

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Earth Sciences

Geography 405
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Spring 2009

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Geographical Thought

Geographical Thought is a capstone course in Earth Sciences which focuses on the evolution of the field of geography from Classical times to the present. The course will focus on the historical evolution of the field of geography as well as some of the concepts, themes, and trends in modern American geography. The first two-thirds of the course are organized around a lecture/discussion format in which all students are expected to participate actively! Course readings (of which there are many!) will be used to shape and guide our daily discussions. The final third of the course will focus on student-led presentations and seminars that are focused on current trends in various topical subfields of geography. Simply put, the course, designed for geography majors, is a kind of intellectual family history, providing students with an opportunity to explore the rich roots and contemporary diversity of their chosen field of study.

Required Books/Readings

All students will need to purchase and/or obtain copies of:

Martin (and James), ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS
Sobel, LONGITUDE
Schulten, GEOGRAPHICAL IMAGINATION
E-access journal articles
Reserve readings (electronic reserve: Renne Library)

Also, additional readings or source materials may be put on Reserve in the Renne Library for use as student reference material for their projects.

For each assigned reading, make sure you are prepared to answer two key questions: 1) What are the author's main points/themes/arguments in the reading? 2) How does the reading fit into the day's discussion topic? ALWAYS COME PREPARED TO INTRODUCE EACH READING and TO PARTICIPATE IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS!

Grading

Course grades will be based on a total of 650 points, derived in the following fashion:

- 1) Two midterms, each worth 100 points, and a comprehensive final worth 150 points, for a total of 350 points.
- 2) A short journal review project worth 50 points and 2 short article reviews, each worth 25 points
- 3) Several pop quizzes on course readings and class participation worth 50 points
- 4) A semester term project/presentation: Oral worth 50 points, written worth 100 points

Capstone Course Philosophy

GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT provides every geography major with an ideal opportunity to explore the evolution and current status of the field. Each student shall reap what they sow in terms of committing themselves to learning the material in the course. As a capstone course for majors, GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT assesses our incredibly rich and diverse ancestry as a field, as well as identifying the directions of its present evolution. With a shared enthusiasm and dedication to hard work, class members can provide themselves with a lasting and productive sense of what the field of geography is all about in the broadest sense. Rather than a being a narrowly-defined course preparing you for this or that career slot, GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT will define the field's broadest boundaries, explore the intellectual traditions that form the base for today's professional geographers, and, most importantly, it will try to communicate something of the wonder and excitement that generations of geographers have experienced as they have tried to make sense of the world around them.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignments and Topics</u>
Th Jan.15	Course Introduction/Organization
T Jan. 20	Major Themes and Questions in Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryden, "Thoreau, Cartography, and <i>The Maine Woods</i>", e-reserve • Marston, "Land, Life,...and Mountains" (See ANNALS of the Ass. Of Amer. Geog. 98 (2008): 507-520, e-access) • Gober, "Need for Synthesis" (see ANNALS of the Ass. Of Amer. Geog 90 (2000): 1-11, e-access)
Th Jan. 22	Geography in the Classical World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APW, 13-38 • Glacken, "Traces on the Rhodian Shore", e-reserve

T	Jan.27	Medieval Geography/ Age of Discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APW, 39-60 • Marco Polo, “The Travels”, e-reserve
Th	Jan. 29	Era of Exploration and Discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sobel, LONGITUDE, Part 1 • APW, 61-106
T	Feb. 3	LIBRARY TOUR—Meet in basement, Renne Library!
Th	Feb. 5	Emergence of Modern Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sobel, LONGITUDE, Part 2 • APW, 107-28, 162-181
T	Feb. 10	Emergence of Modern Geography: American Traditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APW, 131-161 • Marsh, “Man and Nature”, e-reserve
Journal Review Project due today!		
Th	Feb. 12	Emergence of Modern Geography : American traditions and review for exam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mathewson, “Alexander von Humboldt’s Image”, e-reserve
T	Feb. 17	MIDTERM 1 EXAM TODAY!
Th	Feb. 19	British Geographic Traditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APW, 213-247 • Darby, “Changing English Landscape”, e-reserve
T	Feb. 24	French Geographic Traditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * APW 195-212 * Vidal de la Blache, “Principles of Human Geography”, e-reserve
Th	Feb. 26	American Geographic Traditions I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APW 338-381 • Morin, “”Charles Daly’s Gendered Geography” (See ANNALS of the Assoc. of Amer. Geog. 98 (2008): 897-919, e-access)
T	Mar. 3	American Geographic Traditions II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schulten, GEOG IMAGINATION 1-117 • Harley “Deconstructing the Map”, e-reserve
Th	Mar. 5	American Geographic Traditions III <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * APW, 382-413
T	Mar. 10	American Geographic Traditions IV

