

GEOG 410: Black Geographies (CRN: 16975)

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Synchronous Zoom Meeting Time: M/W 10:15am – 11:45am: [Class Zoom Link](#)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00-5:00pm ([Zoom Meeting](#)) Sign up for office hours at <https://brunoofficehours.as.me>

Course Description: Black Geographies is a burgeoning subfield within Geography that draws from Black Studies to upend long held Eurocentric traditions and advance the discipline of Geography in new directions, particularly as it relates to knowledge production regarding Blackness, space, and place. Black Geographies scholarship emphasizes a need for interdisciplinarity to attend to the complexities of Blackness and race in general. In this course, students will learn the interconnections between race and space and what Black geographies are, which is certainly much more than where Black people live. Student will learn how to apply a Black Geographies lens to the world around them. We will examine how Black Geographies scholarship is reframing analyses of place. We will then apply this lens to an analysis of sites central to Black Portland, such as Historic Vanport, a site of historic Black displacement and state abandonment.

Course Objectives:

- Introduce concepts and themes fundamental to understanding critical race geographies
- Introduce concepts, themes, and methodologies within Black Geographies scholarship
- Promote critical thinking about racialized landscapes which students interact with everyday
- Equip students with the ability think critically about social, political, racial, and environmental processes that shape Black Geographies

Required Texts:

- Finney, C. 2014. *Black faces, white spaces: Reimagining the relationship of African Americans to the great outdoors*. UNC Press Books.
- All other reading will be provided through Canvas or are available to download via the UO library

Suggested Text:

- McKittrick, K., and C. Woods. 2007. *Black Geographies and the politics of place*. Toronto: Between the Lines.

Grading:

Current Event Presentation 5%

Participation: 10%

Final Project Proposal: 10%

Final Project: 35%

Response Papers: 40%

Current Events and Black Geographies Presentation (5%) Each student will give a 5-7 minute presentation on a current event that they see as related to the course. The specific events or topic is open for the student to select. Each presentation should include 1) a visual aspect related to the event (timeline, images, maps) that should be shared with the instructor by 5pm the day before the presentation and 2) a clear description of the event and how it relates to race and space. The sign-up sheet for this will be posted on Wed, 9/30.

Participation (10%): Students are expected to come to each class period having done the readings and prepared to actively participate in class. Throughout the term, I will allow time for students to discuss topics in small groups during our Wednesday classes. Students will either write up a short summary of what their group discussed or share out to the class after group discussion.

Final Project Proposal (10%): Students will write a 3-page proposal for their final project. This final project proposal should 1) identify and describe the site or artistic work they have selected for their final project, 2) explain why they have chosen this site or artistic work, 3) explain what course concepts will be applied in their analysis. **Due: 11/2**

Final Project (35%): Each student will turn in a final project. **Due: 12/8**

- Option 1) Students can do research project on a site that exemplifies any concept discussed in class and write an 8-10 page paper on why you chose this site, how it exemplifies Black Geographies, and an explanation on how a Black geographies lens helps one understand the complexities of subjugation and struggle in this site. Scale of this site must be smaller than a state (city, neighborhood, etc.) and must be clearly supported within the write-up.
 - As an example, consider discussion of Treme and Lower Ninth Ward, New Orleans in Brand (2018).
- Option 2) Students can choose the work of Black intellectuals, poets, artists, essayists, or musicians and explain how forms of understanding space or Black sense of place is articulated through their work. Student should write a 8-10 page paper explaining their spatial analysis of whichever works they choose. This write-up may also include the students own attempt to articulate a forms of understanding space or Black sense of place through art. Include a pdf of any lyrics, poems, or art used in this project.

Response papers (40%): Several readings will be assigned each week. Students must submit 5 response papers in which they summarize and respond to at least two readings from that week. Responding to a reading entails briefly discussing what you learned from the reading and how it relates to your interests. Each response should be 400-500 words. Response papers are due the day we discuss those readings. Tip: You do not want to leave these for the last 5 weeks. Start early! Note: A write up of your Current Event presentation and how it relates to the reading is accepted as a reading response paper. **Due: Weekly on Wednesdays before class**

*Extra Credit (5 pts): Oregon Report - **Due: 11/30**

Course Policies and Resources:

Communication

Our class will communicate through our Canvas site. Check and adjust your settings under Account > Notifications to ensure that these messages are sent to you via email or even text. Please only communicate with the instructor and graduate employee via Canvas. Be sure to include the course number (GEOG 410) in the subject line. Emails sent after 5pm or over the weekend may not be responded to until the following business day.

