

GEOG 101: PEOPLE & THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Spring 2022

Hunter North 1022 | Saturdays 9:10am – 12:00pm

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Stephen Jones

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OFFICE HOURS: Hunter North 1032

Saturdays 12:30pm – 1:30pm and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Geography & Environmental Science 101: People & Their Environment is a broad overview of the scientific discipline of geography. Over the course of the semester, we will explore the social, political, and geographical dimensions of weather and climate, landforms, resource management, cultural and religious practices, urban development, infrastructure, transportation, economic relations, and other topics, as well as the relationships between them.

Our course will be organized around the loose theme of water, a prerequisite for all life on Earth. We are water people living on a water planet. A critical approach to the geography of water will therefore allow us to explore a wide swath of topics and settings, as well as appreciate the interrelations between the physical and social science approaches to the discipline of geography.

COURSE GOALS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

Over the course of the semester, students will:

- Appreciate the breadth of the discipline of geography, possibly the most internally diverse of the sciences
- Define “geography” in their own terms
- Gain an introductory understanding of how society and space are co-constituted
- Gain an introductory understanding of the theory and practice of geographical analysis, especially as it relates to water geographies
- Develop college-level reading and writing skills

REQUIRED READINGS

Reading assignments will be available online, on our course webpage and Dropbox. And I will provide printed copies of all our assigned readings. Please see the course schedule below for reading assignments.

FORMAT & PROCEDURE

Students will be expected to attend classes, complete their readings before our meetings, and be prepared to participate in our discussions. Our class sessions will combine lecture, group work, in-class writing assignments, and student presentations.

The topics we will be discussing in class touch on a number of sensitive issues. All of us come to the table with different histories, experiences, and understandings. During open discussion, group work, and otherwise, it is essential that we maintain a safe, respectful, and open-minded environment within the classroom. **Disagreement and debate are encouraged; disrespect is unacceptable.**

ACCESSIBILITY

Please let me know if you need anything to make this course accessible to you; I will be happy to accommodate you. You may contact the Office of AccessABILITY, which coordinates accessibility arrangements at Hunter College. They can be reached on campus in Room 1214B, East Building, or via email at accessABILITY@hunter.cuny.edu.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

I will use email to communicate with the class, so please be sure to check your inbox regularly. If you need to contact me, please email me at sjones2@gc.cuny.edu.

COURSE EVALUATION

Participation (20%)

Students will be expected to attend classes, complete their readings before our meetings, and be prepared to participate in our discussions.

One-Pagers (25%)

Students will be required to hand in several one-page reading reflections. There are seven (7) opportunities to submit one-pagers; but you are only required to complete five (5). I will describe these assignments in more detail in class.

Please see the course schedule below for one-pager due dates.

Final Paper: What Is Geography? (35%)

Due May 14.

Imagine that you are having a conversation with a family member, friend, or loved one. During your discussion, you share with them that you are taking a Geography 101 course at Hunter College. "That's so cool!" your family member/friend/loved one responds. It soon becomes clear, however, that they do not really know what geography *is*. "Are you learning," they ask, "about maps, state capitals, stuff like that?" You inform that no, that's not really what Geography is about; although you have been spending time looking at a lot of cool maps! Puzzled, but interested, they ask you, "So, what is Geography?"

For our final course paper, you will develop an answer to your family member, friend, and loved ones' questions. First, you will give them a short, pithy definition of the discipline of geography, about one to three (1-3) sentences in length. Then, you'll share a bit more about what you have been learning this semester, and your evolving understanding of the science of Geography. Your final paper will be about three (3) pages long, equivalent to roughly five minutes of explanation.

You will be required to discuss specific examples from our readings and in-class discussions, as well as give general, overarching examples of the theory and practice of geographical analysis.

More information will be provided in class, beginning in late February. And several of our later classes will be dedicated to developing the paper.

Final In-Class Presentation (20%)

Due May 14.

COURSE SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS

Note: all readings are listed on the day they are due. Readings may be replaced or adjusted as the semester proceeds, but not without warning.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION & KEYWORDS IN GEOGRAPHY

January 29

- Course overview, introductions
- Dahlman, C.H. & Renwick, W.H. (2014). "What Is Geography?" In *Introduction to Geography: People, Places & Environment*, 6th Edition. London: Pearson.

February 5

- Matthews, J.A. (2008). "Geography: the world is our stage." In *Geography: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

February 12

- NO CLASS

February 19

- Harvey, D. (2008). "Space As a Keyword." In Ed. N. Castree & D. Gregory, *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Marston, S.A., Woodward, K., & Jones, J.P. (2009). "Scale." In Ed. D. Gregory, et al. *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 5th Edition. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Gilmore, R.W. (2007). "How to Use This Book." In *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 27-9. [Read in class]

February 26

- Fitzsimmons, M. (1989). "The Matter of Nature." *Antipode* 21(2): 106-120.

UNIT 2: WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE – THE VIEW FROM NORTH AMERICA

March 5

- Dahlman, C.H. & Renwick, W.H. (2014). "The Hydrologic Cycle." In *Introduction to Geography: People, Places & Environment*, 6th Edition. London: Pearson: 138-40.
- Pulido, L. (2017). "Geographies of Race and Ethnicity II: Environmental Racism, Racial Capitalism and State-Sanctioned Violence." *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(4): 524-33.

March 12

- Reisner, M. ([1986] 1993). "A Country of Illusion." *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water*, Revised and Updated. New York: Penguin Books: 15-51.

March 19

- Katz, C. (2004). "A Child's Day in Howa." In *Growing Up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 3-22.
- Katz, D. (1991). "An Agricultural Project Comes to Town: Consequences of an Encounter in Sudan." *Social Text*, 28: 31-38.

March 26

- Gandy, M. (2002). "Water, Space, and Power." In *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press: 19-75.

April 2

- Cronon, W. (1991). "Rails and Water." In *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company: 55-93.

April 9

- Estes, N. (2019). "Flood." In *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. New York: Verso: 133-167.

April 16

- NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

April 23

- McPhee, J. (1989). "Atchafalaya." In *The Control of Nature*. New York: The Noonday Press: 3-92.

April 30

- Hurley, A. (1995). "Tired of Working in Pollution and Having It Follow Us Home: Working-Class Environmentalism." In *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and*

Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana: 1945-1980. Durham: University of North Carolina Press: 77-110.

May 7

- Peacock, J.G. (2019). “Sun Ma(i)d: Art, Activism, and Environment in Ester Hernández’s Central Valley.” In Eds. S.D. Wald *Latinx Environmentalisms: Place, Justice, and the Decolonial*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 104-30.

May 14

- Peer-review
- **Final paper due**

May 21

- Student presentations
- **FINAL CLASS – END OF SEMESTER**