

## GEOG 600: Introduction to Human Geography – Graduate Seminar



University of Maryland, College Park  
Fall Semester 2009 – M 2:00-4:30pm

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### Course Description & Objectives

GEOG 600 is the first segment of the graduate introduction to Geography as a field of study. The second segment is the Introduction to Physical Geography seminar (GEOG 602). This sequence is the comprehensive exam for both MA and PhD students. After completing these two courses you should have a strong foundation in the history, philosophy, and practice of the discipline. Therefore, the department expects you to give these courses a high level of effort and to emerge from the sequence as a professional geographer – meaning you should be familiar with many of the current debates in geography and be able to understand and appreciate a journal article or a conference presentation outside of your specialty. No matter what your starting point or interests, GEOG 600 & 602 should give you an overview of geography from which you can begin to develop an appropriate theoretical framework and methodological approach for your research.

The main objectives of this course are to have you 1] appreciate the history of (Anglo-American) geographic thought; 2] critically evaluate the theoretical approaches used by human geographers; 3] learn how theory informs practice in geography, and 4] situate your own research and interests in the community of geographers.

### Required Texts

Aitken, S. and Valentine, G. (eds.) 2006. ***Approaches to Human Geography***. London: SAGE Publications. ISBN 0-7619-4263-7

Castree, Rogers & Sherman (eds.) 2005. ***Questioning Geography: Fundamental Debates***. Malden, MA: Blackwell. ISBN 978-1405101929

Other readings can be retrieved electronically via the UMD library website (see syllabus).

## Course Format, Expectations, and Requirements

This course is a seminar, not a lecture. Therefore, a high level of student participation is a requirement. Successful participation is dependent on pulling out the key concepts and contested issues of the readings and providing your own critical analysis.

### Readings

We have a lot of ground to cover in this course, so the amount of reading some weeks will top 150 pages. My suggestion is to schedule time to read every day of the week, leaving the weekend for you to work on reaction papers. Some of the theory articles are difficult. You may feel lost, but don't feel discouraged. If you *aren't* confused some of the time, then you probably aren't reading closely enough! Please feel comfortable admitting you are lost (others will be happy you spoke for them too!), but bring these questions to class so that we may discuss them.

### Reaction papers (20 points x 8 = 160 points)

In order to help you digest the concepts and issues discussed in the readings (and to prepare you for the final exam), you will complete eight (8) reaction papers to the weekly readings over the course of the semester. This number allows you to pass on three weeks – choose them wisely! The papers are to be no more than 2 pages (how much you want or need to say will determine whether you single, 1.5, or double space). The papers are a way to help you make sense of the readings we'll be discussing in class. They also give me a sense of how you are doing in terms of digesting the material. There are no assigned topics for these papers. They are based on your own reactions to the readings, the connections you make to previous readings, your own research interests, etc. The papers are not summaries of articles & book chapters. Feel free to think creatively, but ground your thoughts in that week's readings. You may feel the need to consult sources outside the readings to make a point, but outside research is not expected or required.

### Class presentations & participation (80 points)

At the end of every class, the next week's readings will be divided up among approx. 3 groups of three people each. They will lead the discussion of the readings by drawing out key points and establishing some questions to discuss. A group responsible for that week's reading should prepare a 3 sentence summary and one discussion question for each reading (even if you are not leading discussions in a given week, this would be a useful exercise!). These summaries should be made available to the class by posting them in Blackboard.

While acknowledging differences in personality (some of us are talkers, others not), everyone is expected to participate in class discussions. Thoughtful contributions to the class discussion will boost your grade. Absences, lack of preparation for discussion, disrespectful behavior, and "extreme" lack of participation will lower your grade.

### Praxis Projects (60 points)

Praxis = “an integration of or a tight relationship between theory and practice, in which practical action alternates with theoretical reflection in a mutually informing cycle”\*

One of the goals of this course is to prepare you to situate yourself and join the conversation in the world of professional geographers. This assignment is designed to help you do so. Throughout the course you should be thinking about how the theories and debates we cover are connected to your own research interests. If you are a human geographer, your thesis or dissertation (and any articles you hope to publish) will require you to establish your work within a particular theoretical framework. Even if a theoretically-informed approach isn't required in some physical geography/ GIS subfields, establishing one for yourself or being cognizant of such approaches will help you work with social scientists and humanities scholars in solving complex problems in the interdisciplinary fields of environmental studies, ecology, and global change.

