

GEOG 208: Geography of the US & Canada

(with music!)

Spring 2016

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This syllabus is preliminary and subject to change.

How is sugar implicated in the relationships between different ethnic groups in Hawaii? Why was Hurricane Katrina so devastating for some of the population in New Orleans, but not others? Where do stereotypes of The South come from? Why are there recurring referendums for Quebec to gain independence? How is climate change influencing communities in the far north of Canada and Alaska?

This course is designed to give you tools that will help you address questions like these. This asks questions that compel us to look at the political, economic, social and environmental processes shaping places in different regional contexts of North America. Throughout this course, you will develop tools that will help you continue learning about this region, and others around the world, far beyond the final exam. Geographical concepts will provide you with a deeper context for comprehending the processes through which places are shaped and importantly, develop an understanding of current events playing out right now.

You will not be required to memorize trivial facts in this class. Instead, I expect you to engage with a geographical approach to understanding and explaining how spatial phenomena (i.e. economic, political, social or environmental processes) shape places in different human and physical geographic contexts. Geographers examine how and why people interact with and transform the areas in which they are situated to create specific places (cities, states, parks, etc.). It delves into how power dynamics, histories, globalization, identity, and more are mobilized and situated in places to explain the disparities and patterns that constitute the world in today's headlines. As such, it provides valuable tools for understanding the world around us, both here and in places that seem far away.

As a way to promote the understanding of places through various media, this course will use music to engage with places. For each region we visit, we will incorporate music from or about that region to illuminate some of the dominant themes. As such, we will spend time on textual analysis, both of words and of music, as a way of recognizing the processes that shape places.

This syllabus is subject to change. If any changes are made, you will be notified through Canvas and/or email in a timely manner.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- Identify how political, economic, social and environmental forces influence places across scales and how these forces create similarities and differences between places;
- Reflect upon and understand how you are situated in these processes;
- Engage with course concepts to help explain current events in different places;
- Apply concepts explored in class to the real-world through observation of the local environment;
- Develop an understanding and respect for different sub-regions and peoples who inhabit them;
- Understand the depth of experience that people who are from and in places around the world by seeing the multiple processes that shape their places.

Required materials

- *Geography of North America: The Environment, Culture, Economy*, 2nd edition, 2013. Hardwick, Shelley & Holtgrieve. Pearson/ Prentice Hall.
 - You can order an eTextbook for the course here: <http://www.mypearsonstore.com/bookstore/geography-of-north-america-environment-culture-economy-9780321769671?xid=PS&cid=PS&tid=PS>
If you can find a book on amazon.com or another retailer, you are welcome to use it for the course. Please ensure it is the second edition.
- Access to an online website platform. I recommend wix.com, but weebly, googlesites and others are appropriate.

Canvas

This course will be delivered via Canvas, your online learning community. You will find all course materials, including content slides, assignment sheets, and readings beyond the textbook will be posted here. Visit canvas.uoregon.edu to access the course. For technical assistance in Canvas visit: <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/canvas/support/>

Communication guidelines

As this course is entirely provided online, communication should be primarily through email. While I expect that I will be able to respond to all inquiries within a day or less, please allow up to 48 hours (unless otherwise notified) for a response, especially on weekends. Please use the same expectations when you communicate with your GTFs.

Please remember that the relationship between students and between students, the GTFs, and the instructor is a professional one. As such, any communications should be conducted in a professional manner. Do not use text lingo in emails to me or on the discussion boards. Emails need to have the course number (GEOG 208) and should begin with a salutation, a brief a clear description of the question and a sign off, such as in the example below:

Subject: GEOG 208

Hi Dr McLees,

I just wanted to say that I really enjoyed this week's course content. I look forward to what we will learn next week!

Thanks,

Leslie

If you have any issues or concerns about the course, please bring them up as they arise. I want to alleviate any communication problems as early as possible.

Finally, a discussion thread will be created during week one where I will ask you to post any general questions about the course mechanics (due dates, guidelines, etc.). I will try to respond as soon as possible, but I encourage the entire class to monitor that thread in case any questions that you may have were already addressed. This will save time for the instructor, GTF and students who can use this discussion thread as a resource to address these types of issues.

Requirements:

* Note that all times given below and in the course are Pacific Standard Time, or local Eugene time. If you are located elsewhere, it is your responsibility to figure out the time differences so that everything is submitted on time.

- **Readings:** Each student will be responsible for reading the assigned chapters and materials. There will also be news articles, opinion pieces or other brief readings to supplement the text. Make sure you read them. Student guides and content slides (discussed below) will help guide you as to which material you should focus on.
- **Fundamental content slides:** Each week content slides from lecture will be posted. Links to any material discussed in class will be embedded on the slides, and regardless of whether you were in class, you are responsible for the material. Not all material from the text will be covered, but there will often be supplemental information, both in the content of the slides and in links to outside material (videos, news articles, etc.). Students will be responsible for viewing and/or reading all links posted in the content slides.
- **Weekly Assignment: Diary project:** Throughout the course we will be covering key themes and concepts in geography and applying them to specific places within the US & Canada. Groups will be created in the first week of class (through discussions) that will act as teams to complete various assignments throughout the term.
- **Exams:** Students will complete two exams; a midterm and a final. Exams will cover material from the readings, content slides, and lectures and will be multiple choice and short answer. The purpose of the exam is to test your ability to comprehend, integrate and apply the information covered in the course materials. Tests will cover basic geographies of the region and sub-regions we cover, but also ask you to apply theories about various spatial processes to understanding phenomena of the region.

Assignments & late work

The due dates for all assignments, discussions, quizzes, exams and other projects will be posted as each product is placed online. If you know that you will be busy during a certain deadline, you are welcome (and encouraged) to turn work in early to ensure that you receive full credit.

In some cases, late work will be accepted for partial credit. See below for details of when each type of assignment is due and the late policies.

Late work will not be accepted for full credit unless a previous arrangement has been made with the instructor and the student has a *legitimate and documented* reason for missing a due date.

Evaluation

Weekly quizzes	10 pts ea	80 pts total
Discussion boards	10 pts ea	80 pts total
Weekly assignments	10 pts ea	80 pts total
Midterm exam	30 pts	30 pts

Final exam	35 pts	35 pts
Total points		325 pts

Academic honesty

Please follow this link and read the University of Oregon's policy on academic dishonesty. This is not just an exercise. I will enforce any issues I see that conflict with the university's stated policy.

<http://tep.uoregon.edu/workshops/teachertraining/learnercentered/syllabus/academicdishonesty.htm>

Diversity statement

The University of Oregon affirms and actively promotes the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education and employment at this institution without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or any other extraneous consideration not directly and substantively related to effective performance. This policy implements all applicable federal, state; and local laws, regulations; and executive orders. Direct related inquiries to the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, 474 Oregon Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403; telephone (541) 346-3123; TDD (541) 346-0852.

Students with disabilities

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please bring a notification letter from Disability Services outlining your approved accommodations.

Course schedule

TBA