

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

GEO 100 // Spring 2018 // Instructor: Scott W. Schwartz

T & Th 4:00pm to 5:15pm // Room M1116

Office Hours: By Appointment

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Course Website: humangeography.commons.gc.cuny.edu

Introduction >>>

This course introduces students to the key concepts and principles of human geography. The course is designed to show how world geographic conditions such as climate, landform, natural resources, soil, space and ecology have influenced human culture and civilization over time. We will examine the connectivity of global networks, human migration, citizenship, cultural identity, urbanization, and politics. The class will focus attention on the unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunity in order to highlight the challenges and struggles that these inequalities create.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	ASSESSMENT PLAN
To appreciate the fundamental issues and debates in geography, including the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.	Questions included on an exam, assignment, or survey will assess students' ability to identify the traditional subject matter of cultural anthropology as an academic discipline and practice over time.
To appreciate how humans affect and are affected by modifications of the physical environment.	Discussion questions will be assigned on the class website throughout the semester.
Know how to use a geographic framework to view the past and analyze the present, as well as appreciate the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.	Class participation and discussion will be take place in every class to assess familiarity with the readings.

Requirements >>>

Class Website: You will find all course materials and assignments at this website: humangeography.commons.gc.cuny.edu

Readings: Readings will be assigned each week according to the schedule below. Please read the assigned materials before each class in which they will be discussed. All readings are available on the website listed above.

Discussion Questions: Each student is required to briefly answer five discussion question posed by the instructor in the Discussion section of the class website (your answers only need to be a couple sentences). These will be counted & graded. In addition, these questions and answers will be discussed in class, so you should make sure you are familiar with the topics.

Mapping Activity: Using the Mapping NYC section of the class website students are required to report at least three "geographic events" in New York. This will be a semester-long dynamic assignment, where you are asked to spatially tag events you encounter in your daily urban lives. For example, a train delay could merit a post tagged "MTA," "delay," "Bronx." A protest, movie shoot, traffic incident, construction, or Dunkin Donuts promotion could all be tagged accordingly. More instructions will appear on the class website

Midterm: Halfway through the semester you will be required to complete a midterm mapping project. You are to select a subject that interests you and could potentially be the basis of your final paper. A few sample ideas: the geography of racial violence in New York, the geography of Ebola, the geography of Islam in the U.S., the geography climate change, the geography of poverty, etc. For this project you are to compose a map of the phenomena you choose to research. More information and examples for this project will be posted on the class website.

Final Paper: Instead of a Final Exam, there will be a Final Paper. The paper should be approximately 1,800 to 2,200 words. The paper is to be a critical analysis of one of the topics covered in class (such as the Geography of Food, Geography of Gender, or Geography of health). In this paper you should discuss the existing literature on the topic, as well as present your own ideas and feelings regarding the subject matter. Final paper topics should be cleared by the instructor. More detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard. More detailed instructions will be posted on the class website.

Class Participation: Determination of this grade will hinge upon classroom conduct. Activities like talking during class or use of electronics will negatively impact this portion of your grade. Studies have shown that students who take notes with pen and paper perform better and are more familiar with the course material than those who type notes on laptops – just something to keep in mind. Positive influences upon this grade include regular attendance, following along with the lecture, and answering questions posed by the instructor and classmates.

Grading >>>

Discussion Questions: 20%

Mapping Activity: 20%

Midterm: 25%

Final Paper: 30%

Participation: 5%

Textbook >>>

No textbook is required for this class. All the reading material will be posted on the class website. For this reason, it is **critical** that you have access to this website from the start of the semester. If you have trouble accessing the site, let me know

immediately. If you cannot figure out how to view the readings, I can email them to you, **but I really don't want to!**

Miscellaneous >>>

Engagement with the lecture is critical to the Participation portion of the grade, and thus the readings for each meeting should be completed before class starts. You should notify me in advance if you will be unable to make class. More than 3 absences will negatively impact your grade. In the course of the lecture, if there are points which are unclear please raise your hand and ask for clarification. It is likely that you are not the only one who has a similar question. Familiarity and access to the class website is essential for the class, as all readings, assignments, and final papers are to be turned in electronically. **Cheating and plagiarism are easy to detect, and will result in a failing grade for the course, along with the student being reported to the Dean of Students. This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**

Course Schedule >>>

Week 1

January 30: Class Overview: The Map is Not the Territory

February 1: Introducing the Earth: Geologic Time

Week 2

February 6: Nature & Culture: A False Binary

February 8: Ecodynamics: Habitats, Diversity, Competition, & Collaboration

Week 3

February 13: Agriculture: Origins

February 15: Agriculture: Contemporary Issues

Week 4

February 20: NO CLASS (CUNY follows a Monday schedule)

February 22: Environmental Determinism: Is humanity subservient to the planet?

Week 5

February 27: The Anthropocene: Or is the planet subservient to humanity?

March 1: Energy Extraction: The Cost of Power

Week 6

March 6: Industrialization: Energy Efficient Commodity Circulation

March 8: Welcome to Town: Urban Growth & Labor Exploitation

Week 7

March 13: Shrinking Time & Space: Transportation Innovations

March 15: Road, Car, Suburb: Thanks Robert Moses

Week 8

March 20: Gentrification & Uneven Development

March 22: Eminent Domain & Neoliberal Land Grabs

Week 9

March 27: Privatization of Land Around the World: Past & Present

March 29: Borders, Migration, & Transnationalism

*****MIDTERM PROJECTS ARE DUE*****

Week 10

April 3: SPRING BREAK

April 5: SPRING BREAK

Week 11

April 10: Globalization, Debt, & Protest

April 12: Colonialism & The History of World Domination

Week 12

April 17: Multinational Governance, International Finance & Debt

April 19: Economics of Growth on a Finite Planet

Week 13

April 24: Planetary Limits & Demographics: Population Numbers

April 26: Sustainable Development: Myth or Miracle?

Week 14

May 1: Health & Hunger: Global & Local

May 3: Religion & Language in a Global Society

Week 15

May 8: Gender & Sexuality in a Global Society

May 10: New York City: Real Estate & Urban Ecologies

Week 16

May 15: NYC or LA? (Fantasy Astronauts in the Dying Nights of a Starburnt Glamfade)

FINAL PAPER DUE: MAY 18