- Make one project on walking (details to follow)
- Make one project on mapping (details to follow)
- Formulate and propose a final project based on your own work and interests
- Make and present a final project

Some classes will meet off campus

ATTENDANCE

Regular, punctual attendance is required. Late arrivals and early departures may be counted as absences. More than two unexcused absences will affect your grade.

PARTICIPATION

Participation is essential to your engagement and performance in the class. Please come to class prepared, engage thoughtfully with the material and with other people's work, and participate in discussions.

GRADING

30% Participation (including participating in class discussions, attendance)
30% Small projects
40% Final project

Grades of Incomplete will only be given in extreme cases.

TEXTS

To be purchased/acquired by you:

An Atlas of Radical Cartography Edited by Lize Mogul and Alexis Bhagat

The rest of the texts can be found online or will be distributed through the course website from a password protected page.

MORE ACTIVITIES

- Exploration of binaural recording
- Exploration of Layar, augmented reality software
- Unconfirmed off season visit to Governors Island

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 01 - Feb 01: **Hello / Introduction**

Overview/Details, Hallway exercise

Week 02 - Feb 8: **Psychogeography / Experimental + Cultural Geography**

Introduce project 1

Read for week 2

- Guy Debord, "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography"
- Trevor Paglen, "Experimental Geography: From Cultural Production to the Production of Space"
<http://www.brooklynrail.org/2009/03/express/experimental-geography-from-cultural-production-to-the-production-of-space>
- Martha Rosler, "Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism," *e-flux*

Week 03 - Feb 15: **Walking The City**

Read for week 3

- Michel De Certeau, "Walking the City," *The Practice of Everyday Life*
- Guy Debord, "The Theory of the Dérive,"
- Rebecca Solnit; "Paris, Or Botanizing on the Asphalt," *Wanderlust, A History of Walking*
- Jane Jacobs, "The Use of Sidewalks," *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

Week 04 - Feb 23: **Public Space / Civic Sites**

Project 1 due (view in class)

Read for week 4

- Situated Technologies Pamphlets 1: Urban Computing and its Discontents, Adam Greenfield and Mark Shepard
- Smithson, Robert, "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic New Jersey"
- Yates McKee, "Haunted Housing: Eco-Vanguardism, Eviction, and the Biopolitics of Sustainability in New Orleans," Greyroom 301

Week 05 - Mar 01: **Mapping / Cartographies**

Introduce project 2

Read for week 5

- Selections from *An Atlas of Radical Cartography* Edited by Lize Mogul and Alexis Bhagat
- "Other Worlds, Other Maps: Mapping the Unintended City," Jai Sen
- "Tactical Cartographies," Institute for Applied Autonomy
- "Latino/a America: A Geophilosophy for Wanderers," Alejandro de Acosta
- Rebecca Solnit, Selections from *Infinite City, A San Francisco Atlas*

Week 06 - Mar 08: **Heterotopias / Gentrification**

Read for week 6

- Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" (Heterotopias)
- Douglas Crimp, "Action Around the Edges," Mixed Use, Manhattan
- Lewis Mumford "The Intolerable City: Must it Keep on Growing?," *Harper's*, February, 1926

Week 07 - Mar 15: **The Cinematic City**

Screening in class

Read for week 7

- Zhang, Yingjin; Remapping Beijing: Polyvocality, Globalization, Cinema, pre-published version of essay in *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age*, ed. Andreas Huyssen
- Eisenstein, Sergei, "Montage and Architecture," circa 1938
- Stevens, Rachel, "The High Line: Monument to Modern Ruin," Afterimage

Week 08 - Mar 22: **Geography and Capitalism / Occupy / Public-Private Space**

Project 2 due (view in class)

Read for week 8

- Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street"
- David Harvey, "The Right to the City," new left review 53 Sept/Oct 2008
- Soja, Edward. "Why Spacial, Why Justice, Why L.A., Why Now?," *Seeking Spatial Justice*

Week 09 - Mar 29: **SPRING BREAK**

Week 10 - Apr 05: **Augmented Reality / Place-Based Learning / Site Specificity**

PROPOSAL FOR FINAL PROJECT DUE

Field trip... walking tour about Wall Street, *Curb Exchange*

Read for week 10

- Situated Technologies Pamphlets 9: "Modulated Cities: Networked Spaces, Reconstituted Subjects," Spring 2012, Helen Nissenbaum and Kazys Varnelis
- Miwon Kwon, "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity," October 80, 1997
- Christine Ross, "Spatial Poetics: The (Non)destinations of Augmented Reality Art," *Afterimage* 38 no2 S/O 2010 p. 19-24
- "The Foundations of Place Based Learning" pamphlet

Week 11 - Apr 12: **Hidden Geographies / Excavating a Site**

Read for week 11

- Selection from *Berlin Childhood Around 1900*, Walter Benjamin
- Brian Holmes, "Visiting the Planetarium, Images of the Black World" (On Paglen's work)(online)
- Mary Walling Blackburn, "A Politics of Tears: The Museum of Useless Efforts, Marfa, TX," *Afterall* (online)

Week 12 - Apr 19: **Urban Planning / Improvisational Architecture**

Read for week 12

- Joshua Bauchner, "The City That Built Itself," Triple Canopy online magazine
http://canopycanopycanopy.com/6/the_city_that_built_itself
- Lindsey Bremner, "Recovering from Apartheid"
from *The Endless City, The Urban Age Project*, The London School of Economics, edited by Ricky Burdett and Deyan Sudjic
- *Situated Technologies Pamphlets 6: Micro Public Places*, Hans Frei and Marc Böhlen

Week 13 - Apr 26: **Elastic Geographies / Geopolitical Boundaries**

Read for week 13

- Eyal Weitzman, "Introduction: Frontier Architecture," *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*
- McKenzie Wark, "Abstraction," "Vector," & "World," *A Hacker Manifesto*

Week 14 - May 3: **Projects in progress**

Week 15 - May 10: **Last Class / View final projects**