

**Department of Geography
University of Oregon**

GEOG 208: Geography of the United States and Canada

Winter, 2013 MW 10-11:20 a.m. in PAC 123

CRN: 22983



GEOG 208 Instructional Team:

Prof. S.W. Hardwick (susanh@uoregon.edu)

Office hours - MW 4-5 p.m. and by appt. (office location TBA)

Graduate Teaching Fellows (GTFs):

Emma Slager (eslager@uoregon.edu)

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Course goals:

This survey course provides students with a broad-based regional approach to understanding the physical and human processes shaping North America. Our goal throughout the class is for you to emerge with an enhanced awareness of the importance of using the geographic perspective and geographic concepts and skills to help understand issues in the 'real world.' Emphasis during class discussion and in readings is on the comparative geographies of various North American regions. Weekly discussion sections taught by Graduate Teaching Fellows are designed to help you master the use of maps, fieldwork, and other interactive learning approaches related to the themes, issues, and case studies discussed in lectures.

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify and understand local, regional, and national processes of environmental and human change.
- Learn more about the role of geographic analysis in explaining the occurrences and interrelationships of economic, cultural, social, and physical elements in the landscape.
- Enhance your critical thinking, writing, and speaking skills about issues that affect people and places in the United States and Canada.
- Improve your ability to think spatially and analyze and compare sets of geospatial graphics related to geographic issues framing North American life and landscape.

Required textbook: *Geography of North America: Environment, Political Economy, and Culture* (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2013 – 2nd edition). Available in the Duck Store and on reserve in Knight Library. Please be sure to purchase the new 2013 edition of this text to avoid confusion throughout the term!

Requirements and grading:

Two exams (100 pts each):	200
Weekly discussion section assignments: (7 X 20 pts each)	140
Collaborative research project:	40
In-class writing assignments and participation points (4 X 5 pts each):	<u>20</u>
Total points possible:	400

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How to be successful in GEOG 208:

- **Class Attendance**
GEOG 208 involves active discussions of assigned readings, issues, projects, and interactive learning activities. Thus, it's especially important to keep up with reading assignments, attend class regularly, and participate in lecture and discussion section activities. You will semi-regularly be asked to complete (unannounced) in-class writing assignments and other participatory activities that help us document your class participation. These are worth 5 pts each for a grand total of 20 points credit for 4 unannounced activities/writing assignments in lecture by the end of the term.
- **Midterm and Final Exams**
Each of the two exams in this course is worth 100 points. The questions will be a combination of multiple choice, true-false, concepts to define, and short essay questions. The midterm exam will cover selected information from content covered in your text and during lectures and discussions during Weeks 1-5. The final exam will include information discussed in class and in readings during Weeks 6-10 and is not comprehensive. Note that our final exam will be given on the last day of class in Week 10 during our regularly schedule lecture time from 10-11:20 a.m. Please remember to bring a scantron answer sheet and pencil to both the midterm and final.
- **Weekly Discussion Section Assignments**
Our class will meet twice each week for lecture and discussions of reading assignments and other information on the U.S. and Canada and one additional hour per week for a required discussion section led by your assigned Graduate Teaching Fellow. In most of these discussion sections, you will complete a 20 pt. interactive assignment based on topics and assigned readings listed in this syllabus for that particular week. Some of these activities will be done individually and others will be completed collaboratively with other students in the class. You will also complete a final group project in your discussion section to present during the last week of the course.

Classroom Conduct and Academic Honesty:

ALL SUBMITTED WORK MUST BE ORIGINAL. All sources must be cited. Plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated. Engaging in either will result in an immediate failing grade in this course and a referral to the Office of Student Affairs, which may culminate in proceedings to expel the student from the University for academic dishonesty.

If you have any questions about this policy or what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please contact the professor or GTF. They will be glad to clarify.

ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES MUST BE TURNED OFF WHEN ENTERING THE CLASSROOM. Text messaging, talking on your cell, using your iPad, Facebook, etc. is strictly prohibited. Not only is it disrespectful to the instructor, but it is disrespectful and disruptive to your fellow students who don't want to hear your phone vibrating.

The only exception to this policy is for laptop computers used for taking notes. Anyone wishing to use laptops for this purpose must receive explicit permission from Dr. Hardwick or one of the GTFs for our class.

And please, no reading of magazines, books, newspapers, or any other non-assigned materials during lecture or discussion section activities.

Other:

- Please do not consistently wander into class late.
- Late assignments will not be accepted unless by prior arrangement.
- Attendance is not mandatory, but consistent absences will be noticed.

In short, this is an academic environment - so please act accordingly!

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Reading Assignments and Lecture/Discussion Topics:

Week 1: Introduction to the Geography of North America

1/7/13: Course requirements; discussion of the geographic perspective, regional approach and regional methods; and overview of comparative North American identities.

Read: Chapter 1 in your text

1/9/13: Boundaries, mental maps, perception, and sense of place in North America (and viewing of excerpts from the student-produced documentary, *Project Canada*)

Review: Text, Ch. 1

Week 2: North America's Physical Environments

1/14: Martin Luther King holiday – **no class!** (double check this date?)

1/16: North American landform regions; environmental issues in North America (guest speaker on water issues and other environmental concerns in the U.S. and Canada by co-author of your textbook)

Week 3: Population, settlement, and cultural landscapes in North America

1/21: Review of North American physical geography (recap - Chap. 2)

Read/review: Text, Ch. 3

1/23: Historical North American exploration and settlement; contemporary demographic patterns and issues in the US and Canada

Review Ch. 3

Week 4: Political Economy and the North American City

1/28: Urban patterns and processes in North America

Read: Text, Ch. 4

1/30: Political economy of the U.S. and Canada
Review Ch. 4

Week 5: The Atlantic Periphery and Quebec

2/4: North America's Atlantic Periphery
Read: Text, Ch. 5

2/6: Quebec - French Canada
Read: Text, Ch. 6

Week 6: North America's Megalopolis

2/11: **Midterm Exam (Chapters 1 through 6)**

2/13: A region called Megalopolis
Read: Text, Ch. 7

Week 7: Great Lakes and Corn Belt region and the American South

2/18: Agricultural issues in the Heartland
Read: Text, Ch. 8 and 11

2/20: Inland and Coastal South regions
Read: Ch. Text, 9 and 10

Week 8: Rocky Mountains, Intermontane West, and Mexamerica

2/25: Understanding the geography of Mexamerica (DVD hosted by guest speaker)
Read: Ch. 14

2/27: Exploring the Rocky Mountains and Intermontane West regions
Read: Text, Ch.12 and 13

Week 9: Life and Landscape on the Pacific Coast

3/4: California: Continuity and Change
Read: Text, Ch. 15

3/6: The Pacific Northwest and Hawai'i as comparative regions in time and place
Read: Ch. 16

Week 10: The outer edges of North America: Hawai'i and the Far North

3/11: Review and recap of major course themes and issues (and brief overview of the Far North region)
Read: Text, Ch. 17 and 18

3/13: **Final exam** (Chapters 7-18 only)