

THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE:

Henri Lefebvre & historical-geographical materialism



Thursdays 5-8pm @ MU222

Instructor: Scott Kirsch, Assoc Prof of Geography, UNC-Chapel Hill

Office: SA 306 Office hours: W 1-3 F 2-3; or by appt.

kirsch@email.unc.edu course homepage via: <https://sakai.unc.edu/>

Overview

If it is no longer strange to think of spaces and landscapes as "socially produced," it is largely a reflection of the extent to which contemporary spatial and geographical thought has been transformed in its encounters with historical materialism, and in particular with conceptual language developed by the late French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre. This graduate seminar is designed as a close study of one of Lefebvre's signature theoretical concepts and book, *The Production of Space*, situating the work in the context of Lefebvre's lively career, its reception in Geography and related fields, and the currency of its concepts in and for contemporary research. Read alongside Lefebvre's recently discovered treatise on the built environment, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, along with selections from his *State Space World*, *Introduction to Modernity*, *Critique of Everyday Life*, and other works, with contributions from Kristen Ross, Neil Brenner, Stuart Elden, Don Mitchell, Neil Smith,

Marshall Berman and others, our purpose is to "triangulate" the *Production of Space* in relation to key questions of (1) architecture and social space; (2) new urban forms (including the "rural city"); and (3) politics and state space.

Format and Requirements

Close reading and discussion of texts. Participants will take turns leading discussions. In addition, two short papers are required: a review essay; and an effort, perhaps highly speculative, to think through your own research problems using Lefebvrian categories. Some will want to combine these into a single full-length term paper.

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| Reading and seminar participation | 50% |
| Review essay | 25% |
| Categories essay | 25% |

Plan to read ~75-125 pages per week for regular seminar meetings.

Key Texts

Available @ student store:

Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Blackwell, 1991), trans. D Nicholson-Smith. **[PoS]**

Henri Lefebvre, *State/Space/World*, ed. N Brenner & S. Elden, trans. Moore, Brenner & Elden (University of Minnesota Press, 2009). **[SSW]**

Henri Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, ed. L. Stanek, trans. R Bononno (University of Minnesota Press, 2014). **[AoE]**

*Others, as indicated by week below, will be available via sakai.

Schedule

Jan 8: INTRODUCTIONS

Part I: Henri Lefebvre and *The Production of Space* - Approaches, Methods & Contexts

Jan 15:

- HL, "Notes on the New Town (April 1960)" in Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity* (Verso, 1995, trans. J Moore), pp. 116-126.
- HL, "Space: Social Product and Use Value" [SSW, 185-195]
- HL, "The Question" [AoE, 3-23]

- Andrew Merrifield, "**Henri Lefebvre: The Urban Revolution**" in Merrifield, *Metromarxism: A Marxist Tale of the City* (Routledge, 2002), pp. 71-91.
- Kirsch S. "**Historical-Geographical Materialism**" In Kitchin R, Thrift N (eds) *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Volume 5, (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), pp. 163-168.
- Stuart Elden, "**Production of space**" in D. Gregory et al. (eds), *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 5th edn), 590-592.

Jan 22:

- HL, "**Plan of the Present Work**" (PoS, 1-33)
- HL, "**The Marxian concept of praxis**" in Lefebvre, *The Sociology of Marx* (Columbia University Press, 1982 [1968], trans. N. Guterman), 25-58.
- HL, "**A letter**" in Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity* (Verso, 1995, trans. J Moore), pp. 102-115.
- L Stanek, "**Introduction. A Manuscript Found in Saragossa: Towards an Architecture**" [AoE xi-lxi]

Jan 29:

- HL, "**Plan of the Present Work**" (PoS 34-67)
- HL, "**Ideology and the sociology of knowledge**" *Sociology of Marx*, 59-88.
- Kristen Ross, "**The police conception of history**" in *May '68 and its afterlives* (University of Chicago Press, 2004), 19-63.
- David Harvey, "**Afterword**" [in Lefebvre, PoS, 425-434].