By the end of the semester, you should have prepared an approximately 5-page paper on your own praxis (see definition above). Things to consider and include

- What is it you are interested in doing in terms of your research and how do these theoretical discussions inform your likely approach and methods?
- In which epistemological tradition(s) does your research interest find a home?
- How has your geographic subfield evolved over time in terms of theory, methods, and application?
- If you disagree with the dominant paradigm(s) in your sub-field, explain why and describe your alternative approach.
- Consider the potential reciprocal nature of theory and practice in your planned research.
- How does your theoretical position intersect with the policy realm or pedagogy?
- An annotated bibliography of approximately 10 sources

This project should ultimately be of use to you when you prepare your thesis or dissertation proposal.

### Final Exam (100 points)

The final exam will be an open-book and open-note exam. The questions will not be given out ahead of time. There will be 5 questions to choose from; you will need to respond to 3 in the 2-hour exam period.

### **Late work**

Work will be accepted up to one week late with a 10% reduction. After one week, late work will not be accepted.

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\* Fisher, A. 2009. Ecopsychology as Radical Praxis. In L. Buzzell and C. Chalquist (eds). *Ecotherapy: Healing with Nature in Mind*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

## **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**

I will use the following point scale

A+	= 390 to 400 points
A	= 370 to 389 points
A-	= 360 to 369 points
B+	= 350 to 359 points
B	= 330 to 349 points
B-	= 320 to 329 points

[Note that a B- in this course is the lowest passing grade. You will be required to repeat the course if you do not achieve at least a B-.]

## **Tentative Course Schedule**

### **1. Mon 31 Aug            Introduction to the Course: Geographers -- Who Are We?**

#### In Castree

Johnston, R (Chap 1) – “Geography – Coming Apart at the Seams?”

Viles, H. (Chap 2) – “A Divided Discipline?”

McKittrick & Peake (Chap 3) – “What Difference Does Difference Make to Geography?”

#### Articles

Goodchild, M.F. and Janelle, D.G. 1988. Specialization in the Structure and Organization of Geography. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 78(1):1-28

Hanson, S. 2004. Who are “we”? An important question for geography’s future. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 94(4):715-722

Tuan, Y-F. 1991. A View of Geography. *The Geographical Review* 81(1):99-107

### **2. Mon 7 Sept            Labor Day – No classes**

**3. Mon 14 Sept      A Brief History of Human Geography – PART 1 (i.e. Race, Empire, and Environmental Determinism)**

Articles

- Arnold, D. 2000. 'Illusory riches': Representations of the tropical world, 1840-1950. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 21(1):6-18
- Barrows, H. 1923. Geography as Human Ecology. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 13(1):1-14
- Bassett, T.J. 1994. Cartography and Empire-Building in Nineteenth-Century West Africa. *Geographical Review* 84(3):316-335
- Garcia-Ramon, M-D. 2003. Gender and the colonial encounter in the Arab World: examining women's experiences and narratives. *Environment and Planning D* 21(6):653-672
- Huntington, E. 1924. Geography and Natural Selection: a Preliminary Study of the Origin and Development of Racial Character. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 14(1):1-16
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1943. The Geography of Human Productivity. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 33(1):1-31
- Peet, R. 1985. The Social Origins of Environmental Determinism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 75(3):309-334
- Sluyter, A. 2003. Neo-Environmental Determinism, Intellectual Damage Control, and Nature/Society Science. *Antipode* 35(4):813-817
- Stoddard, D.R. 1966. Darwin's Impact on Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 56(3):683-698
- Trewartha, G.T. 1926. Recent Thought on the Problem of White Acclimatization in the Tropics. *The Geographical Review* 16(3):467-478

**4. Mon 21 Sept      A Brief History of Human Geography – Part 2 (i.e. the Old Cultural Geography, the New Cultural Geography)**

[Old]

- Brown, R.H. 1933. Belle Forche Valleys and Uplands. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 23(3):127-156
- James, P.E. 1952. Toward a Further Understanding of the Regional Concept. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 42(3):195-222

Mikesell, M.W. 1978. Tradition and Innovation in Cultural Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 68(1):1-16

Solot, M. 1986. Carl Sauer and Cultural Evolution. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 76(4):508-520

[New]

Cosgrove, D. and Jackson, P. 1987. New Directions in Cultural Geography. *Area* 19(2):95-101

Duncan, J.S. 1980. The Superorganic in American Cultural Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70(2):181-198

Mitchell, D. 1995. There's no such thing as Culture: Towards a reconceptualization of the idea of culture in Geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20(1):102-116

Price & Lewis. 1993. The Reinvention of Cultural Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83(1):1-17

## **5. Mon 28 Sept      Why Theory? Ontology, Epistemology, Science, Praxis**

### In Aitken & Valentine

Aitken & Valentine (Chap 1) – “Ways of Knowing”

### In Castree

Castree, N. (Chap 4) – “Is Geography a Science?”

Graham, E. (Chap 15) – “Theory and Theorizing”

Harrison, S. (Chap 5) – “What Kind of Science is Physical Geography?”

