**DESCRIPTION**

This seminar will investigate geographies of violence, security, and resistance through an engagement with the infrastructures of empire. We will consider infrastructure in its breadth and specificity, looking to both the concrete socio-technical systems that enable deeply uneven connection and circulation (pipelines, roads, rail, ports, dams), as well as infrastructures' social, intimate, affective, and even metaphoric forms. In this sense, an investigation of infrastructure allows us to explore what underpins and enables the everyday material life of empire, and its alternatives. The course takes as its starting point that infrastructure has a long and violent history in sculpting space and creating dis/connection in the service of racial capitalism, biopolitics, settler colonialism and imperialism. Yet it also acknowledges the increasingly critical and ubiquitous presence of infrastructure in the context of a deeply securitized, financialized and logistical geo-political economy. We will examine a diverse range of struggles over infrastructure, a wide variety of means of conceptualizing infrastructure, and the growing emphasis on infrastructure from states, corporations, indigenous people, social movements, artists and scholars. The seminar wraps up with dedicated reflection on efforts to resist, repair and rebuild infrastructures emerging out of especially indigenous, queer, and Black politics and movements.

**EVALUATION**

- Class participation: 30%
- Weekly submissions (10 x 5%): 50%
- Final submission: 20%

To see work produced in the 2017 course visit: [http://societyandspace.org/2017/10/03/investigating-infrastructures-a-forum/](http://societyandspace.org/2017/10/03/investigating-infrastructures-a-forum/)
Readings are listed below, and most will be made available through the course website. There are some books you will need to purchase or borrow from the library. We will occasionally add additional required readings.

Seminar participation is crucial and requires effort. The quality of our time together is contingent on many things. For this course to meet its potential we will need to invest ourselves in the experience. First and foremost, this means approaching the readings, discussions, participants, and space with respect and care. It requires that we all do the readings before class, even if you are tired, stressed, distracted, have a date, are stuck on Facebook, or are just feeling lazy. Please come prepared to work hard, but also to have fun. Please engage the material, share your ideas and experiences, and ask questions when you have them. Please show respect for all the seminar participants, and expect the same in return. Participation will be valued according to the thoughtfulness of your contributions, the constructiveness of your engagement with your colleagues and the course material, and your overall contribution to making the seminar a generative learning experience. In other words, participation is not assessed according to how much you speak. Good conversation requires trust, and trust needs to be earned, so the seminar and assignments have been designed to encourage collective process and individual engagement.

Accessibility is a commitment of this course and of the University of Toronto. This course understands difference as a source of value, and aims to welcome and support diverse learning styles and needs. If you have suggestions for making the seminar more accessible, or if you have a consideration or circumstance that you would like to bring to my attention and that needs specific accommodation, please see me as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. For more information on services and resources, please contact Tanya Lewis, Director of Academic Success and Accessibility Services, (416) 978-6268; tanya.lewis@utoronto.ca

Readings are listed below, and many will be made available through the course website. There are some books you will need to purchase or borrow from the library. We will occasionally add additional required readings through the term.

Weekly submissions are due every week at the end of the seminar. Your submission should be one page (double sided, double spaced). You are expected to draw from your weekly written submission in the seminar discussion.

Late penalty is 5% (of the assignment grade) for each weekday that an assignment is late (weekends count as one day). Assignments will not be accepted later than one week after the due date. Please come talk to me if you feel you cannot complete coursework on time so we can make an alternate arrangement.
Introductions | JANUARY 12