Accessibility

I am happy to make any accommodations for this learning experience. Please notify me 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 at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Course Technology

Log into canvas.uoregon.edu using your DuckID to access our class. If you have questions about accessing and using Canvas, visit the [Canvas support page](#). Canvas and Technology Support also is available by phone or live chat: [541-346-4357](tel:541-346-4357) | livehelp.uoregon.edu

If you face Internet access challenges: companies are offering free access during this challenging time. To learn more about options visit Information Services' [web page on going remote](#).

Canvas Discussion Best Practices:

1. Use subject lines that clearly communicate the content of your post
2. Write clearly and concisely and be aware that humor or sarcasm often doesn't always translate in an online environment.
3. Be supportive and considerate when replying to others' posts. This means avoiding use of jargon or inappropriate language, and it means disagreeing with respect and providing clear rationale or evidence to support your different view.
4. Keep focused on the topic and reference readings and other class materials to support your points (as applicable).
5. Try to use correct spelling and grammar and proofread your submissions. After submitting, use the edit feature to make corrections and resubmit (don't create a new or duplicate post that corrects your error).
6. Contribute and interact often!

Zoom Guidelines

1. Please test your video and audio prior to joining a live class session. You can learn more about testing your audio and video by visiting the [UO Service Portal](#).
2. Please have your camera on. All of us occasionally need to hide video, but know that seeing your faces is a joy to me and will enrich our relating and connecting in the course experience, especially during group discussion.
3. Be mindful that others can see you and your surroundings when your video is on.

4. Use chat to pose questions or offer insights “on the side” while others are contributing. The chat can be read by all and should reflect a high standard of respect for our class community.
5. For help and troubleshooting with Zoom, visit the [UO Service Portal](#).

Well-Being

University Health Services help students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the Duck Nest (located in the EMU on the ground floor) and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates. Find out more at health.uoregon.edu/ducknest.

University Counseling Services (UCS) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at counseling.uoregon.edu or by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number).

Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support.

This UO webpage includes resources for food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances, and legal support: <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/basicneeds/food/>

Course Schedule:

Week 1: An Introduction to Race and Space

W: 9/30

Films: Race: The Power of an Illusion

<https://uoregon.kanopy.com/video/race-power-illusion-0>

Pulido, L. 2000. Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in southern California. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90 (1):12–40.

Brand, A. L. 2018. The duality of space: The built world of Du Bois’ double-consciousness. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36 (1):3–22.

Week 2: What are Black Geographies?

M: 10/5

McKittrick, K., and C. Woods. 2007. *Black Geographies and the politics of place*. Toronto: Between the Lines. (Chapter 1 and 3)

W: 10/7

Bledsoe, A., L. E. Eaves, and B. Williams. 2017. Introduction: Black Geographies in and of the United States South. *Southeastern geographer* 57 (1):6–11.

Ansfield, B. (2015). Still submerged: The uninhabitability of urban redevelopment. In *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. McKittrick, K, 124-141. Duke University Press.

Week 3: What are Black Geographies? Con't

M:10/12

McKittrick, K. 2011. On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place. *Social and Cultural Geography* 12 (8):947–963.

W: 10/14

McKittrick, K. 2006. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Chapter 1)

Hawthorne, C. 2019. Black matters are spatial matters: Black geographies for the twenty-first century. *Geography Compass* 13 (11):1–13.

Week 4: Racial Capitalism and Space*

M: 10/19

Video: Ruth Wilson Gilmore: Geographies of Racial Capitalism

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CS627aKrJI&ab_channel=antipodeonline

Robin. D. G. Kelley, “What did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism?” (2020).

<http://bostonreview.net/race/robin-d-g-kelley-what-did-cedric-robinson-mean-racial-capitalism>

W: 10/21

Bledsoe, A., and W. J. Wright. 2019. The anti-Blackness of global capital. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 37 (1):8–26.

