

SECURITIZING THE CITY

For and From Whom?



Towson University
College of Liberal Arts
Department of Geography & Environmental Planning

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GEOG 472/672: Space and Society Special Topics
11:00am-12:15pm Tuesday/Thursday

Drawing from software studies, criminology, anthropology, STS, and digital, urban, feminist and Black geographies, this course examines securitization in U.S. cities. From the globe to a strand of DNA, each week studies security at a different scale.

We begin globally with urban efforts to combat international terrorism; then move to national security; to defensive urban planning. Neighborhood security looks at hot-spots policing; a single urban block lets us track 'carceral circuitry' or population flows from block to prison; while a city park deploys subtle order maintenance, prompting the question: can a flower arrangement securitize a space?

From there we move through school (surveillance and SROs), home (smart-home technology), and vehicle (who has the right to control behavior within this liminal space?).

Final weeks cover securitization at the increasingly granular scales body (passing through TSA while transgender), face (implications of racial bias built into facial-recognition software), and iris (how biometric-data gathering enhances mobility for some but leads to forced mobility or containment for others).

Throughout this course, we will consider what a geographic lens brings to understandings of security, and what spatial and scalar tools those from other fields might take back.