What is infrastructure? | JANUARY 19
Fighting for Our Lives: #NoDAPL in Historical Context, Nick Estes
Standing Rock’s Technology War To Get The Truth Out, TYT Politics
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dyu8JqpfqDk
Raise and Support, Aaron Labaree and Christian Hansen
http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2016/12/these_standing_rock_veterans_are_willing_to_put_their_bodies_on_the_line.html
From Flint to Standing Rock: The Aligned Struggles of Black and Indigenous People, Kyle T. Mays
Race, Class, and Social Reproduction in the Urban Present: The Case of the Detroit Water and Sewage, Jon Cramer
Infrastructure Failures, Like Flint, Are a Crisis for Black America, Charles Ellison
http://www.theroot.com/articles/politics/2016/01/infrastructure_failures_like_flint_are_a_crisis_for_black_america/
Social Media Helps Black Lives Matter Fight the Power, Bijan Stephen
https://www.wired.com/2015/10/how-black-lives-matter-uses-social-media-to-fight-the-power/
Building Empire City: How Infrastructure Drives Growth in America’s Metropolis, Joel Moser
Growing cross-country solidarity with Muskrat Falls land protectors in Labrador, Scott Neigh
http://rabble.ca/podcasts/shows/talking-radical-radio/2017/11/growing-cross-country-solidarity-muskrat-falls-land

What is infrastructure? II | JANUARY 26
The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure
Brian Larkin
When Settler Colonialism Becomes ‘Development’: ‘Fabric of Life’ Roads and the Spatialities of Development in the Palestinian West Bank
Omar Salamanca
The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times
Lauren Berlant

INVESTIGATING INFRASTRUCTURES
(We will choose 6 from below)

Week 4 | FEBRUARY 2
Week 5 | FEBRUARY 09
Week 6 | FEBRUARY 16
Week 7 | MARCH 2
Week 8 | MARCH 09
Week 9 | MARCH 16
**Energy**  
Carbon Democracies  
Tim Mitchell

**Embodied**  
People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg  
AbdouMaliq Simone  
The Infrastructure of Intimacy  
Ara Wilson  
The Smell of Infrastructure: Notes toward an Archive  
Bruce Robbins

**Toxic**  
Distributed Reproduction  
Michelle Murphy  
Police Power and Particulate Matters: Environmental Justice and the Spatialities of In/Securities in U.S. Cities  
Lindsay Dillon & Julie Sze

**Border**  
Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States  
Audra Simpson

**Police**  
Police  
The Funambulist  
OR  
Policing the Planet  
Jordan T. Camp & Christina Heatherton


**Rail**  
The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century  
W. Schivelbusch  
OR  
The Underground Railroad  
Colson Whitehead

**Black**  
Black Infrastructure: Media and the Trap of Visibility  
Anirban Gupta-Nigam  
Everybody’s Got a Little Light Under the Sun: Black luminosity and the visual culture of surveillance  
Simone Browne

**Urban**
Hot Spots/Cold Spots: Infrastructural Politics in the Urban Age
Martin Coward

Lively Infrastructure
Ash Amin

When Infrastructures Attack: The Workings of Disrepair in China
Julie Chu

Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space
Keller Easterling

Cable
The Undersea Network
Nicole Starosielski

Pipes and Cables
Derek P. McCormack

Legal
Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism
Lauren Benton

Jurisdiction and Settler Colonialism: Where Laws Meet
Shiri Pasternak

Logistics
Disrupt the Flows
https://itsgoingdown.org/disrupt-flows-war-dapl-planetary-annihilation/

The Art of Logistics
Alberto Toscano & Greg Kinkle

Logistics
Deborah Cowen

Media
Infrastructures of Empire: Towards a Critical Geopolitics of Media and Information Studies
Miriym Aouragh & Paula Chakravartty

Coded Vanilla: Logistical Media and the Determination of Action
Ned Rossiter

Queer
Building Queer Infrastructure: Trajectories of Activism and Organizational Development in Decolonizing Vancouver
Gordon Brent Brochu-Ingram

Sex, Time, and the Transcontinental Railroad: Abstract Labor and the Queer Temporalities of History
Iyko Day

Road
A Matter of Perspective: The Racial Politics of Seeing the Freeway
Eric Avila
REBUILDING & REPAIRING INFRASTRUCTURE

**Rebuild** | MARCH 23
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The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study
Stefano Harney and Fred Moten

**Repair** | MARCH 30
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Reparations and the Human
David Eng
A Day of Reckoning: Dreams of Reparations
Robin Kelley
A Case for Reparations
T. Coates

**Repair (and wrap up!)** | APRIL 6
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Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action
http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
Movement for Black Lives
https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/

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Irving Norman, 1941