Overview

As a philosophy that prioritizes the material conditions of existence over spiritual and metaphysical prime causes, materialism, in varied forms, has animated geographical inquiry for centuries. This graduate seminar joins the conversation on “how matter matters” by focusing on geographical engagements with materialism from the 1970s on, including historical-geographical materialism and marxist humanism (and “production of space”), alongside “new materialist” approaches associated with interdisciplinary science & technology studies and political ecology. In the context of current debates over agency, temporality, and crisis in the Anthropocene, the seminar raises questions about the value and implications of materialist approaches and encourages students to think through their own research problems in materialist terms.

Requirements

- Close reading and discussion of texts. Participants will take turns leading discussions. Plan to read ~75-125 pages per week for regular seminar meetings. (50%)

- Project participation: cabinet of curiosities exhibit. Will involve some additional research and writing, collaboration, and creative uses of mapping and/or new media. (15%)

- Term paper. In which students are encouraged to examine aspects of their own graduate research projects in relation to course themes. Papers will be developed
throughout the semester; due in hard copy at the last class session. Alternately, students may choose to write a review paper, or to expand their work on the collaborative project. (35%)

Key Texts
Required:
Terry Eagleton, Materialism (Yale University Press, 2016).


Recommended:
Donna Haraway, Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene (Duke University Press, 2016). We will read three of ten chapters.

Bruno Latour, Facing Gaia. We will read four (of eight) “lectures.”

Additional texts are included in the schedule below – pdfs or links will be provided via sakai

SCHEDULE:

I: INTRODUCTION: GEOGRAPHICAL MATERIALISMS

1. Aug 21
   Introductions

2. Aug 28
   Materialisms
   • Eagleton: Preface (viii-x); ch.1 “Materialisms” (1-35)
   • Future Remains:
     ○ Mitman, Armiero, and Emmett, “Preface” (ix-xiv);
     ○ Nixon, “The Anthropocene: The Promise and Pitfalls of an epochal idea” (1-18);
     ○ Matza and Heller, “Anthropocene in a Jar” (21-28);
     ○ Harkness, Smonetti, and Winter, “Concretes Speak: A Play in One Act” (29-39)

3. Sep 4
   What matters
   • Eagleton: ch.2 “Do badgers have souls?” (36-60)
   • Future Remains:
     ○ Mitman, “Hubris or Humility? Genealogies of the Anthropocene” (59-68)
     ○ Pulido, “Racism and the Anthropocene” (116-128)

4. Sept 11
   What do we know, what stories do we tell?
   • Steven Shapin, Introduction (1-14) and “What Was Known” (15-64) in Shapin, The Scientific Revolution (University of Chicago Press, 1996)
   • David N. Livingstone, “Revolution, Celestial and Terrestrial: Geography and the Scientific Revolution” (63-101) in Livingstone, The Geographical Tradition (Blackwell,

- Haraway, Introduction (1-8); ch.2 “Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chtulucene” (30-57)
- Future Remains:
  - Warren, “Huia Echoes” (71-80)
  - Kroll, “Snarge” (81-88)

II: Marxism and Historical-Geographical Materialism

5. Sep 18  
    - Eagleton: ch. 3 “Emancipating the Senses” (61-97) 
    - David Harvey, Prologue “The Crisis of Capitalism This Time Around” (ix-xiv) and Introduction “On Contradiction” (1-11) in Harvey, Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism (Oxford University Press, 2014). 
    - AAG: Geographers on Film Interview with David Harvey 
      https://www.loc.gov/item/mbrs01844880/

6. Sep 25  
    - “Reading Marx’s Capital Volume I with David Harvey” class 2: 
      http://davidharvey.org/2008/06/marxs-capital-class-02/ 
        ▪  https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch03.htm
        ▪  https://librivox.org/capital-volume-1-by-karl-m Marx/ (audio)
      - Or read the long version here: 

7. Oct 2  
    - Body and Spirit
- Eagleton, ch.4 “High Spirits” (98-119)
- “Marxism on the Rise – Can it Really Defeat Capitalism?” Interview with David Harvey on Under the Skin with Russell Brand podcast: http://davidharvey.org/2017/09/interview-russell-brand-marxism-rise-can-really-defeat-capitalism-david-harvey/ * (or alternate)

III. Cabinet of Curiosities I: The Technosphere

8. Oct 9
- Latour, “The Anthropocene and the destruction of (the image of) the globe” (111-145)
- Future Remains:
  - Hennessy, “Cryogenic Freezer Box” (108-115)
  - Farmer, “Technofossil” (191-199)
- “Spheres” Technosphere Magazine #12, June 2018: https://technosphere-magazine.hkw.de/p/Spheres-2NhXDHop5bfPcKDJiRjdN selections*.
- Scott Kirsch, “Technology as a geographical keyword,” forthcoming in M Domosh, M Heffernan, CWJ Withers (eds), SAGE Handbook of Historical Geography.

9. Oct 16
- Haraway, ch.8 “The Camille Stories” (134-168)
- Latour, “Gaia, a (finally secular) figure for nature” (75-110)
- Future Remains:
  - Hersko, “Objects from Anna Schwartz’s Cabinet of Curiosities” (182-190)
  - Robin, “Anthropocene Cabinets of Curiosity: Objects of Strange Change” (205-218)

10. Oct 23 catching up/workshop #1 materialist approaches to materials
- Karl Marx, The “fragment on machines” in Marx, The Grundrisse (1858), 690-712
- Due: first drafts – object study

IV. Marxism and the Production of Space

11. Oct 30

12. Nov 6

13. Nov 13
• Eagleton, ch.5 “Rough Ground” (120-154)

V. Cabinet of Curiosities II: Geographical Materials

14. Nov 20
• Latour, “The States (of Nature) between war and peace” (220-254)
• *Future Remains* [here or below]:
  o Hanwahr, “Marine Animal Satellite Tags” (89-98)
  o Miller, “On Possibility; or, The Monkey Wrench” (141-148)
• Carse et al. (eds), “Chokepoints” *limn* Issue 10(2018): [https://limn.it/issues/chokepoints/ Selections](https://limn.it/issues/chokepoints/)
15. Nov 27

- Latour, “How to govern struggling (natural) territories?” (255-292)
- Doreen Massey, *for space* (Sage, 2005), 147-176.

16. Dec 4

catching up/workshop #2 – the cabinet

- Due: final object studies

**Dec. 13  “FINAL EXAM”**

- no class meeting, term papers due (early papers accepted)

∞ Please inform the instructor if you have special needs which require accommodations in or out of the classroom in order for you to fully participate in this course.