

Cultural Geography (GEOG 444/544)

Fall 2014

MW 12:00 - 1:20

MCK 240B

Instructor – Dr. Connie Johnston

GTF – Dylan Brady

Contact information:

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Course Description:

How do we understand the concept of “culture”? What factors contribute to cultural difference and how do we recognize/account for it? A foundational premise of this course is that culture is a set of ever-evolving *processes*, rather than a pre-existing entity (although the processes are often manifested in tangible and intangible entities, pre-existing and emergent). Another premise of this course is that power relations are inherent in cultural processes and that, further, these processes are enacted and experienced differently by individuals based on their gender, race, socio-economic status, etc. Cultural geography gives us tools to examine the ways culture is practiced in particular places, spaces, and landscapes. In this course, we will explore questions related to the processes/practices of culture and where these are located in space and time.

Learning Objectives:

Drawing on course materials and each other’s input and experiences, you should learn to:

- Analyze culture as a set of processes/practices that can be placed in space and time
- Recognize and analyze the relationship between cultural processes/practices and the physical environment/landscapes
- Tease out the elements of power within these processes
- Recognize aspects of individuals’ differential experience of cultural processes.

Course Readings:

There are no readings that you are required to purchase for this course. Regular class readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site. For the book review/analysis assignment (see below), it will be your choice as to whether you want to purchase the text.

Assignments/assessment parameters:

****More detailed assignment instructions will be posted on the course Blackboard site****

****Please note differing paper lengths for undergrads and grads below****

- (1) **Discussion leaders (20% total)** – Working in groups of 3 to 4, you will lead discussion for two class sessions (10% each) during the semester. Your questions should connect the readings for that class period to readings and/or discussion from a prior class. You may also connect the reading/your questions to a real world case that you present briefly to the class. **As a group** you will send your

questions for class discussion to me for review one to two days prior to class. Student discussion leading will begin during week 2 and continue through week 9. **To be done properly, this assignment will require that you have some form of discussion within your group about the reading(s)!**

- (2) **Reading responses (20% total)** – For this assignment, you will individually write a **3-5 (undergrad) or 5-7 (grad) page** response/reflection paper (10% each) on the readings for which you were a co-discussion leader. These papers will be due one week after the day your group led discussion.
- (3) **Book review/analysis and group presentation (30% total)** – Working in groups of 2-4, you will select a book from a list that I provide to you. You will *individually* write an approximately **3-5 (undergrad) or 5-7 (grad) page** review/analysis of the book in the context of cultural geography and *as a group* give an approximately 15-minute presentation for the class. Both components (15% each) of this assignment should focus on drawing from concepts explored in class readings and discussion. Presentations will be done during the final week of class. **(Individual paper due on Wednesday, November 19)**
- (4) **Final essay (15%)** – For your final paper, you will choose a topic of interest to you related to contemporary culture (US/Western or other) and that you can connect to course concepts/themes *and* the ways you might do (social science) research on this topic. This paper will be **4-6 (undergrad) or 8-10 (grad) pages**. Examples of topics include: attitudes toward bike-riding in the Netherlands; cultural aspects of rice growing in East Asia; changes in funding for women’s collegiate athletics in the US, etc., etc. **(Due by NOON on Wednesday, December 10.)**
- (5) **Attendance/participation (15%)** – This is a participation-heavy class, so it’s crucial that you keep up with the readings and be here every class period, ready to substantively engage. You should come to each class with **at least one question or comment** about the readings for that day.

Assignment Policies:

Assignment deadlines are printed in the syllabus and are firm. With the exception of the final essay, all assignments are to be uploaded to Blackboard by 5:00 p.m. on the day they are due. The final essay is to be uploaded to SafeAssign on Blackboard by noon on the day it is due. Assignments that are late will incur a 10% grade reduction for each day that they are late. However, a primary goal of the course is to assist you in producing analysis and questions regarding the reading and to utilize both in your writing. Therefore, if you are struggling with completing the work on time, please see me or your GTF so that we can discuss.

Overall Course Policies:

Please be respectful of your classmates, your GTF, and the instructor. I expect students to be in class on time, to engage with lecture, presentations, and especially the discussion. This is an upper-division undergraduate/graduate combination course and thus has high standards for completion of reading, participation, and coursework.

Technology -

If you have plans to use a computer or other electronic device for note-taking or to access the digital readings during the class period, please do so in a way that is not distracting to others.

Students found to be using their computers for non-class purposes will be prohibited from using their electronic device in class for the rest of the term. *No exceptions.*

Additionally, please plan to **turn off/silence your cell phone prior to class**. If you are unable to comply with this and must communicate on your cell phone during class time, please advise me of such *before* class, exit the class to do so, and return when you are finished. **Because texting during class is disruptive and disrespectful, if I see you doing so I will ask you to stop. If you are found to be texting during a second class period, I will ask you to leave for the remainder of that class. *Again, no exceptions.***

Academic Honesty-

Violations of academic integrity, such as cheating or plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Suspected violations will be reported to the Director of Student Judicial Affairs. If that office finds the student to be guilty of a violation, it may result in a failing grade for the course.

Plagiarism is serious! Make sure you know the rules and follow them.

Please refer to and be familiar with the content of the following websites:

<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx>

<http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>

Disability Services -

Please contact me early in the course so that we can make arrangements if you have special learning needs. There are a range of accommodations possible and you may find useful information through the Accessible Education Center on campus.