Feb 5:

- HL, "**Social Space**" [PoS, 68-111]
- HL, "**The Scope of the Inquiry**"; "**The Quest**" [AoE, 24-31; 32-49]
- HL, "**Space and the Mode of Production**" [SSW, 210-222]
- S Kipfer, P Saberi, and T Wieditz, "**Henri Lefebvre: Debates and controversies**" *Progress in Human Geography* 37(2012): 115-134.

Part II: Social Spaces

Feb 12:

- HL, "**Social Space**" [PoS, 111-168] [does this go w state*]
- HL, "**Objections**" [AoE, 50-59]
- HL, "**Dissolving city, planetary metamorphosis**" *Society and Space* 32(2014): 203-205.
- Japhy Wilson, "**Notes on the Rural City: Henri Lefebvre and the transformation of everyday life in Chiapas, Mexico**" *Society and Space* 29(2011): 993-1009.

Feb 19: **–NO CLASS**; *Individual student meetings to be scheduled (Feb 17–18)*

Feb 26: Movie night: *Chaplin and the Critique of Everyday Life*

- **'Categories papers': roundtable workshop – sketches due in advance**
- HL, "Foreword to the second edition" (selection) in *Critique of Everyday Life* [1958] trans. J. Moore (Verso, 1991), 1-42.
- HL, "Philosophy" [AoE, 60-79]

Mar 5:

- **'Categories' paper due**
- HL, "Spatial Architectonics" [PoS, 169-228]
- HL, "Anthropology" [AoE, 80-86]
- "Henri Lefebvre on the Situationist International" Interview conducted and translated (1983) by Kristin Ross. *October* 79, Winter 1997. <http://www.notbored.org/lefebvre-interview.html>
- Marshall Berman, "Introduction: Caught up in the Mix: Some Adventures in Marxism" in Berman, *Adventures in Marxism* (Verso, 1999), 1-18.

Mar 12: **NO CLASS MEETING – SPRING BREAK**

Part III: State Space

Mar 19:

- HL, "From absolute space to abstract space" [PoS, 229-291]
- HL, "The state and society" (SSW, 51-68)
- HL, "The withering away of the state" (SSW, 69-94)
- Don Mitchell, "State intervention in landscape production: the Wheatland riot and the California Commission of Immigration and Housing" *Antipode* 25 (1993):91-113.
- Scott Kirsch, Review essay: *State, Space, World: Selected Essays by Henri Lefebvre*. *Antipode* 44(2012): 1042-1049

Mar 26:

- HL, "The state in the modern world" [SSW, 95-123]
- HL, "Comments on a new state form" [SSW, 124-137]
- Japhy Wilson, "The devastating conquest of the lived by the Conceived": The concept of abstract space in the work of Henri Lefebvre" *Space and Culture* 16(2013): 364-380.
- HL, "History" [AoE, 87-101]

April 2:

- HL, "Contradictory space" [PoS, 292-351]
- HL, "Space and the state" [SSW, 223-253]

- HL, "Plan for a contribution to the study of the modern State" (1979), unpublished 1 page typescript. Translated by Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden.
- Brenner N, 1998, "Between fixity and motion: accumulation, territorial organization, and the historical geography of spatial scales" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16(4) 459 - 481

Part IV: Dissolving city, planetary metamorphosis?

April 9:

- HL, "Differential space" [PoS, 352-400]
- HL, "Psychology and Psychoanalysis" [AoE, 102-116]
- Neil Brenner, "Introduction: Urban theory without an outside" in N. Brenner (ed) *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*. Jovis. 2014
- David Pinder, "Reconstituting the possible: Lefebvre, utopia and the urban question" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (2013)

April 16:

- HL, "Economics" [AoE, 128-135]
- HL, "The worldwide and the planetary" (SSW, 196-209)
- Neil Smith, *Uneven Development* (1984), (66-96)
- Scott Prudham, "Production of Nature" in D. Gregory et al. (eds), *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 5th edn).
- David Harvey, 'Monument and myth: the building of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69 (1979), pp. 362-81

April 23:

- HL, "Openings and Conclusions" [PoS, 401-425]
- HL, "Architecture" [AoE, 136-145]; "Conclusions (Injunctions)" [AoE, 146-153]
- **Review/final papers -- roundtable workshop; sketch due**

Final exam date: **Review/final papers due**