



GEOG 330: Cultural Geography

**University of Maryland, College Park
Fall Semester 2009 – Lectures MWF 12:00-12:50pm**

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Course Description & Objectives

Cultural Geography studies how culture shapes places and regions, how culture determines human-environment interactions, and how ideas flow from one place to another. These cultural imprints and dynamics are in a constant state of change and operate within political and economic systems (themselves determined by culture). In this course you will study the geographies of national, linguistic, and religious identity as well as the spatial realities of difference (race, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, age).

The Human Geography program at UMD-College Park has adopted “Society and Sustainability” as a curriculum-wide focus. Society and Sustainability is the social side of Human Dimensions of Global Change (HDGC), a research area in which our departmental has an international reputation. HDGC has become synonymous with environmental sustainability and while that is a crucial concern, there are also significant social changes occurring at a local as well as a global scale which threaten the sustainability of cultures and societies. In this course, you will be introduced to cultural ideas of nature, the environment, and the economy and discuss how these ideas impact attempts to achieve sustainable systems.

By the end of the course students should ...

- understand important concepts & theories in cultural geography concerning culture and identity
- understand the multiple definitions of culture, society, and nature
- be able to apply these concepts to understand particular places, spaces and landscapes
- understand the concept of sustainability and apply it to examples of societies and cultures faced with change
- understand the link between environmental and social change
- improve their research skills
- improve their ability in reading and working with more difficult texts
- be able to cope with contradiction and ambiguity

Required Course Materials

Introductory terms and concepts will be presented and explained through lecture slides (many of these concepts should already have been covered in GEOG 202 or ANTH 260). The following textbook will be *on reserve* at McKeldin for those who feel they do not have an adequate background: Knox and Marston. ***Human Geography (4th Edition)***.

We will be reading extensively from the following text:

Lippard, Lucy. 1998. ***The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society***. New York: The New Press. ISBN 1565842480 (approx. \$35 new)

There will be a significant number of journal articles and other readings which will be posted on the course ELMS/Blackboard site.

Course Requirements

The primary requirement of this course is that you play an active role in your own education. This means doing the assigned readings in advance of lecture, paying attention and actively participating in class, preparing for discussions, etc.

Readings (minimum 50 pages per week)

The readings in this course are not standard textbooks and they represent a variety of styles, some straightforward and others more difficult. Therefore, you need to be an **active** reader (taking notes -- noting new, key terms; noting main arguments; noting where you have questions).

Tests (3 tests, 50 points for first two/ final exam 70 points = 170 points)

There will be 3 tests during this course. The tests will consist of mix of objective questions and take-home short essays and will test your understanding of key terms and concepts discussed in lecture and the readings. The final exam covers some cumulative material in addition to material from the last third of the course.

Discussion talking points (3 sets of talking points, 20 points each = 60 points)

There will be three in-class discussion sessions throughout the semester. The class will be split in half for this activity. Each discussion group will get two questions (prompts) one week in advance. Each student will need to prepare his/her own set of talking points to bring to the discussion the following week. Talking points are points that you would likely make during a discussion with supporting evidence from trustworthy sources. These talking points should be typed and edited for spelling & grammar since they will be handed in for a grade.

Research Project Outline (50 points)

This assignment requires you to do the thinking, planning, and reading behind a research paper, but not actually write one. You will need to pick a topic, make a thesis statement, propose a paper outline, provide a short background description of the topic, and provide an annotated bibliography of sources you would use if you were to write a research paper. This project is described in greater detail on pages 6 & 7 of this syllabus

Attendance

This course is not just a series of PowerPoint presentations (though I'll be using PPT); it is a series of lectures. Lectures are not just presenting facts, but presenting context. They also involve student input and unplanned material that might make it into exams. I will take attendance to satisfy university record-keeping requirements, however, I will not penalize you for not attending. The negative consequences of not attending will be self-inflicted.

