For almost twenty years, scholars have spoken of a “spatial turn” in history – or of “spatial history” as a new methodological sub-field – that promises to use new sources, new tools, and new theoretical commitments to ask new historical questions. Now with the recent spread of GIS software and historical GIS data, the spatialization of history has come to seem even more urgent. But how does one actually do spatial history? And what does it mean to think geographically? This seminar is an attempt to zoom out from the rhetoric of the “new,” the “turn,” or any particular research tool in order to investigate the broader intellectual intersection of history and geography. Our approach will be optimistic but circumspect; we will explore the history of geography as a discipline (especially its status as a “science”), take a critical stance towards maps, atlases, and GIS, and analyze real-world examples of successful (and not-so-successful) research.

The course is divided into three parts. It begins with the “deep historiography” of early-twentieth-century environmental determinism and the reactions to it by the Annales School and neo-Marxist geographers. Second is a more practical methodological analysis of the uses (and abuses) of maps, including various case studies of historical GIS. The course ends with a broad cross-section of the current state of the field.

ASSIGNMENTS

Even though our topic is primarily methodological and historiographic, this is indeed a research seminar. Besides just being a good citizen – participating in discussion, leading discussions as necessary, etc. – the only graded assignment for this course is a research paper. The length, style, and argument should approximate a published journal article. (If you’re not sure what this entails, spend some time going through journals online or in the library; also be sure to look at your favorite journals’ submission guidelines.) You’ll be required to submit a proposal before fall break. Details about the proposal will be given in class, but your overall goal should be to get feedback on your ideas before crunch time. After the break, all students will also give an in-class presentation of their work in progress.

Final papers are due the last day of reading period: December 12th, 2012.
SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Books marked with an **dagger** (†) will be placed on reserve, but should be purchased if possible. Books marked with an *asterisk* (*) are on reserve at Bass. All other readings are available on the website.

August 31 – Introduction

**PROLOGUE: WHAT'S AT STAKE**

September 10 – What is Geography? What is History? How about the “Spatial Turn”?  

**PART I: ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINISM AND THE “SCIENCE” PROBLEM**

September 17 – Is Environmental Determinism Just Scientific Racism?  
Ellsworth Huntington, *The Character of Races as Influenced by Physical Environment, Natural Selection and Historical Development* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1924), preface and chapters 1, 4, and 20.  
September 24 – Possibilism and the Annales School
* Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (orig. 1949). Online you’ll find a translation of the preface to the first edition, the table of contents, the introduction to part 1, and “Geohistory and Determinism.” You should also look at the book itself (on reserve) and skim all of part 1 – aggressively!

October 1 – Neo-Marxism and Postmodern Geographical Theory
David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), introduction and conclusion. NOTE: This is also available as an e-book through Orbis.

PART II: THE RHETORIC OF MAPS

October 8 – Visual Communication and Visual Argument
Peruse the maps, charts, diagrams, and captions in these well-known books (on reserve):  

ALSO: Come to class with your favorite analytic map (via email or USB drive)

**October 15 – Historical Atlases**

* Jeremy Black, *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past* (New Haven: Yale, 1997), chapters 4 and 5. Also peruse the illustrations and captions from the rest of the book (on reserve).


Peruse the following pairs of historical atlases (on reserve) and come prepared to discuss some of their differences (and your own preferences):

**October 22 – Historical GIS**

– PAPER PROPOSAL DUE –


Peruse the “Current Projects” (and their associated visualizations) at the Stanford Spatial History Project: http://www.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory

**PART III: SPATIALIZING HISTORY, HISTORICIZING SPACE**

**October 29 – Mapping and Governmentality**


† Susan Schulten, *Mapping the Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). See also the maps posted online at http://www.mappingthenation.com

**November 5 – The Geography of Knowledge**


† Charles Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically About the Age of Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). **NOTE:** This is also available as an e-book through Orbis.

**November 12 – Space and Subjectivity**


– THANKSGIVING BREAK –

**November 26 – Cultural History of the Landscape**


† Thomas Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885–1945* (Harvard University Press, 2004). **NOTE:** This is also available as an e-book through Orbis.

**December 3 – The Local and the Global**


– RESEARCH PAPERS DUE DECEMBER 12th –
OPTIONAL: GIS TUTORIALS
100% optional – taught by Stacey Maples of the Map Library

All tutorials are held in Bass L06-AB; see http://bit.ly/yalegis for more info.

August 31, 1pm: Intro
September 7, 1pm: Intermediate
September 14, 1pm: Advanced
September 21, 1pm: Workshop: GPS Field Data

September 28, 9am: Intro
October 5, 9am: Intermediate
October 12, 9am: Advanced

November 2, 1pm: Intro (with free and open-source software)
November 9, 1pm: Intermediate (with free and open-source software)
November 16, 1pm: Advanced (with free and open-source software)