

Gabarit du cours

Sigle du cours : ANG6670

Titre du cours : Constructions of Cultural Space

Trimestre : Automne 2020

Titulaire du cours : Robert Schwartzwald

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1. Objectifs et contenu du cours :

“Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else” (Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*). This seminar investigates imaginative and affective relationships between the urban built environment and literature, film, and the visual arts. We will focus on writing that discusses how urban space is invested with significance on the levels of myth, history, and the body.

The course begins with two books that provide background on the origins and development of cities, but with almost diametrically opposed perspectives on the question. From there, we will consider a number of key texts that theorize construction of cultural space in the modern city. Following these, a third set of readings addresses specific cities. Students will be expected to select a novel as the basis for the research paper and contribute a creative component through PowerPoint presentations or podcasts in which concepts and approaches gleaned from the readings are placed into encounter with personal experiences and explorations of the city.

2. Liste (provisoire) des textes à l'étude :

Recommended reading over the summer:

- James C. Scott, *Against the Grain. A Deep History of the Earliest States*. New Haven & London: Yale UP, 2017
- Monica L. Smith, *Cities. The First 6,000 Years*. New York: Viking, 2019

Both are available as eBooks.

Other books for purchase:

- Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, translated by William Weaver. Several editions are available.
- Erin Moure, *Sitting Shiva on Minto Avenue, by Toots*. Vancouver: New Star, 2017.

Other readings will be posted on StudiuM and will include texts chosen from the work of, Dina Al-Kassim, Marc Augé, Billy Ray Belcourt, Walter Benjamin, Alan Blum, Amy Boutin, Dionne Brand, Mike Davis, Guy Debord, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Saskia Sassen, Sarah Schulman, Georg Simmel, Sherry Simon, Joshua Whitehead, Raymond Williams.

The syllabus will be available later in August.

3. Organisation du cours (facultatif) :

The seminar will be conducted remotely this semester, with the scheduled weekly class structured around a variety of activities. Some of these will involve the entire group while others will take place in small groups or as individual tutorials. Conditions permitting, students will also be encouraged to circulate in Montreal, or where they are located, and develop PowerPoint presentations and/or Podcasts as personal responses to issues explored through our reading.

The course is organized into four modules:

- 1 – Space and the City: Basic texts
- 2 – Writing on specific cities (Beirut, Berlin, Istanbul, Montreal, New York, Paris, Vienna)
- 3- Fiction
- 4- “My City” – personal responses

Modules will be introduced by presentations by the instructor to the entire class. Students will then be expected to select and develop their own corpus from within each one.

4. Modalités d'évaluation prévues :

- Module 1 : Tutorials
- Module 2: Review essay
- Module 3: Research paper
- Module 4: Oral presentations and/or podcasts

