SPRING 2010
GEOG 334 - Political Geography
Monday & Thursday, 11:10 A.M. – 12:25 P.M.
Room: HN 1022

Instructor: Rachel Goffe
Email address: rachelgoffe@gmail.com (please be sure to include GEOG 334 in the subject line of any email and always sign your full name to your messages)

Office hours by appointment

Required Text
Course reader, about $20. Available at Shakespeare and Co. 939 Lexington Avenue, (212) 570-0201 and Copyland Center, 335 East 65th Street (between 1st & 2nd Avenues) (212) 439-8504.
A few readings will instead be made available via posted link online.

Course Description
Traditionally, political geography as a sub-discipline of human geography has been concerned with the territory of nations, formal political structures and the populations they govern. Drawing inspiration from a broader view of “the political” this course will grapple with the uneven processes of political power in and through space, how those processes show up in our everyday lives, and how we participate in, disrupt, maintain a level of autonomy, and reconfigure them. We will begin by examining some key concepts through which we will develop a vocabulary to bring to later readings and exercises. Among the concerns of the class are: how is state power distributed and maintained? How are political boundaries maintained, contested or reinforced by globalization, and is that new? What does political power have to do with the economy? How are spatial concepts like “public” and “private” political?

I will be showing short screenings or audio clips from mainstream and alternative media sources as a vehicle for discussion and analysis, but also because so many of our common sense ideas about politics are reflected in the sources of information to which we are exposed. Feel free to bring articles or video to share that are relevant to the concepts presented in the course, though I have not made this a formal requirement.

Objectives, Expectations
The primary goal of the course is to develop students’ critical analysis of interactions between social and spatial phenomena in our daily lives. To that end, the majority of the course assessment will be related to being fully prepared for class participation throughout the semester (writing responses to the readings every week). The final project has built-in some flexibility since we are not all equally skilled writers: this is your chance (in addition to class participation) to play to your strengths. See below for more on assignments.
**Assessment**
Class participation 20%
Weekly responses to the readings 30% (due night before discussion classes – in bold below)
Final Project proposal 10% (due 22 April)
Final Project 20% (due 17 May)
Final Presentation 20% (24 May, 11:30 – 1:30)

**Class Participation:** Your participation is important in this class. Please arrive on time, ready to participate, stay in the room for the entire class period, and engage with class discussions. Classes in **bold** (Thursdays) will focus on discussion of the assigned readings, though your participation is required in all class meeting times. Come to class prepared to engage with the class based on a rigorous reading of the material assigned. The emphasis will be on developing a coherent position and you are encouraged to bring your personal experience into the discussions in a way that thoughtfully engages with the readings.

**Weekly responses (10 total):** Responses to the readings are due via email by **8pm the night before (Wednesday).** I will review your responses and may ask you to elaborate in class. You do not have to agree with me or with any of the readings, but you will be expected to critically engage the concepts presented. You may take a free pass on a maximum of 3 responses during the semester. This does not mean you don’t have to read, but acknowledges that there are some weeks that we can’t get everything done. Choose wisely. **These assignments must be turned in on time.**

**Format:** The format of the responses should be 500-600 words, double-spaced 12pt Times Roman or similar sized text. Include a paragraph on each of the assigned readings.

**Final Project and Presentation:** The final project can be group or individual, and it can be a paper or some other media (an edited video, a journal, a blog, etc.). If it is a group project, you will be expected to submit the work indicating what portion was contributed by each participant. During our finals period (24 May) we will have some food and drink, and present our work to the class. Each class member, even if in a group, must participate in the presentation. Presentation time will be determined by the number of enrollees in the course, dividing the final meeting time.

**Hunter College Statement on Academic Integrity:**
Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

**Schedule** (subject to change)

28 Jan – Boundaries, Mobility, and States: What’s Geographical about politics?
   An introduction to the key themes of the course

1 Feb – The Role of the State under Capitalism

**4 Feb**
+ Wolff and Resnick - *Economics: Marxian versus Neoclassical* Chapter 1

8 Feb – Imagined communities
11 Feb
+ Max Weber, Politics as a Vocation
+ Michel Foucault, State Racism in Society must be Defended

15 Feb (No Class)

18 Feb (Hunter Monday)
+ Federici, Silvia. Caliban and the Witch, Chapter 1
+ Katz, Cindi. Growing up Global. Selections

22 Feb – What’s in a Wage? The Politics of Social Reproduction, privacy and making citizens

25 Feb

OR

1 Mar – City Governments and the Economy: Keynesianism

4 Mar

8 Mar – City Governments and the Economy: Neoliberalism

11 Mar

OR
+ Newspaper selections on the 2009 City budget crises: creativity, entrepreneurialism
15 Mar – Boundaries and the Other I: Colonialism

18 Mar

22 Mar – Boundaries and the Other II: Decolonization and Development

25 Mar
+ Fanon, Frantz. 1959. This is the Voice of Algeria
+ Reading to be determined from Demystifying…

(Spring Break)

8 Apr (Hernando de Soto on property and governance)
+ Midnight Notes Collective. The New Enclosures.
+ Bill Maurer, Recharting the Caribbean, Chapter 7.

12 Apr – The New Enclosures: Land rights, state formation and social reproduction
Presentation on my research on land tenure in Jamaica

15 Apr (No Class – I’ll be attending a conference)

19 Apr – Wars for Hearts and Minds (Insurgents, Illegals and Terrorists)

22 Apr
+ Arquilla and Ronfeldt, NetWar.

OR

26 Apr – Entrepreneurial People, Entrepreneurial Cities: Social Capital, World Class Cities and the Creative Class

+ Jamie Peck on The Creative Class.

3 May – Framing Politics from the Ground I (Pirates: Anarchist vagabonds, or anti-imperialist resistance?)
6 May

10 May – Framing Politics from the Ground II

13 May – **Readings to be determined**

17 May – Wrap-up and planning for presentations

24 May, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm: Final Presentations!