

Geog 343 Society, Culture, and Place

Fall 2015

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Course Description

We visit grocery stores every week. There we can choose the items we favor, pay them in terms of our income capability, and meet all kinds of people. In this process, we can find a number of questions about our shopping and socialization in various grocery stores. Why do you choose Market of Choice rather than Walmart, or vice versa? Do you care about whether the food items are organic or locally made or the clothes are made in China? How do you socialize with other customers in the same store? Do you think these customers are belonging to the same class as you? Do you notice the variety of gender ratio in different stores and why does this happen? Shopping in grocery stores, like many other social activities in our everyday life, is reflective of and influenced by our sociospatial relations with other people. These sociospatial relations are embedded in race, gender, sexuality, age, disability, class, and political control. Power and the politics of identity get embedded in reconfiguring and transforming place and society as local forces mediate global flows of people, capital, and information. Addressing the above-mentioned questions and many others, this course puts society, culture, and place on center stage in an effort to examine what has happened in the global world on the one hand and our everyday life in the local community of Eugene on the other.

This course aims to survey and explore a range of concepts in relation to what I call the society-culture-place triad. Specific concepts for analysis include class, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, aging, and disability. The course will enable students to develop an understanding of key themes in contemporary social and cultural geography. Specifically, this course examines the ways in which geographical context reflects and shapes cultural and social processes. Moreover, it encourages critical thinking about the role space, place and culture plays in shaping and transforming thought and practices in the contemporary world. Students are strongly encouraged to make connections between concepts and theories, and conduct empirical research on the structuring of social relations and cultural formations across space and in place.

If students make a full investment in the course, they will know and be able to do the following:

1. Summarize the key concepts in social and cultural geography, such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, consumption, and as such;
2. Choose a concept or two to explain why one social phenomenon in our everyday life occurs and analyze what kind of spatial outcomes it generates;
3. Identify the role of place and space in shaping socioeconomic relations in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and class

Methods of Instruction

Students are strongly encouraged to make contributions to the class by active and regular discussion and presentation. Therefore it is imperative that you come to class regularly to demonstrate your contribution to the class. In addition, field assignments, guest lectures, videos and group debates, will be used to foster interactive learning.

No textbook is assigned for this course. A number of required and recommended reading materials will be released to facilitate your learning. Every week there will be around 20-30 pages of required reading, including 2-3 pages from the Dictionary of Human Geography, one or two book chapters, and two news reports. All of the readings will be available to you via the library's reservation counter or course documents in Blackboard throughout the spring term. The course consists primarily of lectures, discussions and case analyses, based on the assigned readings, movies and other materials. To get the most from the lectures, please be sure to read the assignment materials before attending class.

Course Grading

Attendance and Discussion	15%
In-class quiz	4x2 %=8%
Class attendance and participation	7%
Written Assignment	25%
Film analysis	15%
Newspaper report analysis	4x2.5%=10%
Individual Research Project	30%
Map Drawing	10%
One-page proposal	3%
Final Report	17%
Final Exam	30%

Grades for the course will be based on the following grading scale.

A 94-100; A- 90-93.9; B+ 85-89.9; B 80-84.9; B- 75-79.9;
C+ 70-74.9; C 65-69.9; C-60-64.9; D 55-59.9; F less than 55

Attendance and Discussion

Regular attendance is an important way to show your respect to the class. You are required to finish the following steps: do the reading material, take notes, attend lectures with notes, participate in class discussion, and raise questions.

If you have to be absent or leave early for some special reason, please inform the instructor in advance. Class participation is a crucial part of your final grade. You are strongly encouraged to share your thoughts with your classmates and make regular contributions to the learning process. Any question relevant to Geog 343 is welcome.

There will be four in-class quizzes. They are randomly assigned. Each quiz includes two questions: one on lecture contents and one on reading material. If you miss one quiz without any advanced notice, you will lose the quiz points and get a penalty of 2 points out of your class attendance and participation. If you inform us of your absence in advance, you can avoid extra penalty.