Johnson, G. T. and A. Lubin. 2017. Introduction. In *Futures of Black Radicalism*, eds. G. T. Johnson and A. Lubin, 9–18. Chapel Hill & London: Verso Books.

Week 5: Black Portland*

M: 10/26

Walidah Imarisha: Why Aren't There More Black People in Oregon? A Hidden History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWC-8hvP7aY>

Thoennes, P., and J. Landau. 2019. Constitutionalizing Racism: George H. Williams’s Appeal for a White Utopia. *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120 (4):468–487.

W: 10/28

Brushfire and Bell, Ifyani, (2015). *Future: Portland*. Oregon Humanities.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLLLuaDHEls>

“How Oregon’s Second Largest City Vanished in a Day”

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/vanport-oregon-how-countrys-largest-housing-project-vanished-day-180954040/>

“Black Artists Find Ways to Make Their Voices Heard in Portland”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/23/arts/design/black-artists-portland.html>

Week 6: Black Feminist and Queer Geographies

M 11/2:

McKittrick, K. 2006. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Chapter 2)

Eaves, L. E. 2017. Black Geographic possibilities: On a Queer Black South. *Southeastern Geographer* 57 (1):80–95.

***Final Project Proposal due**

W 11/4:

Bailey, M. M., and R. Shabazz. 2014. Editorial: Gender and sexual geographies of blackness: anti-black heterotopias (part 1). *Gender, Place & Culture* 21(3):316-321.

Bailey, M. M., and R. Shabazz. 2014. Gender and sexual geographies of Blackness: new Black cartographies of resistance and survival (part 2). *Gender, Place and Culture* 21 (4):449–452.

Week 7: Anti-Blackness and the environment

M 11/9

Merchant, C. 2003. Shades of darkness: Race and environmental history. *Environmental History*, 8(3):380-394.

DeLuca, K., and A. Demo. 2001. Imagining Nature and Erasing Class and Race: Carleton Watkins, John Muir, and the Construction of Wilderness. *Environmental History* 6 (4):541–560.

W 11/11

Pulido, L. 2016. Flint, Environmental Racism, and Racial Capitalism. *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 27 (3):1–16.

Wright, W. J. 2018. As Above, So Below: Anti-Black Violence as Environmental Racism. *Antipode* 0 (0):1–19.

Suggested Reading:

Bullard, R., P. Mohai, R. Saha, and B. Wright. 2008. Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: Why Race Still Matters after All of These Years. *Environmental Law* 38 (2):371.

Sharpe, C. 2016. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Duke University Press. (Chapter 4: The Weather)

Week 8: Black relationships to the environment

M 11/16

Finney, C. 2014. *Black faces, white spaces: Reimagining the relationship of African Americans to the great outdoors*. UNC Press Books. (Chapters Intro, 2, and 3)

W 11/18

Finney, C. 2014. *Black faces, white spaces: Reimagining the relationship of African Americans to the great outdoors*. UNC Press Books. (Chapters (4-5))

Suggested Reading:

Finney, C. 2014. *Black faces, white spaces: Reimagining the relationship of African Americans to the great outdoors*. UNC Press Books. (Chapters 1, 6, and Epilogue)

Week 9: The Urban: Prisons, Confinement, and Gentrification

M 11/23

“Death by gentrification: the killing that shamed San Francisco”- Rebeca Solnit

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/mar/21/death-by-gentrification-the-killing-that-shamed-san-francisco>

Gilmore, R. W. 2017. Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence. In *Futures of Black Radicalism*, eds. G. T. Johnson and A. Lubin, 225–240. Chapel Hill & London: Verso Books.

Shabazz, R. 2015. *Spatializing blackness: Architectures of confinement and black masculinity in Chicago*. University of Illinois Press. (Preface and Introduction)

Suggested Reading:

“Is Prison Necessary? Ruth Wilson Gilmore Might Change Your Mind”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/17/magazine/prison-abolition-ruth-wilson-gilmore.html>

W 11/25

No class

Week 10: Review

M 11/30

Revisit: McKittrick, K. 2011. On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place. *Social and Cultural Geography* 12 (8):947–963.

***All extra credit assignments due.**

W 12/2

No class, Extra Office Hours

Week 11: *Final Project due 12/8