What is this class about?

This course centers around society, culture, and place to explore the intersections of the global processes with local, everyday practices in different parts of the world. Taking a geographic approach, students will develop an understanding of key themes in contemporary social and cultural geography. Specifically, the course examines the ways in which geographic context reflects, shapes, and is shaped by cultural and social processes. Utilizing a geography lens will encourage critical thinking about the ways in which space, place, and culture influence thought and practice in the world, and vice-versa. Students will make connections between concepts and theories covered in the course, and their own personal experiences.

Learning objectives: Through investing in the course, students will be able to:

- understand why societal structures are so diverse and often misunderstood around the world, and how geography can explain these differences.
- argue why common binary approaches (e.g. us/them, inside/outside, right/wrong, etc.) are problematic in viewing and understanding culture.
- develop a deep understanding of space, place, and the relationship between them.
- employ space and place as cornerstones of geographic inquiry in research.
- appreciate the critical role of space and place in their personal and collective cultural and social experiences.

Reading Material and Methods of Instruction:

There will be no textbook in this course. Readings will include a wide variety of material, including book chapters, encyclopedia entries, academic articles, and journalistic and literary pieces. The goal is to incorporate different texts and authors with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. All the readings will be available on Canvas, under Modules. Please do the readings before class (be good citizens).

Students should be active partners in teaching and learning. This is a higher-level course, and students’ activities should match the course level. Students should be prepared to contribute to class conversations and ask questions. In addition, the class will benefit from guest lecture, videos, and group activities to foster an interactive learning environment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1:

Introduction: Society & Culture

Readings

INTRODUCTION- Anderson, 2009- Understanding cultural geography places and traces.
Concepts (*All concepts are Gregory et al. (2009). Dictionary of Human Geography)  

SOCIETY; CULTURE

Videos, Audios & Visuals  
The food deserts of Memphis: inside America's hunger capital.  
Food Deserts in D.C. | Let's Talk | NPR.  
Housing Is Health: Calls Grow for California to Give Vacant Homes to Unhoused People Amid Pandemic.

Introduction: Culture & Place

Readings

KNOWING (YOUR) PLACE- Anderson, 2009- Understanding cultural geography places and traces

Concepts

CULTURE; PLACE

Videos, Audios & Visuals

How China is changing Hollywood.

Assignments: Discussion 1; Reflection 1; Due Friday, Apr. 3, 5:59 pm

WEEK 2:

Readings

The invention of Essex: How a county became a caricature.  
Orientalism-Edward Said-Introduction. (OPTIONAL)

Concepts

ORIENTALISM; DISCOURSE; OTHER/OTHERNESS

Videos, Audios & Visuals

Edward Said on Orientalism.  
Aladdin - Arabian Nights.  
Brexit: Hegemony in Practice [Minutes: 10:09 to 11:18].

Readings


Concept

NATION; STATE; TERRITORY

Assignments: Discussion 2; Reflection 2; Due Fri. Apr. 10, 5:59 pm

WEEK 3:
Readings
The Imperial Present: Geography, Imperialism, and its Continued Effects-

Concepts
EMPIRE; IMPERIALISM

Videos, Audios & Visuals
The Story Behind Iran Cables.
Iran's Secret Influence on Iraq.
Does Iran’s deep religious influence in Iraq translate to politics?
Armenian genocide: survivors recall events 100 years on.

Readings

Concepts
COLONIALISM

Videos, Audios & Visuals
Ayala Museum Online Resources (optional).

Assignments: Discussion 3; Reflection 3; Due Sat. Apr. 18, 11:59 pm

WEEK 4:
Readings
After the Election; Speaking Arabic, Speaking English, GeoHumanities, 4;2.

Concepts
LANGUAGE; POWER; REGION

Videos, Audios & Visuals
What You Didn’t Know about Language Barriers | Roxanne Pomerantz | TEDxBGU.
A tour of The UK and Ireland in accents.
Italian and Sicilian: Language Differences.
You Talk Funny (And Other Opinions) - American Tongues.
Phoebe with "posh" accent.
The Killing Times: Interactive Map.
Interactive Map Shows What Languages NYers Speak at Home.

Readings
The Fight to Redefine Racism.

Concepts
RACE; RACISM

Videos, Audios & Visuals
Debunking the Most Common Myths White People Tell About Race.
Inside the mind of a teenage neo-Nazi (optional).
Everyday racism: what should we do? Akala.
Why “I’m not racist” is only half the story.

Assignments: Discussion 4; Reflection 4; Due Sat. Apr. 25, 11:59 pm

WEEK 5:
Readings

Concepts
GENDER; FEMINISM; PATRIARCHY; FEMINIST GEOGRAPHIES (optional)

Assignments: Discussion 5; Mid-term; Due Sat. May 2, 11:59 pm

WEEK 6:
Readings

Concepts
SEXUALITY; HOMOPHOBIA & HETEROSEXISM; HETERONORMATIVITY

Videos, Audios & Visuals
How Florida legally terrorized gay students.
The Stonewall You Know Is a Myth. And That’s O.K. | NYT Celebrating Pride.
Owen Jones 'goes' queer clubbing during the coronavirus quarantine (optional).

Readings
Nipples, Facebook, and what our society deems 'decent.'

