

Racial Capitalism, Spatial Politics, and Urban Culture

Readings on Los Angeles and Beyond

Course Description

This seminar will draw from a variety of disciplines to interrogate the following three intellectual projects:

- 1) Space has become a popular topic in a number of academic disciplines, but what does it mean and how does it help us understand contemporary social relations? We will grapple with popular spatial mappings to decipher how spaces are perceived, conceived, and lived through both cognitive and material realities.
- 2) How do theoretical frameworks like racial capitalism, queer studies, critical ethnic studies, settler colonialism, gender studies, and political ecology extend or limit our understanding of space and power?
- 3) What can an interdisciplinary reading of space that combines political economy and cultural theories teach us about particular places? While we will read several texts on Los Angeles and California, the class will also in locate these particular places within hemispheric and global contexts.

We will use a broad series of texts to examine each of these topics.

Course Requirements and Student Evaluation

In addition to regular attendance (25%), course requirements include:

1. Everyone will have to lead class discussion during the semester (10%).
2. You must write a short 1 to 2 page précis whenever it's your turn to lead discussion (15%).
3. Those who are not leading the discussion must submit a half page reflection piece that engages with some aspect of the reading (more details to be provided).
4. A short paper will be due at the end of the semester (50%). The paper will ask you to reflect on themes/ideas from the class that might be useful for your own research/work.