Late work/ Make-up exams

Work will be accepted up to one week late with a 10% reduction. After one week, late work will not be accepted. Make-up tests will only be given to students with university approved (and documented) absences. Such students must schedule their make up within the week following the test date.

Academic integrity

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that can result in suspension or expulsion from the University of Maryland. Please refer to the following website to determine how the University of Maryland defines plagiarism and academic dishonesty --

<http://www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/dishonesty.html>

Grade scale (non-negotiable)

A = 252 to 280 points; B = 224 to 251 points; C = 196 to 223 points;
D = 168 to 195 points; F = 0 to 167 points

Tentative Course Schedule

1. Mon 31 Aug	Introduction to the Course
Wed 2 Sept	What is Culture?
Fri 4 Sept	What is Cultural Geography?
2. Mon 7 Sept	Labor Day – No classes
Wed 9 Sept	Senses of Place
Fri 11 Sept	Place and Community
3. Mon 14 Sept	Geographies of Language & Ethnicity
Wed 16 Sept	Geographies of Language & Ethnicity
Fri 18 Sept	Geographies of Nationalism

4. Mon 21 Sept Wed 23 Sept Fri 25 Sept	Geographies of Nationalism Sacred Spaces Topic selection (Deadline: Wednesday 23 September) Discussions A
5. Mon 28 Sept Wed 30 Sept Fri 2 Oct	Globalization of Culture = Westernization & McDonaldization? Globalization of Culture = Hybridity & Resistance? Discussions B
6. Mon 5 Oct Wed 7 Oct Fri 9 Oct	TEST 1 Defining nature Understanding nature-society relationships
7. Mon 12 Oct Wed 14 Oct Fri 16 Oct	Understanding nature-society relationships Cultural transformations of the environment Defining sustainability
8. Mon 19 Oct Wed 21 Oct Fri 23 Oct	Cultural transformations of the environment Cultural transformations of the environment Discussions A
9. Mon 26 Oct Wed 28 Oct Fri 30 Oct	“Land-based People” The Culture in Agriculture Discussions B
10. Mon 2 Nov Wed 4 Nov Fri 6 Nov	Home Places: Cities, Suburbs, Nomadism Home Places: Cities, Suburbs, Nomadism Sustainable home places
11. Mon 9 Nov Wed 11 Nov Fri 13 Nov	TEST 2 Sustainable home places Geographies of Difference: Race
12. Mon 16 Nov Wed 18 Nov Fri 20 Nov	Geographies of Difference: Race Geographies of Difference: Class Discussions A
13. Mon 23 Nov Wed 25 Nov Fri 27 Nov	Research Project Outlines Due Geographies of Difference: Gender No class – Thanksgiving Break
14. Mon 30 Nov Wed 2 Dec Fri 4 Dec	Geographies of Difference: Sexuality Geographies of Difference: Dis/ability Discussions B
15. Mon 7 Dec Wed 9 Dec Fri 11 Dec	Space, Culture, Power Public vs Private Space Course wrap-up
Fri 18 Dec	Final Exam from 8-10am (same room)

Relevant University Policies

Student Conduct

Students are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to show civility with one another, the teaching assistants, or to the instructor will be subject to being referred to the Office of Student Conduct or to Campus Police. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct.

Medical Excuses

Campus Senate policy requires students who are absent due to illness or injury to furnish documentary support to the instructor. You are required to contact their instructors by email or by phone prior to class time in which you indicate that you have an illness or an injury. You must provide written documentation verifying your illness/injury immediately upon your return to class. You will not be allowed to turn in missed assignments or make up quizzes, tests, papers, etc. if you have not provided this documentation. Documentation not presented in a timely manner will not be accepted. In addition, if it is found that you have falsified the documentation provided, you will be referred to the University's Student Conduct Office.

Students with Learning, Emotional, Psychological and Physical Disabilities

Every effort will be made to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office and who provide their instructors with a University of Maryland DSS Accommodation form which has been updated for the Fall 2009 semester. This form must be presented no later than October 1, 2009. Instructors are not able to accommodate students who are not registered with DSS or who do not present documentation which has been reviewed by DSS by October 1, 2009.