- APW, 414-447
- Schulten GEOG IMAGINATION 118-242

Th	Mar. 12	American Geographic Traditions V <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dobson and Fisher, "Panopticon's Changing Geog.", GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEW 97 (2007): 307-323, e-access • Sui and Morrill, "Computers and Geography", e-reserve • Geographical Review, "Fieldwork Issue Excerpts", GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEW 91 (2001): 1-8; 105-112; 168-184; 328-334, e-access
T	Mar. 17	SPRING BREAK!
Th	Mar. 19	SPRING BREAK!
T	Mar 24	NATIONAL AAG MEETING: WORK ON TERM PROJECTS
Th	Mar 26	NATIONAL AAG MEETING: WORK ON TERM PROJECTS
T	Mar. 31	American Geographic Traditions VI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murphy, "Enhancing Geography's Role", ANNALS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMER. GEOG. 96 (2006): 1-13, e-access • Solem et al, "Skills in Professional Geography" (See Professional Geographer 60 (2008): 356-373, e-access)
Th	Apr 2	MIDTERM 2 EXAM TODAY!
T	Apr. 7	Special Topics: Recent Evolution/Trends in Physical Geog. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhoads, "Whither Physical Geography?", ANNALS OF the ASS. OF AMER. GEOG. 94 (2004): 723-28, e-access • Takaoka and Swanson, "Change in Extent of Meadows" (See Professional Geographer 60 (2008): 527-40, e-access) • Discuss individual articles; collect summaries • Begin Student Presentations!
Th	Apr. 9	Student Presentations!
T	Apr. 14	Student Presentations!

- Th Apr. 16 Special Topics: Recent Evolution/Trends in Human/Land Tradition
- Meyer and Turner, “The Earth Transformed”, e-reserve
 - Sakakibara, “Our Home is Drowning”
GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEW 98 (2008): 456-475, e-access
 - Kates and Burton, “Gilbert White” (obit)(See Annals of the Ass. Of Amer Geog. 98 (2008): 479-86, e-access)
 - **Student Presentations!**
- T Apr. 21 **Student Presentations!**
- Th Apr. 23 Special Topics: Recent Evolution/Trends in Human Geography
- *Oberle and Arreola, “Resurgent Mexican Phoenix”,
GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEW 98 (2008): 171-96, e-access
 - * Mitchell, “New Axioms for Reading the Landscape”,
e-reserve
 - *Watts and Walker, “Allen Pred” (obit)(See Annals of the Ass. Of Amer. Geog. 98(2008): 487-93, e-access)
 - * Discuss individual articles; collect summaries
 - * **Student Presentations!**
- T April 28 **Student Presentations!**
- Th April 30 Pondering Geography
- Tuan, “A View of Geography”, e-reserve
 - **Student Presentations!**
 - **PAPERS ARE DUE TODAY!**
- T May 5 2:00-3:50PM COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM!!

GEOGRAPHY 405:**TERM PAPER PROJECT:****KEY SUBFIELDS IN AMERICAN GEOGRAPHY**

Select a major subfield of American Geography (examples: climatology, geomorphology (or subsets), vegetation, cartography, GIS (or some aspect of it), economic, political, cultural, urban, etc) from the sign-up sheet.

Write a 12-15 page typed (double spaced) paper that summarizes the current status of that subfield today in American geography. Be particularly sensitive to these questions:

- 1) What are the **main research topics/questions** in the subfield? What have been important conceptual/theoretical statements in the subfield over the past 25 years?
- 2) Who are the **dominant academic figures** in the subfield and why?
- 3) What are the **key specialized journals** in the subfield and what types of research do they publish?
- 4) What are the **key sources, methods** for the subfield and at what scale is research usually undertaken (microscale, meso/regional scale, macroscale).
- 5) What **related academic fields** outside of geography are closely related to the subfield?

Your papers, worth 100 points, are due April 30. You will also be presenting an oral synopsis of your assessment to the class during April, worth an additional 50 points. You will have only 15 minutes to summarize your work, so practice and come prepared!

Tips for research:

- Use some of the appropriate research tools introduced at the Library visit.
- Use earlier summations as a guide (see the Gaile and Wilmott volume on Reserve; check journals such as PROGRESS IN PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY and PROGRESS IN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY for recent bibliographic treatments of your subfield).
- Talk to relevant faculty here in the Department that might have insight.
- Contact relevant Specialty Groups in the AAG and examine their recent activities and paper sessions at national conferences (the current Program is on the Web at aag.org).
- Find RECENT articles in the major journals that deal with your subfield and that can be used to hunt down other relevant references.
- You will need *a minimum* of **20 references and citations** to get a sense of trends in your subfield, so get an early start in the semester and steadily build a working bibliography of relevant material.
- READ, READ, READ the works of key recent leading figures as a guide to big themes and trends!
- Spend time organizing and structuring your presentation and paper carefully. Be well organized!
- Discuss your outline and organization with me ahead of time as we go through the semester!