

FAG3171 Ethnography of Space and Place

PhD Course at the division of Urban and Regional Studies, KTH

27th of April to 4th of May 2017

The study of the city has undergone a transformation during the past ten years integrating ever wider theoretical perspectives from anthropology, cultural geography, political economy, urban sociology, and regional and city planning, and expanding its attention to the city as physical, architectural and virtual form. An emphasis on spatial relations and consumption as well as urban planning and design decision-making provides new insights into material, ideological and metaphorical aspects of the urban environment. Reliance on ethnography of space and place allows researchers to present an experience-near account of everyday life in urban housing or local markets, while at the same time addressing macro-processes such as globalization and the new urban social order.

This course sketches some of the methodological and theoretical implications of the ethnographic study of the contemporary city using anthropological tools of participant observation, field notes, behavioral mapping, and theories of space and place to illuminate spaces in modern/post-modern cities and their transformations. In doing so, the course underscores links between the shape, vision and experience of cities and the meanings that their citizens read off screens and streets into their own lives.

The course is developed in collaboration between the Center for the Future of Places, KTH and the division of Urban and regional Studies.

The course is 3 ects with beforehand reading, 5 days in Stockholm and a written assignment to be handed in afterwards.

Course objectives:

After completing the course, the student will:

- Be able to employ ethnographic methods to study phenomena of place and space
- Be able to present experience-near accounts of everyday situated life, while at the same time addressing macro-processes such as globalization and the new urban social order.
- Display a comprehension of the variegated ways through which contemporary urban experience is mediated.

Participants need to be accepted into a PhD program in planning studies, urban and regional studies, or a related field.

Grading: P/F

Applications and questions:

By email to Jonathan Metzger, jonathan.metzger@abe.kth.se.

Final reading list will be provided in the beginning of April.

Preliminary Schedule:

27th of April *What constitutes the anthropology of space and place? How is it different from a geography of space and place? Why would this be a helpful body of theory and methodology for my research and scholarly development?*

Introduction: The Anthropology of Space and Place

Social co-production of scape

28th of April Social Production of Space: History, Political Economy, Planning and Power

Introduction to fieldwork: Participant Observation and Field notes as a Method for Understanding the Social Construction of Space

2nd of May Social Construction of Space: Race, Class and Gender

Introduction fieldwork: Behavioral Mapping

4th of May Presentation and final discussion

Course leader: Setha Low

Setha Low received her Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley. She started her career as an Assistant and Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, City and Regional Planning, and Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Low is currently Professor of Environmental Psychology, Geography, Anthropology, and Women's Studies, and Director of the Public Space Research Group at The Graduate Center, City University of New York where she teaches courses and trains Ph.D. students in the anthropology of space and place, urban anthropology, culture and environment, and cultural values in historic preservation. Her most recent books include: *Politics of Public Space* (2006 Routledge with Neil Smith), *Rethinking Urban Parks: Public Space and Cultural Diversity* (2005, University of Texas Press with S. Scheld and D. Taplin), *Behind the Gates: Life, Security and the Pursuit of Happiness in Fortress America* (2004, Routledge), *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture* (2003, Blackwell with D. Lawrence-Zuniga), *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture* (2000, University of Texas), *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader* (1999, Rutgers University Press), *Place Attachment* (1992, Plenum with I. Altman). Her current research is on the impact of private governance on New York City coop residents, working on a collaborative project with Dolores Hayden on Spatial Methods and Public Practices funded by CASBC at Stanford, and is writing a book entitled *Spatializing Culture: An Anthropological Theory of Space and Place*.

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