Written Assignments

There will be one film analysis assignment. This will entail watching part of a film (“Crash,” 2004, directed by Paul Haggis) in class, and subsequently writing an analysis of the use and meaning of “geography” in that film. Instructions for this assignment will be given the week prior to it being due. This analysis essay will be 3-4 **double-spaced** pages (about 1200-1400 words) and the deadline of submission is by the end of Week 7-2 lecture.

In addition, there are four pieces of newspaper report analysis. You can either choose your favorite reports or focus on the ones I provide. Each report analysis should include the following contents: the newspaper report title, URL, a brief of the story, the category of social difference, the key figures that participate in the event in the reports, and an explanation of why they participate. Each analysis is single-spaced, one page long (about 500 words). The deadline of each submission is by the end of Week 3-2 lecture, Week 5-2 lecture, Week 8-2 lecture, and Week 10-2 lecture.

Research Project

Each student is strongly encouraged to step out of the classroom to do a small research project focusing on the city we are living in. Please choose a small place to conduct your project. The place can be a parking area, one block in a neighborhood, a community playground, or even a public building. Here I use the Saturday Market as one example. You can choose **ANY** place you are interested in. Cyber space is not to be chosen.

This research project has two parts. The aim of this project is to apply what you learn in the class to understand the Saturday Market in Eugene and analyze issues of culture and society, and spatial outcomes. Each student will be asked to select one concept as the entry point of analysis and then do fieldwork in Eugene. Specific questions about the project include: How are social structures and cultural formations spatially embedded in the Saturday Market? Who are involved in the market, how are they involved, and for what purposes? How does Eugene’s geographic context shape social relations and cultural representations within the context of globalization?

The final project report should be **4-5 double-spaced** pages (1300-1600 words), including text, photographs or other materials you find relevant. This is an interpretive exercise: You may be as creative and imaginative as your abilities let you, but this is not a license to do shoddy work, or to evade the thrust of the assignment. A one-page project proposal should be submitted at the end of Week 5-2 lecture. The proposal should include the exact place you choose, the reasons to choose it, what category of social difference you are going to focus on, and a short paragraph to describe what you have found so far. The deadline for submitting final report is **Week 10-2**.

The second part of the project is mapping the site you choose. Each student needs to draw a map of the site on one particular day. The following themes can help you draw a map and write a brief introduction: (1) Functions: what types of activities (stores, services) are found here? (2) Spatiality: how are these activities distributed in this site? (3) People: Who uses this place? What socio-economic class of people is this place catering to? Or, is it more than one? When is it most used? (4) Power: Is this a differentiated landscape? i.e., is this a place that is safe for women? Gay-friendly? Child-friendly? Does it have age-specific qualities—for old people, for young people, for middle-aged people? You need to create a base field map of the area that hosts the Saturday Market. Use of GIS mapping, GoogleEarth, etc, are welcome for establishing base maps, but you need to “walk the land”, measure it yourself, and show as much information on your map as possible. Mapping requires you to look closely at what is actually there, and take notice of things that you may otherwise deem “unimportant.” Remember, one of our landscape axioms is that every item in the landscape is equally important in telling us about that place. In your final map, you need to clearly note some information, such as date, weather, and legend.

Again, the above description draws the Saturday Market as an example. You can choose **any public site** with a reasonable size as your study case. You are strongly encouraged to discuss your research project with me and my teaching assistants at any time during this term.

Final Exam

The final exam will be administered through two essay-based questions during the Final Week. It is a **close book exam**.

Late assignment policy:

I do **NOT** like to receive late assignments. Late submission will be accepted no later than 6 hours, losing 10% of the total possible grade. Late submission longer than 6 hours is not ACCEPTED, if you cannot provide very strong reason (i.e. emergence care).

Course policy

- a) Students are expected to master the material and to attend all classes
- b) Students are expected to participate in in-class activities
- c) Assignments should be attended to at the proper times.

d) The classroom is not a cafeteria: please arrive at the beginning and do not leave until the end. There is no coming and going during the class itself.