Hickey & Lawson (Chap 6) – “Beyond Science” Human Geography, Interpretation, and Critique

### Articles

Feyerabend, P.K. 1989. Realism and the Historicity of Knowledge. *The Journal of Philosophy* 86(8):393-406.

Gallopín, G.C., Funtowicz, S., et al. 2001. Science for the twenty-first century: from social contract to the scientific core. *International Social Science Journal* 168:219-229.

ICSU (International Council for Science). 2002. *Science, Traditional Knowledge and Sustainable Development*.

[http://www.icsu.org/Gestion/img/ICSU\\_DOC\\_DOWNLOAD/65\\_DD\\_FILE\\_Vol4.pdf](http://www.icsu.org/Gestion/img/ICSU_DOC_DOWNLOAD/65_DD_FILE_Vol4.pdf)

Perry, N. 1977. A Comparative Analysis of 'Paradigm' Proliferation. *The British Journal of Sociology* 28(1):38-50.

## **6. Mon 5 Oct            Positivism and (in reaction) Marxist and Humanistic Geography**

### In Aitken & Valentine

Kitchin (Chap 2) – “Postivistic Geographies and Spatial Science”

Entrikin & Tepple (Chap 3) – “Humanism and Democratic Place-Making”

Rodaway (Chap 24) – “Humanism and People-Centered Methods”

Henderson & Sheppard (Chap 5) – “Marx and the Spirit of Marx”

Samers (Chap 25) – “Changing the World: Geography, Political Activism, and Marxism”

### Articles

#### [Positivism]

Couclelis, H. and Golledge, R. 1983. Analytic research, positivism, and behavioral geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 73(3):331-339

Gould, P. 1979. Geography 1957-1977: The Augean Period. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69(2):139-150

#### [Humanistic Geography]

Buttimer, A. 1976. Grasping the Dynamism of the Lifeworld. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66(2):277-292

Relph, E. 1977. Commentary: Humanism, phenomenology, and geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 67(1):177-179

Tuan, Y-F. 1976. Humanistic Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66(2):266-276

#### [Marxism]

Castree, N. 1999. Envisioning capitalism: geography and the renewal of Marxian political economy. *Transaction of the Institute of British Geographers* 24(2):137-158

Soja, E. 1980. The Socio-Spatial Dialectic. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70(2):207-225

Walmsley, D.J. and Sorensen, A.D. 1980. What Marx for the Radicals? An Antipodean Viewpoint. *Area* 12(2):137-141

**7. Mon 12 Oct            More reactions to Positivism: Structuration Theory, Realism, and Feminist Geographies**

Aitken & Valentine

Dyck & Kearns (Chap 7) – “Structuration Theory: Agency, Structure and Everyday Life”

Sayer (Chap 8) – “Realism as a Basis for Knowing the World”

Dixon & Jones (Chap 4) – “Feminist Geographies of Difference, Relation, and Construction”  
England (Chap 26) – “Producing Feminist Geographies: Theory, Methodologies and Research Strategies”

Articles

[Structuration Theory]

Gregory, D. 1981. Human agency and human geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 6(1):1-18

Sewell, Jr., W.H. 1992. A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation. *The American Journal of Sociology* 98(1):1-29

[Realism]

New, C. 2003. Realism, Deconstruction and the Feminist Standpoint. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 28(4):349-372

Proctor, J.D. 1998. The Social Construction of Nature: Relative Accusations, Pragmatist and Critical Realist Responses. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88(3):352-376

[Feminist Geography]

Hanson, S. 1992. Geography and Feminism: Worlds in Collision? *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82(4):569-586

Kwan, M-P. 2002. Feminist Visualization: Re-envisioning GIS as a Method in Feminist Geographic Research. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92(4):645-661

**8. Mon 19 Oct            The “Posts” – Poststructuralism, Postmodernism, Postcolonialism**

In Aitken & Valentine

Clarke (Chap 9) – “Postmodern Geographies and the Ruins of Modernity”

Harrison (Chap 10) – “Poststructuralist Theories”

Wylie (Chap 27) – “Poststructuralist Theories, Critical Methods and Experimentation”

Barnett (Chap 12) – “Postcolonialism: Space, Textuality, and Power

Robbins (Chap 28) – “Research is Theft: Environmental Inquiry in a Postcolonial World.”