Concepts
BODY

Videos, Audios & Visuals
Americans feel passionate about abortion but don't know much about it.
All You Need to Know About FGM | End FGM (optional).
Construction Workers Speak Out About Unsafe Conditions During COVID-19 Crisis.
What is the Covid-19 crisis doing to our mental health?

Assignments: Discussion 5; Reflection 5; Due Sat. May 9, 11:59 pm

Final Project Proposal; Due Sun. May 10, 11:59 pm

WEEK 7:

Readings


Concepts

CLASS; CAPITAL; FORDISM (optional), POST-FORDISM (optional)

Videos, Audios & Visuals

TED Talk: Choice, happiness and spaghetti sauce | Malcolm Gladwell.
The new US tax law, explained with cereal.
Noam Chomsky - Manufacturing Consent.

Readings

The Century of the Self - Part 1: "Happiness Machines"

Concepts

CONSUMPTION

Videos, Audios & Visuals

How the economy shapes our love lives.
Cinema's Commentary on Consumerism.
America's Dopamine-Fueled Shopping Addiction.

Assignments: Discussion 7; Reflection 6; Due Sat. May 16, 11:59 pm

WEEK 8:

Readings

A Short Documentary on Gentrification.

Concepts

MIGRATION; GENTRIFICATION

Readings

'No one's an exception': toll of climate change, from US to the Marshall Islands.
A Policy Knot Leaves Oklahomans From Marshall Islands Struggling to Get Health Care.

Concepts

DIASPORA
Videos, Audios & Visuals

Pain and terror: America remembers its past.
Holocaust survivor, 102, meets nephew after thinking all family died in war.
John Oliver explains refugee vetting process. Last Week Tonight.

Assignments: Discussion 8; Reflection 7; Due Sat. May 23, 11:59 pm

WEEK 9:

Readings

Spotify: Song Playlist.
Race, Ethnicity, Expressive Authenticity- Can White People Sing the Blues.
Cultural Appropriation: From Culture Stealing to Culture Sharing.
How Rock and Roll Became White.
Alan Lomax - The Land Where the Blues Began.
From Down South to Up South an Examination of Geography in the Blues.
'Ve We Will Always Sing': Black Belt Eagle Scout Makes Space for The Marginalized.
The Blues Tradition of Explanation - Clyde Woods (optional).
Development Arrested - Clyde Woods (optional).
Color Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop (optional).

Concepts

MUSIC (optional)

Assignments: Discussion 9; Reflection 8; Due Sat. May 30, 11:59 pm

WEEK 10:

Readings

OPTIONAL: Nosedive (2016).
10-1- The Ending of Nosedive Explained | Black Mirror Season 3 Explained.

Concepts

SURVEILLANCE

Readings

A Mexican Baseball Team Plays in Texas. It's a Home Game. - NY Times.
Why France produces the most World Cup players.

Videos, Audios & Visuals
Border Wall: Trump's first visit to border in Laredo.
VEGEDREAM - RAMENEZ LA COUPE A LA MAISON.
L.E.J - Liberté, Égalité.

Assignments: Final Project; Due Sun. Jun. 7, 11:59 pm

Final Exam: Wednesday at 5:59 pm

*The syllabus is open to changes. Any further changes will be announced on Canvas.

Grading and Assessment (100% Total)

Detailed instructions for each section will be available in a separate file on Canvas, under Modules. Your grade includes the following components:

**Weekly Discussions (10%)** are based on participation in online discussions on Canvas.

**Reflections (30%)** consists of students’ response to weekly prompts that combine concepts from lectures with other course material including readings, videos, audios, etc.

**Midterm Exam (15%)** covers the first part of the term, and includes short answer definitions and medium-length essay questions.

**Final Exam (15%)** covers the second part of the term, and is in the same format as the midterm.

**Final Project Proposal (5%)** is comprised of a one-page proposal that includes the topic, and potential sources for the final project.

**Final Project (25%)** is a more in-depth inquiry into a specific topic. Students are free to choose the type and topic of their projects. However, projects have to be original (not done by another person or for another course), and related to the course themes. More details and guidelines will be posted in a separate document on Canvas.

Students are required to submit all assignments before the due dates. It is understandable that the current emergency has disrupted the normal course of life. However, there will be sufficient time to complete the assignments.

Ethical Codes of Conduct and DON’TS

Respecting the class and your classmates is absolutely essential to the course. Throughout the course, we will have conversations about many different subjects, some of them quite sensitive. It is your responsibility to make sure that you respect others’ opinions, even if what
they say is the exact opposite of what you think to be the case. In your participation in class conversations, you have to make sure that your speech and practice does not ridicule, insult, or denigrate any racial, ethnic/national, religious, sexual, or other personal or collective identities, values, and belief systems. Learning is only possible if we provide a safe and respectful environment for all.

Plagiarism is NEVER acceptable in this class. Suspected cases of plagiarism will be reported for Academic Misconduct. The student will receive an ‘F’ for the course if that office finds the student guilty. To educate yourself on this matter, please consult this link. You are also welcome to get help from your instructor, or your GEs on what constitutes plagiarism, and how to avoid it.

Accessibility

We strive for an inclusive and accessible learning environment. If you have special needs or a disability that impedes your learning due to the physical condition of the classroom, or the structure, content or methods of this class, please talk to me. You can also reach the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.