

Introduction to Human Geography

Geography 142

Spring 2016

Tues & Thurs, 12:00pm-1:20pm, 229 McKenzie



1 Wealth and poverty in NYC

This course counts towards a Social Science Group elective, and an International Cultures Multicultural Requirement.

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1 Disparities of wealth in Sao Paulo, Brazil

GTFs: TBA

Please see Discussion session syllabus for more specific information on discussion schedule, policies, and grading.

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

Course Overview

Geography provides us with the tools to ask questions about the events happening around us every day. Why is terrorism so closely associated with the Middle East? Why does Africa struggle economically, politically and socially? Why are there homeless people in the wealthiest country on Earth? What propels people to get into unsafe boats to cross the Mediterranean? How is it possible that in the US, a major city's water supply is severely contaminated with lead?

Geography asks about the why and how of where... and importantly, so what.

This course provides you with key concepts in geography towards the purpose of having a useful set of question to ask about the world. More importantly, however, it also provides you with the tools to answer those questions. Geographers study connections (of people, money, the environment, ideas, and more) across space and time. Where those things interconnect results in places: We call this a ***spatial approach***. Understanding those places required understanding the processes that influence those things, especially by understanding the relative power of different actors and processes and how that transforms places.

Geographers don't memorize capitals and the names of rivers. We study how and why people transforms their surroundings in to cities, homes, deserts, sites of religious expression, or parks.

This course will examine the various processes that shape the human geographies we all live and interact within. We will focus on this in the context of **globalization**, a regime we live under and touches our daily lives. This allows us to understand not only how global processes are shaping the world, but where other forces resist and what that means for you, me, and people in seemingly far-off places.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the term, you will be able to

- Identify categories of analysis of geographical phenomena;
- Recognize the importance of globalization in different places, in different ways, and at different scales;
- Understand how spatial thinking can enhance our understanding of places and events in the world;
- Apply these concepts to your own experiences and to current events;
- Think, speak, and write critically about issues that affect people and places around the world.

Promises

- This course will encourage students to ask 'why' when looking around the world and observing disparities and injustices;
- This course will provide students conceptual tools to address their questions, helping them to understand current events and the distribution of spatial phenomena (a.k.a. unequal resources, income inequalities, political freedoms, urban development, etc.);
- This will allow students to develop abilities that allow them to look at the world and the discourses (i.e. way people talk about things) with a more critical eye, allowing them to be more engaged and informed world citizens;
- This goal of this course will not be to test your ability to store information in your memory, but instead to help you construct new modes of understanding that allow you to understand and explain phenomena.

Instructor and GTF tasks to achieve these promises

- Instructors and GTFs will provide an open atmosphere that allows students to think out loud (ask questions, either in lecture, small group activities or in discussions) or on their own to develop an understanding of how various factors (politics, economics, cultures, etc.) interact create current events and spatial phenomena.
- Assignments will be developed that encourage students to reflect on how these factors play out in their own lives, and eventually connect these to the global level. This will help demonstrate how connected we actually are the events at different scales, and our responsibility for making changes.
- Exams will encourage authentic learning, not regurgitation of facts. Assignments, exams and other graded activities will not be assigned just for a grade, but to ensure that they benefit students personally and professionally

Recommended activities for students to learn in this course

- Read the assigned chapters in your textbook or any outside readings before coming to class. The lecture is NOT a repeat of the textbook, but an elaboration of certain concepts. Reading the textbook prior to the lecture will greatly assist you in understanding the concepts. There are specific pages for each reading, which have been purposefully selected to ensure that students focus on the relevant concepts.

- Attend class meetings. Lectures will consist of in-depth discussion and application of concepts. We will utilize various means (lecture, video, in-class discussion, etc.) to help students develop these concepts. Missing class means you miss this opportunity to learn. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get materials from a classmate. Only see the instructor when you have questions about what was covered in class after you have looked through the materials.
- Participate in discussions. Please express your thoughts in class. We will have frequent in-class activities and I expect some form of participation. This will include contributing to daily discussions of current events.
- Download lecture guide prior to lectures: each week by 9pm Sunday evening I will post a study guide for the following week's lectures. These will function as basic study guides for the exams, and will assist in you note-taking during class. I will emphasize here that the guide is just that: a guide. Questions on the exams will not be the same as the ones of the study guide, but these documents can help provide some structure for your studying.
- Download course notes after lectures: Each week by Friday at 5:00pm the week's lecture notes will be posted in one or two pdf files (depending on organization). I will not post them before lectures. However, the lectures slides may provide another useful way to organize your studying for the course.
- Attend discussion sessions: These are required and are not used for busy work, but instead to provide students with the opportunity to explore and elaborate on specific concepts, with a focus on how spatial phenomena play out in our daily lives.
- Complete assignments: You will have three mental mapping exercises that build upon each other throughout the term, starting with focusing on your personal experiences and moving up to global mapping. More on this later in the term.

How students will be assessed

- Attendance: Attendance will be taken occasionally and at random by various means.
- Participation in discussion sessions: More information on the discussion session syllabus
- One in-class midterm. Exams are a combination of short answer and essay. This is meant to reinforce that this course is not about learning 'facts,' but instead to develop your ability to critically analyze spatial phenomena and the implications of how it plays out in different places.
- One cumulative final exam. However, we will build upon material throughout the session, so there should be no surprises.

Final notes

- Do not make travel plans to leave prior to the assigned final exam period: Tuesday, June 7th at 8:00am. You will not be able to reschedule the exam.
- Understand that minimal work will receive a minimal grade.
- Any late work will have 10% of the possible points deducted for each day it is late. No Exceptions.

Course Texts

The primary course texts are available at the DuckStore and online.

- Harm de Blij. 2012. *Why Geography Matters: More than Ever* (2nd edition). Oxford University Press.
- *Compact Atlas of the World* (6th edition). 2015

Other readings will be assigned and posted on Canvas.

Academic Integrity Code

All students are expected to complete assignments in a manner consistent with academic integrity. Students must produce their own work and properly acknowledge and document all sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases). Students can find more complete information about the University of Oregon's Policy on Academic Dishonesty in the University of Oregon Student Handbook. Find links on the Blackboard to clarify what is meant by plagiarism and to find proper ways of using sources.

If you are found to have plagiarized (copied) off a classmate or from other materials for a test or an assignment of any sort, your first warning will be a zero on the assignment. Your second incident will result in an F in the course.

Disability Statement

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me at the beginning of the term if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoac@uoregon.edu.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is an important part of a student's educational experience. Students are expected to attend every meeting of their classes and are responsible for class attendance. Regardless of what reasons there may be for absence, students are accountable for all academic activities, and I reserve the right to require special work or tests to make up for the missed class or classes.

Grading

Participation in discussions and in-class activities	25 points
Assignments (3 @ 15 points each)	45 points
Discussions	30 points
Mid-term exam	20 points
Final cumulative exam	30 points
TOTAL	150 points

Any late work, including exams, are subject to a deduction of 10% of the total grade for each day that the work is turned in late.