Ethics of the Learning Environment

Everyone should respect the classroom as a place of learning. Showing respect for your classmates and paying your attention to other peers' opinions, especially during the discussion of sensitive or controversial topics, are absolutely essential to a good learning experience. Furthermore, I strongly urge you to appreciate and comprehend the ways by which people in our class hold diverse backgrounds and experience.

Students enrolling in the class assume the obligation of conducting themselves in a manner compatible with the University's function as an excellent education institution. All activities of dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism or others violating academic integrity will not be tolerated (see reference to http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/programs/student_judi_affairs/index.htm). Any suspected misconduct will be reported to the Director of Student Judicial Affairs. If the office confirms the student to be guilty of a violation, it may lead to a grade of F or a denial of a grade for the course, or subject to further disciplinary actions. If you need disability accommodations for this class, please inform the professor the first week of class.

Schedule
(Reading material is open to modification)

- Week 1-1 **Introduction to the course**
No reading material
- Week 1-2 **A general profile of socio-cultural geography**
(What is socio-cultural geography about? What are the major theoretical approaches in social and cultural geography?)

Panelli, R. (2004) *Social Geographies*. London: Sage. pp. 11-36.
- Week 2 **Work and Class**
(Why do you have to work or get prepared for work? How do your working position and income shape your class status?)

Panelli, R. (2004) *Social Geographies*. London: Sage. Pp. 39-63.
- Week 3-1 **Eating Breakfast, Thinking Geography**
(what do you eat every morning and why do you eat in this way? Did you ever try different style of breakfast?)

PG Kittler, K Sucher, M Nelms (2011) *Food and Culture*, Chapter 1.
- Week 3-2 **Movie Watching and discussion: Crash (2004)**
- Week 4 **Gender and Sexuality**
(What does it mean “I am woman, here me shop?” Why do we fight for women’s rights? What it means to be homo/hetero/inter/bi/transsexual?)

Panelli, R. (2004) *Social Geographies*. London: Sage. Pp. 64-87 and pp. 111-133.
Pain, R., Barke, M., and Fuller, D. (2001) *Introducing Social Geographies*. London: Amold. pp. 120-140
- Week 5 **Race and Ethnicity**
(What is racism? How and why were black ghettos formed? What is the difference and similarity between race and ethnicity?)

Pain, R., Barke, M., and Fuller, D. (2001) *Introducing Social Geographies*. London: Amold. Pp. 97-119
Panelli, R. (2004) *Social Geographies*. London: Sage. Pp. 89-109
- DUE (Week 5-2): One page project Proposal**
- Week 6 **Aging and Disability**

(Why do more and more industrialized societies become aging? Why do people discriminate aging people or people with disability?)

Pain, R., Barke, M., and Fuller, D. (2001) *Introducing Social Geographies*. London: Amold. Pp. 141-186

Hopkins, P., and Pain, R. (2007) 'Geographies of age: thinking relationally', *Area*, 39(3), 287-294.

Week 7

Consumption and shopping

(How does your consumption define your identity? What is the difference between Market of Choice and Walmart?)

Zukin, S., and Maguire, J. S. (2004) 'Consumers and consumption', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30(1), 173-197.

DUE (Week 7-2): Film analysis

Week 8

State and territory

(Why do we have to live under digital cameras? When is surveillance appropriate to use?)

Panelli, R. (2004) *Social Geographies*. London: Sage. Pp. 137-179

Week 9

Home and homelessness

(Where is a place you call home? Why is home so important to us in an era of globalization?)

Pain, R., Barke, M., and Fuller, D. (2001) *Introducing Social Geographies*. London: Amold. Pp. 203-253

Del Casino, V. J., and Jocoy, C. L. (2008) 'Neoliberal Subjectivities, the New Homelessness, and Struggles over Spaces of in the City', *Antipode*, 40(2), 192-199.

Week 10

Young and Child

(How are kids shaped into social beings? Why do more and more people refuse to raise kids?)

Del Casino, V.J. (2009) *Social Geography*, pp.185-210.

DUE (Week 10-2): Final Project and Map

Final week: final exam