

HUNTER COLLEGE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
GEOG 247 CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY
Guidelines Fall 2017

CULTURAL REGION. A geographic unit based on characteristics and functions of culture.

Exercise 5: My Neighborhood (*Cultural Region*).

(a) Select a neighborhood within or around NYC with which you are familiar. The neighborhood could be where you now live or grew up or have relatives. Do the following:

(b) Walk or drive the area.

(c) Describe it in terms of a culture region. *What makes it unique? What distinguishes it from surrounding areas? Who are the people who live there? (How do you know that?) What are the characteristic sights, smells and sounds of this neighborhood? What type of housing predominates? Is it convenient to shopping and transportation? How has it changed over time? (You may have to ask an 'old timer!')*

(d) Map it. Provide a local street map of the neighborhood being discussed plus a map of the NYC area to show where this neighborhood is located within the larger region. Outline the boundaries of the neighborhood on the map. Locate on the map places that are familiar to you as your home or grocery store. Annotate places in the neighborhood that give it its character as the main commercial area, local houses of worship or cultural centers, frequented stores/restaurants, parks and landmarks.

(e) Document it. Attach photographic evidence of the uniqueness of the area as mentioned in (b), (c) and (d) above.

ADD A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOURCE MATERIAL at the end of your write-up.

DUE DATE: Thursday, December 7, 2017

- 1) **Identify a neighborhood to illustrate the theme of this assignment.**
- 2) **Find and print a street map of your chosen neighborhood.**
- 3) **Walk or drive through your neighborhood (field work) using your neighborhood street map as a guide.** Observe the people, land use, street lay out, topography, toponomy, sounds and smells. Take photos to document your findings. Use the street map to locate the sites of your observations and places mentioned and to help you recall them when you write up your field work.
- 4) Once you have gathered your information, **present your findings in essay format.**
- 5) **Start with an introductory paragraph** in which you set the theme of the exercise by defining *region, cultural region and neighborhood*. Explain how they are related and describe how you will show that your neighborhood is a cultural region.
- 6) **Describe the physical aspects of this neighborhood.** Where is it located in the NYC area? What are its boundaries (firm or fuzzy)? What is its appearance? It is hilly? flat? near water? Tree lined streets or all concrete and asphalt?

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- 7) **Then describe the cultural aspects of this neighborhood.** Is it residential? Is it commercial? Is it a unique cultural region? Who lives there? Can you identify the ethnicity of the majority of the people? How? Look for languages and national colors displayed. What's the restaurant scene? Houses of worship? Local groceries? Funeral homes? Has the core area changed over time? (You may have to ask an "old timer".)
- 8) **How does the area differ from surrounding neighborhoods? Or does it fade/blend into the adjacent area?**
- 9) **Site and situation: Include a local street map of the neighborhood being discussed plus a map of the NYC area to show where this neighborhood is located. Outline the boundaries of the neighborhood on the street map. On it locate an address of a place that is familiar to you, as your home. On the street map annotate places that give it its character to the neighborhood, as the main commercial area, local houses of worship or cultural centers, frequented stores/restaurants, parks and landmarks/monuments. This can be done by hand using a colored marker. NEATNESS COUNTS.**
- 10) Support your essay with visual evidence of the uniqueness of the area. Number and label the photos/images, then link each one to the map by placing its number at the correct site. **NEATNESS COUNTS.**
- 11) **STAY ON TOPIC.** Focus on the cultural region and its make-up. Explain what gives any person (especially an outsider) the ability to identify this neighborhood. (*What are the clues? BTW, holiday decorations count this time of year.*) You can include relevant bad things about the area that contribute to its character. *Remember this is not a cheering section for your neighborhood. You are not a real estate agent trying to sell property.*
- 12) **End with a summary and conclusion.** Highlight the theme of "region and culture." Here is where you summarize your findings that prove a neighborhood is a cultural region. **No new information.**
- 13) Your bibliography is any reference material you may have consulted to ascertain the history and development of the area. It could come from a guidebook or a neighborhood web site. This is the last page of the exercise. **NEVER use just one source of information.** All web addresses must be annotated to tell me what the link contains. Sometimes it is obvious. Most times it is not.

REMINDER: DO NOT CUT AND PASTE FROM SOURCE MATERIAL.

Summarize and paraphrase in your own voice. **Your source material does not know this assignment!**

PROOF READ, SPELL CHECK and PROOF READ AGAIN. Check sentence structure, capitalization and the sense of the sentence/paragraph. *What are you saying? Does it make sense?* If you are not sure let someone else read the paragraph.