Rough Trade: Logistics Space from Military Art to Business Science

Deborah Cowen
University of Toronto:

In the field of logistics, the work of militaries and markets have long been heavily entwined. But how did the ‘revolution in logistics’ – arguably the most understudied revolution of the 20th century - transform the nature of this intimate entanglement? How did this revolution, and the emergence of a ‘business science of logistics’ that it prompted, reshape this military art? How did it recast global economic and battle space? This paper suggests that the revolution in logistics hardly marked its ‘civilianization’, but rather a different entanglement between the just-in-time geographies of production and destruction. If the art of logistics came to drive geopolitical military strategy and tactics in the early twentieth century, today, market models of economic space have increasingly come to drive the science of logistics across the blurring bounds of military and civilian domains. These transformations propel logistics from a discrete and specialized military art to a ubiquitous science of the government of circulation.

Thursday, May 10, 2012
beginning at 3:30 pm
Derby Hall Room 1080

The Geography Colloquium series is funded in part through the John Nelson Endowment and the alumni, faculty, and friends of the Ohio State Geography endowment.