Religious Observance

Students must notify a faculty member by the end of schedule adjustment that the student is unable to take a midterm, turn in a paper, take the final examination, etc. on the date specified on the syllabus due to religious observance. Students must only be accommodated for the day of the religious observance. Students do not have to be accommodated for travel to and from the religious observance. Please refer to the Online Undergraduate Catalog Policy on Religious Observance.

Research Project Outline Assignment

It is expected that by the 3rd year of your undergraduate education, you understand the basic procedure and expectations for writing a research paper. Because the allowed enrollment for this class is so large, a research paper assignment has been scaled back to a research project outline. You will be doing all the work that goes into a research paper except for writing it. If you need or want some general guidance in the research paper process (in addition to asking me), this link from the University of Wisconsin (Madison) Writing Center is helpful.

<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/index.html>

Step 1 – Topic selection (Deadline: Wednesday 23 September)

Browse ahead in the texts and the syllabus; jot down ideas during the first weeks of class. One way to narrow the focus is to come up with 1) an issue or concern that interests you and 2) a place that interests you – (e.g. informal settlements in Mumbai, India). Once you think you have a topic, start doing as much background reading on it as you can to make sure it's a viable topic with adequate resources. Your topic must be approved by me either via e-mail or an office visit. Don't wait until the last minute.

Step 2 -- The Thesis Statement

The key to an excellent research paper is your thesis statement. It's the statement you intend to explain and support with evidence gained from your research. The thesis statement determines the overall content of the paper.

A thesis statement is not a question nor is it the topic of the paper, but rather is a *thesis* (= a proposition or point-of-view supported by research). It's a claim that you will be clarifying and defending in your paper.

For example, if your topic is informal settlements in Mumbai, India, the following **would not** be thesis statements:

"Why have informal settlements developed on the outskirts of Mumbai, India?"

"In this paper I will discuss the reasons why there are informal settlements in Mumbai, India"

The following sentence, however, **would** be a thesis statement for this topic:

"The rapid growth of informal settlements in Mumbai, India can be attributed to the low status of agricultural work in traditional Marathi society." [I'm making this up!]

Step 3 – Background Description and an Annotated Outline

After your thesis statement, provide a background description of the topic (approx 250 words). This should be followed by an outline for your paper. This outline should clearly identify the major sections of your paper, and include a brief statement of what purpose each section will serve in relation to the thesis statement. For example:

1. Introduction

In this section I will ...

2. Section supporting thesis statement

In this section I will ...

3. Section supporting thesis statement

In this section I will ...

4. Objections and Replies

In this section I will consider objections to my thesis statement ... In particular, I will respond to the argument that ...

5. Conclusions

In this section I will ...

Step 4 – The Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is one that gives a brief description of the source, showing its relevance to the topic of a book, article, or research paper. To learn more about how to complete one, try this link from the Cornell University library.

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm>

You will need to have 10 annotated sources. They must be quality sources (from reputable book, academic journals, respected media outlets, etc.). Wikipedia is not an acceptable source, but it can often lead you to one. In other words, the top 10 hits in a Google search will not help you. If you search via Google Scholar on the campus network, it will link you directly to journal articles available to UMD students. You will also need to go to library (gasp!) and check out relevant books. A very productive way of finding sources is by locating a few promising books via the catalog and then going into the stacks. Books are arranged by topic, so the other books surrounding your promising book may be even more helpful to you.

The Final Product

This assignment should end up being somewhere between 3 and 5 pages. Its length is not my focus, but more isn't necessarily better. It doesn't matter if it's single-spaced or double-spaced. (However, bibliographies should be single-spaced. Please don't use the MLA double-spaced bibliographic style). All assignments should contain the following:

1. Title
2. Thesis Statement
3. Approx. 250 background description of the topic
4. Paper Outline
5. Annotated bibliography
6. Honor pledge