### Articles

[Poststructuralism]

Dixon, D.P. and Jones III, J.P. 1996. Editorial: For a *Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* Scientific Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86(4):767-779

Popke, J.E. 2003. Poststructuralist ethics: subjectivity, responsibility and the space of community. *Progress in Human Geography* 27(3):298-316

[Postmodernism]

Dear, M. 1988. The postmodern challenge: Reconstructing human geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 13(3):262-274

Dear, M and Flusty, S. 1998. Postmodern Urbanism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88(1):50-72

[Postcolonialism]

Robinson, J. 2003. Postcolonialising geography: tactics and pitfalls. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24(3):273-289

Sidaway, J. 2000. Postcolonial geographies: an exploratory essay. *Progress in Human Geography* 24(4):591-612

## **9. Mon 26 Oct          Debating Binaries**

### In Castree

Burt (Chap 7) – “General/Particular”

Rhoads (Chap 8) – “Process/Form”

Hannah (Chap 9) – “Representation/Reality”

Curry (Chap 10) – “Meta-Theory/Many Theories”

### Articles [The Importance (or not) of Scale]

Girodano, M. 2003. The Geography of the Commons: The Role of Scale and Space. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93(2):365-375

Brown, J.C. and Purcell, M. 2005. There's nothing inherent about scale: political ecology, the local trap, and the politics of development in the Brazilian Amazon. *Geoforum* 36 607–624

Marston, Jones, & Woodward. 2005. Human Geography Without Scale. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30(4):416-432

Escobar, A. 2007. The 'ontological turn' in social theory. A Commentary on 'Human geography without scale', by Sallie Marston, John Paul Jones II and Keith Woodward. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32(1):106-111

## **10. Mon 2 Nov          Additional Theory in Practice: What Geographers Do**

### In Aitken & Valentine

Fotheringham (Chap 22) – “Quantification, Evidence and Positivism”

Goodchild (Chap 23) – “Geographic Information Systems”

### In Castree

Herbert, Gallagher, & Myers (Chap 13) – “Ethnography and Fieldwork”

Orford (Chap 11) – “Cartography and Visualization”

Demeritt & Wainwright (Chap 12) – “Models, Modelling, and Geography”

Dorling (Chap 14) – “Counting and Measuring: Happy Valentine’s Day.”

## **11. Mon 9 Nov          Making Geography Relevant, PART 1 -- Policy**

### In Castree

Rogers (Chap 16) – “A Policy-Relevant Geography for Society?”

### Articles

Bonnett, A. 2003. Geography as the World Discipline: Connecting Popular and Academic Geographical Imaginations. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35(1):55-63

Burgess, J. 2005. Follow the argument where it leads: some personal reflections on ‘policy-relevant’ research. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30(3):273-281

- Harvey, D. 1974. What kind of geography for what kind of public policy? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* [old] 63(1):18-24
- Martin, R. 2001. Geography and public policy: the case of the missing agenda. *Progress in Human Geography* 25(2):189-210.
- Peck, J.A. 1999. Editorial: grey geography? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24(2):131-135
- Pollard et al. 2000. Shades of grey? Geographers and policy. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 25(2):243-248
- Staeheli, L.A. and Mitchell, D. 2005. The Complex Politics of Relevance in Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95(2):357-372

## **12. Mon 16 Nov      Making Geography Relevant, PART 2 – Pedagogy**

### In Castree

Castree (Chap 17) – “Whose Geography? Education as Politics”

### Articles

- Boyd, W.E. et al. 2008. ‘None of Us Sets Out to Hurt People.’: The Ethical Geographer and Geography Curricula in Higher Education. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 32(1):37-50
- Browne, K. 2005. Placing the Personal in Pedagogy: Engaged Pedagogy in ‘Feminist’ Geographic Thinking. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 29(3):339-354
- Castree, N. et al. 2008. Geography, pedagogy and politics. *Progress in Human Geography* 32(5):680-718
- Cox, K.R. 2006. Editorial: Physical Geography and the Geographic Thought Course. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 30(3):373-388
- Delyser, D. 2003. Teaching Graduate Students to Write: a seminar for thesis and dissertation writers. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 27(2):169-181
- Downs, R.M. 1994. Being and Becoming a Geographer: An Agenda for Geography Education. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84(2):175-191
- Hall, T. et al. 2004. Fieldwork and disabled students: discourses of exclusion and inclusion. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 28(2):255-280
- Hanson, S. 2001. Teaching, Research and Lifelong Learning. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 25(1):110-112

Hardwick, S. 2000. Humanising the Technology Landscape through a Collaborative Pedagogy. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 24(1):123-129

Kropotkin, P. 1885. What Geography Ought to Be. Available at <http://www.praxis-epress.org/CGR/2-Kropotkin.pdf>

Nairn, K. 2005. The Problem of Utilizing 'Direct Experience' in Higher Education. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 29(2):293-309

**13. Mon 23 Nov**      **No class -- SEDAAG**  
Work on your praxis projects !!!

**14. Mon 30 Nov**      **Praxis Projects Due!**  
**Discussing your praxis projects**

**15. Mon 7 Dec**      **Discussing your praxis projects and course wrap-up**

**Thu 17 Dec**      **Final Exam from 1:30pm-3:30pm (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.