

Landscape and Labor

PhD Research Course in Human geography, spring 2024, 7.5 ECTS

SYLLABUS

Course organizers

- Tom Mels, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Uppsala University – Campus Gotland (course co-convener)
- Don Mitchell, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Uppsala University (course co-convener)
- Johan Pries, Department of Human Geography, Lund University (course co-organizer)
- Kristina Zampoukos, Department of Economics, Geography, Law and Tourism, Mittuniversitet (course co-organizer)

Sponsoring Departments

- Department of Human Geography, Uppsala University
- Department of Human Geography, Lund University

Aim

With its focus on key concepts of landscape and labor, the course seeks to combine two broad fields of research, i.e. landscape studies and labor geography. Our prime concern will be with landscape geography, but with a keen eye to the various ways in which labor is central to the making of landscapes even as landscapes shape labor relations and processes.

Why landscape and labor?

In the first place, the aim of the course is to provide a methodological and epistemological foundation for research on landscapes. It will introduce the history of landscape research and offer an overview of current research themes in landscape studies, emphasizing the crucial importance of various forms of (in)justice, (unequal) power relations and the politics of landscape.

In the second place, the course will pay particular attention to the relationships between landscape and labor. Landscapes are humanly-made constructions, and thus the question of how they are made – and by whom – is a vital one for understanding how landscapes function (politically, economically, and culturally) in society. Ongoing and historical processes of landscape change, such as the rationalization of agriculture and rural labor, the mobilization of the countryside as a resource, the aestheticization and conservation of nature, the making of urban spaces do not happen as if by magic. Processes like these are actively made and struggled over and the form and nature of those struggles can be decisive for how landscapes are lived, how individuals and communities socially reproduce themselves, and the kinds of material – that is landscape – forces that will shape the future. In particular, we will explore what the growing field of labor geography, with its focus on workers as active geographical agents, labor as a kind of infrastructure, labor precarity, and the centrality of social reproduction within productive systems, can offer the study of landscapes – and vice versa, how the long tradition of landscape study in geography can enrich and enliven the field of labor geography.

Location and time table

The course consists of three parts:

- Short individual assignment in early May, before the meeting in Visby (cf. below).
- Intensive period in Visby, Gotland, May 20 to May 24, 2024. The intensive period starts with an introduction at the University, after which we'll spend much of the week in the field, combining lectures with seminars and field trips.

- Essay writing June–September, examination September 2024 (webbased)

Swedish National Program in Human Geography PhD Education:

Criteria for passing the course (7.5 ECTS):

Module 1: Short essay on landscape concept to be completed before the course 1.5 ECTS

Module 2: Active participation in seminars and assignments intensive period 1.5 EC

Module 3: Independent, reflexive essay on chosen topic, 4 ECTS

Module 4: Peer review on other essays 0.5 ECTS

Guest lecturers

We have a list of interesting scholars on our provisional and still expanding list, with invitations pending decision on financing and with gender issues taken into consideration.

Provisional reading list

Module 1: Landscape concept: (to be read before course)

Cosgrove, D. 2006. Modernity, community and the landscape idea *Journal of Material Culture* 11 no. 1-2, pp. 49-66.

Duncan, J.S. & Duncan, N.G. 2001. The aestheticization of the politics of landscape preservation. *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 91 no. 2, pp. 387-409.

Henderson, G. 2003. What (else) we talk about when we talk about landscape. For a return to the social imagination. In Wilson, C. & Groth, P. (eds.) *Everyday America. Cultural landscape studies after J.B. Jackson*, pp. 178-198. University of California Press.

Mitchell, D. 2005. "Landscape," in D. Sibley, P. Jackson, D. Atkinson, and N. Washbourne (eds.), *Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Ideas* pp. 48-56. London: I.B. Taurus.

Olwig, K.R. 2019. *The Meanings of Landscape. Essays on place, space, environment and justice*. Routledge.

Widgren, M. 2004. Can landscapes be read? In H. Palang, H. Sooväli, M. Antrop & Setten, G. (eds) *European rural landscapes: persistence and change in a globalising environment*, pp. 455-465. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Wylie, J. 2007. *Landscape*. Routledge

Module 2: Definite reading list will be issued later

Buckley, M. (2014). On the work of urbanization: Migration, construction labor, and the commodity moment. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(2), pp. 338-347, DOI:[10.1080/00045608.2013.858572](https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2013.858572)

Herod, A. 1997. From a geography of labor to a labor geography: Labor's spatial fix and the geography of capitalism. *Antipode*, 29(1), 1-37.

Herod, A. (ed.) 1998. *Organizing the Landscape; Geographical perspectives on labor unionism*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Mels, T. 2014. Primitive accumulation and the production of abstract space: Nineteenth-century mire reclamation on Gotland. *Antipode* 46(4), pp. 1113-1133.

Mitchell, D. 1996. *The Lie of the Land: Migrant labor and the California landscape*.

Mitchell, D. 2005. California living, California dying: Dead labor and the political economy of landscape,” in K. Anderson, S. Pile, and N. Thrift (eds), *Handbook of Cultural Geography* pp. 233-248. London: Sage.

Reid-Musson, E. 2014. Historicizing precarity: A labour geography of ‘transient’ migrant workers in Ontario Tobacco. *Geoforum* 56, pp. 161-171.

Zampoukos, K. 2018. Hospitality workers and the relational spaces of labor (im)mobility. *Tourism Geographies*. 20(1), pp. 49-66.

Module 3: Individually chosen literature

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, participants should:

- have obtained in-depth understanding of how the concept of landscape is defined and applied within human geography.
- be able to relate their own doctoral studies to the field of landscape geography
- be able to connect the literature studies to field observations
- be able to conceptualize and analyze the connection between landscape and labor in a geographical perspective.

Swedish National Program in Human Geography PhD Education:

Course evaluation will be organized on the web

Fee

The costs incurred for participating doctoral students from Swedish geography departments belonging to the national program are paid by the respective department.

If places are available, the course is also open for postgraduate students in other departments and disciplines, but fees apply for covering costs for field trips.

How to apply

Write an email to Tom Mels (tom.mels@kultgeog.uu.se) or Don Mitchell (Don.Mitchell@kultgeog.uu.se), 1st of March 2024 by the latest, and give a very brief motivation for wishing to take this course and how it relates to your ongoing doctoral project.