

# **The Politics of Third Spaces: Alterity, Spatiality, and the Social**

**Instructor:** Augusto Riveros, PhD

**Contact:** [gus.riveros@uwo.ca](mailto:gus.riveros@uwo.ca)

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

## **1. Course Description**

Critical theorists of space (e.g. Soja, 1989, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991/1974; Massey, 1994b; Harvey, 1996, 2006) have argued that space and society exist in a dialectical relationship. That is, space is produced through social relations and social relations are produced through space. Redefining social phenomena as socio-spatial reasserts space as political, whereby power struggles are presented as reconfigurations of spatial relations, such as exclusions, inclusions, hierarchies, displacements, and mobilities. Centering the analysis on a politicized space reveals juxtapositions in social life, for instance, spaces of difference where alternative experiences, social practices, and identities are performed. The notion of third space (Bhabha, 2004/1994; Soja, 1996) has been deployed to capture these emerging and fluid spaces, always in-between conventional spatial practices and sanctioned representations of space. This seminar explores various articulations of the notion of third space and some cognate ideas, including borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987), heterotopias (Foucault, 1986/1967), paradoxical space (Rose, 1993), power geometries (Massey 1994a), and spatial practices (de Certeau, 1984/1980). The purpose is to investigate how difference and otherness can be repositioned, if not subverted, through analyses that recapture and destabilize movement, liminality, and marginality.

## **2. Schedule**

### **Week 1- Introduction - Space: A Provocation**

Lefebvre, H. (1991/1974) *The Production of Space*. The plan. Blackwell.

### **Week 2- The Challenge of Abstract Space**

Lefebvre, H. (1991/1974) *The Production of Space*. Ch. 6. From the contradictions of space to differential space. Blackwell.

### **Week 3- Power Geometries: Place and Politics**

Massey, D. (1994b). *Space, place and gender*. Polity Press. Ch. 6,11

### **Week 4- Margins, Peripheries, and Exclusions**

Shields, R. (1991). *Places on the margin: Alternative geographies of modernity*. Routledge (Introduction, Ch. 1)

### **Week 5- Space, Tactics, and Strategies**

De Certeau, M. (2011). *The practice of everyday life*. University of California Press. (General Introduction, Ch 7, 8, 9)

### **Week 6- Radical Otherness**

Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace*. (Ch. 2, The trialectics of spatiality), Blackwell.

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### **Week 7- Space and Difference**

Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace*. (Ch. 3, Exploring the spaces that difference makes), Blackwell.

hooks, b. (1989). Choosing the margin as a space of radical openness. *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, 36, 15–23.

### **Week 8- Paradoxical Spaces**

Rose, G. (1993) *Feminism and geography*. (Ch. 6 - 7), Cambridge: Polity.

### **Week 9- Hybridity-Interstice**

Bhabha, H. (2004/1994) *The location of culture*. Routledge Classics. (Introduction, Ch. 1)

Rose, G. (1995a). The interstitial perspective: A review essay on Homi Bhabha's 'The location of culture', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13(3), pp. 365– 373.

### **Week 10- Heterotopias**

Foucault, M. (1986/1967). Of other spaces. *Diacritics*, 16(1), pp. 22– 27.

Foucault, M. (1982). Space, knowledge and power. *Skyline: The Architecture and Design Review*, March, pp. 16– 20.

Saldanha, A. (2008). Heterotopia and Structuralism. *Environment and Planning A*, 40(9), 2080-2096.

### **Week 11- Mestizaje: Liminality and Identity**

Anzaldúa, G. (1987) *Borderlands/ La frontera: The new mestiza*. (ch. 1, 2, 3, 7), Aunt Lute Books.

### **Week 12- Diasporas**

Gilroy, P. (1993). The Black Atlantic as a counterculture of modernity. In Gilroy, P. (ed.), *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and double-consciousness*. (pp. 1-40), Verso.

## **3. Methods of Evaluation**

- a. Participation (5%):** Attendance and general engagement in the course's activities. This includes involvement in class through active listening and discussion.
- b. Critical Response and Discussion Question (5 readings x 4% = 20%):** Students will be asked to submit a 300-500-word critical response, including one discussion question, to any five readings selected from the course outline. The response is due the day before the respective reading is scheduled to be discussed in class. Please submit through OWL. This assignment encourages you to reflect on any topics, themes, arguments, or

questions that arise from your reading of the texts. While some degree of synopsis may be required, the response is not intended to be a summary of the reading.

- c. **Presentation and Discussion (30%):** A 15 - 20-minute seminar presentation on one of the weekly readings.

The presentation must include:

1. A summary of the key points/arguments
2. Discussion of a topic, question, or problem emerging from your reading
3. Connections or tensions with other course readings/authors

The presentation should include a one to two-page handout to be used as a reference for discussion. Following the presentation, the presenter will facilitate a 10 to 15-minute discussion based on at least three discussion questions. In addition to identifying connections within the course, students are encouraged to relate the contents of the seminar to their own research interests.

- d. **Final Paper Proposal (15%):** A 500-1000-word proposal that describes an issue, problem, or question to be discussed in the final paper. This assignment provides an initial framework and motivation for investigating the issue. Students are encouraged to relate the paper to their research interests. Please include at least eight potential bibliographic references, two of which must be from the course readings. Please explain the relevance of these sources for the proposed paper.

- e. **Final Paper (30%):** A 4000 - 5000-word paper (excluding references) that discusses the issue identified in the proposal.

#### 4. Course Policies

- a. **Attendance and Participation:** In the case of absence, the student may be assigned additional coursework. Students who are absent from more than two classes may be given an F (fail) grade or asked to withdraw from the course.
- b. **Late Assignments:** Unless there are formal accommodations through Student Accessibility Services, or a mutual arrangement with the instructor, late assignments will be deducted 10% off the obtained mark per day. No assignment will be accepted for marking if it is more than five business days past its due date.
- c. **Academic Offences:** Students are strongly encouraged to review the appropriate policy document, and specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence:  
[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf).
- d. **Student Code of Conduct:** <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>
- e. **Student Accessibility:** For more information, see: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>
- f. **School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Regulations:**  
<https://grad.uwo.ca/resources/regulations/index.html>