Course Schedule and Readings List:

Readings are listed by the date of their discussion; please complete the required reading prior to the class discussion.

Introduction to the course and the sub-discipline of cultural geography

Week 1

Sept. 29 (no readings)

Oct. 1 - Cosgrove, Denis and Jackson, Peter. 1987. "New Directions in Cultural Geography". *Area* 19(2): 95-101.

Johnson, Nuala C., Schein, Richard H., and Winders, Jamie. 2013. "Introduction." In *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Cultural Geography*, 1st ed. Nuala C. Johnson, Richard H. Schein, and Jamie Winders, eds. John Wiley and Sons, Ltd. Pp. 1-13. **(Read only to top of page 6.)**

What is this thing we call "culture"?

Week 2

Oct. 6 – Sewell, Jr., William. 1999. "The Concept(s) of Culture." In *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, Bonnell, V., Hunt, L., and Biernacki, R., eds. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press. Pp. 35-61.

Oct. 8 – Mitchell, Don. 1995. “There’s no such thing as culture: towards a reconceptualization of the idea of culture in geography.” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* NS 20: 102-116.

Space and Place

Week 3

Oct. 13 - Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1977. “Introduction” and “An Experiential Perspective”. In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 3-18.

Oct. 15 - Cresswell, Tim. 2004. “Introduction: Defining Place.” In *Place: a Short Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. Pp. 1-14.

Week 4

Oct. 20 - Massey, Doreen B. 1994. “A Global Sense of Place.” In *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp.146-156.

Oct. 22 - Cronon, William. 1991. “Annihilating Space: Meat.” In *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W.W. Norton. Pp. 207-262.

Landscape, Place, and Culture

Week 5

Oct. 27 - Sauer, Carl Ortwin. 1925. *The Morphology of Landscape*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California press. Pp. 98-104

Meinig, D. W. 1979. “The Beholding Eye, Ten Versions of the Same Scene.” In *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, Meinig, D.W. ed. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 33-47.

Oct. 29 - Rose, Gillian. 1993. “Looking at Landscape: The Uneasy Pleasures of Power.” In *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 86-112.

Week 6

****If you have not already begun reading your book, you should start this week!****

Nov. 3 - Mitchell, Don. 1996. “California, the Beautiful and the Damned.” In *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 13-35.

Nov. 5 - DeLyser, Dydia. 2001. “When Less Is More: Absence and Landscape in a California Ghost Town.” In *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies*, Adams, Paul C., Hoelscher, Steven D., and Till, Karen E., eds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 24-40.

In/Out of Place

Week 7

Nov. 10 - Cresswell, Tim. 1996. “Geography, Ideology and Transgression: A Relational Ontology.” In *In Place/out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 11-27.

Nov. 12 - Cresswell, Tim. 1996. “The Crucial ‘Where’ of Graffiti.” In *In Place/out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 31-61.

Identity and Practice

Week 8

Nov. 17 - Bobrow-Strain, Aaron. 2008. "White Bread Bio-politics: Purity, Health, and the Triumph of Industrial Baking." *Cultural Geographies* 15(1): 19–40.

Nov. 19 – * **Book review due** *

Klein, Naomi. 2000. "Our New Branded World." In *No Space, No Choice, No Jobs, No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*. New York: Picador USA. Pp. 3-26.

Week 9

Nov. 24 - Cohen, Shaul. 2000. "An Absence of Place: Expectation and Realization on the West Bank." In *Cultural Encounters with the Environment: Enduring and Evolving Geographic Themes*, Murphy, Alexander B., Johnson, Douglas L., and Haarmann, Viola, eds. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield. Pp. 283-304.

Nov. 26 – No class

Week 10

Dec. 1 – Group book presentations

Dec. 3 – Group book presentations

*** FINAL ESSAY DUE BY NOON ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10***

Optional reading list:

Alexander, David. 2000. "The Geography of Italian Pasta." *The Professional Geographer* 52(3): 553–566.

Blunt, Alison. 2005. "Cultural geography: cultural geographies of home." *Progress in Human Geography* 29(4): 505-515.

Blunt, Alison. 2007. "Cultural geographies of migration: mobility, transnationality and diaspora." *Progress in Human Geography* 31(5): 684-694.

Cresswell, Tim. 1993. "Mobility as Resistance: A Geographical Reading of Kerouac's *On the Road*." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 18(2): 249–262.

Escobar, Arturo. 2001 "Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization." *Political Geography* 20(2): 139-159, 163-171.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books. Pp. 3-42.

Kneale, J. 2003. "Secondary Worlds: reading novels as geographical research." In *Cultural geography in practice*, Alison Blunt, ed. London; New York: Arnold. Pp. 37-51.

Nash, Catherine. 2002. "Cultural geography: postcolonial cultural geographies." *Progress in Human Geography* 26(2): 219-230.

- Nash, Catherine. 2003. "Cultural geography: anti-racist geographies." *Progress in Human Geography* 27(5): 637-648.
- Spinney, J. 2010. "Performing Resistance? Re-reading Practices of Urban Cycling on London's South Bank." *Environment and Planning A* 42(12): 2914-2937.
- Tolia-Kelly, Divya P. 2010. "The geographies of cultural geography I: identities, bodies and race." *Progress in Human Geography* 34(3): 358-367.
- Tolia-Kelly, Divya P. 2012. "The geographies of cultural geography II: visual culture." *Progress in Human Geography* 36(1): 135-142.