

**GEOG 251**  
**THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA**  
**SPRING TERM 2011**

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**Required text:** Stephen S. Birdsall et al., *Regional Landscapes of the United States and Canada*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009. ISBN – 13: 978-0-470-09826-4.

Atlas: Any **LARGE** up-to-date road atlas of the United States and Canada.

**Grading formula:**

Mid-term exam:	25%
Final exam:	25%
Landscape exercise:	25%
Trans-continental trip:	<u>25%</u>
	100%

Date	Topic	Chapter
M 1/31	Introduction	1
Th 2/3	Physical Environment	2
M 2/7	Physical Environment	2
Th 2/10	The Human Element	3
M 2/14	The Human Element	3
Th 2/17	Megalopolis	4
<b>M 2/21</b>	<b>(NO CLASS TODAY)</b>	
W 2/23	Megalopolis	4
Th 2/24	The Manufacturing Core	5
M 2/28	Canada's National Core	6
Th 3/3	The Bypassed East	7
M 3/7	Appalachia and the Ozarks	8
Th 3/10	The Changing South	9
M 3/14	The Changing South	9
<b>Th 3/17</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</b>	
M 3/21	The Southern Coastlands	10
Th 3/24	The Southern Coastlands	10
M 3/28	The Agricultural Core	11
Th 3/31	The Agricultural Core	11

M 4/4	The Great Plains and Prairies	12
Th 4/7	The Great Plains and Prairies	12
M 4/11	The Empty Interior	13
Th 4/14	The Southwest Border Area	14
<b>M 4/18</b>	<b>(NO CLASS TODAY)</b>	
<b>Th 4/21</b>	<b>(NO CLASS TODAY)</b>	
<b>M 4/25</b>	<b>(NO CLASS TODAY)</b>	
Th 4/28	The Southwest Border Area	14
M 5/2	California	15
Th 5/5	California	15
M 5/9	The North Pacific Coast	16
Th 5/12	The Northlands	17
M 5/16	Hawaii	18
<b>Landscape and Trip Projects Due Today (5/16)</b>		

Please see the course Webpage for additional course information and downloads:  
<http://www.geography.hunter.cuny.edu/courses/geog251/index.html>

### DESCRIPTION and GOALS

This is a Powerpoint-based lecture course that seeks to familiarize students with the regional geography of the United States and Canada. More specifically, the goals are to acquaint you with

- the dynamic nature of human and physical features that characterize the study area;
- the ways in which human and natural phenomena interact to create unique place characteristics and sub-regions;
- the key environmental issues that characterize the study area and its constituent parts;
- major trends that are affecting the geography of the two countries; and
- the locations of principal features.

As suggested by the course outline, the course begins with general overview material, and then examines the various sub-regions of the study area in much greater detail, focusing on key characteristics and environmental challenges. GEOG 251 is especially recommended for students who are prospective K-12 teachers. If the course has a major “unofficial” goal, is to increase your desire to travel about the study area whenever you have an opportunity to do so.

### The MIDTERM and FINAL EXAMS

Each is worth 25% of your final grade and consists of the following components that will have roughly equal value: a list of words/terms to be defined; multiple-choice questions; a couple of mini-essays; and a map containing indicated features you will be asked to identify. The final exam is not cumulative, but instead will cover only the second half of the

course.

### TRANS-CONTINENTAL TRIP

This exercise, worth 25% of your final grade, requires you to prepare a written report on a make-believe trans-continental journey by car across our study area. It should be at least 20 pages long (including maps and photos as described below). Text should be double-spaced in 12 point type. Your make-believe itinerary must embody the following:

1. Your travel must begin in a large city on the Atlantic Coast (excluding the Gulf of Mexico) of the United States or Canada, and terminate in a large city on the Pacific Coast of either country.
2. Your itinerary may lie entirely within the U.S., or partly within the U.S. and partly within Canada, **but cannot** lie entirely within Canada.
3. Your itinerary must include portions of at least seven (7) regions of the United States and Canada as defined by the author of your textbook.
4. Your trip must include visits to at least five (5) major cities and five (5) national parks.

With respect to your actual paper/project:

5. With the aid of your road atlas, include in your report at least five (5) maps that depict your itinerary. The first map, which must appear at the beginning of your report, should be a general map of North America that shows the entire route, as well as the major cities and national parks you visited. The other maps should show smaller segments of your itinerary in much greater detail including roads and route numbers, and points of interest. Together, the segments shown on these four maps should comprise the entire itinerary.
6. Include one photograph taken in each region included in your itinerary. Your photos will be evaluated on the extent to which they capture the essence of their respective regions. Please include the source of each photo in your report.
7. The names of the regions through which you travel should serve as the major headings/divisions of your paper.
8. As is the case in your textbook, the maps and photographs should be consecutively numbered (i.e. Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.). Each should have a title.
9. Your maps and photos should be incorporated into the text rather than appended.
10. The narrative should combine objective description with make-believe. Thus, it should describe the places you visited, things that you did, people you met, etc. during your trip.
11. The narrative should begin with a general overview and then proceed with a sequential (start to finish) recounting of your travels. Your grade will largely be based on (a) how well you followed directions; (b) your paper's overall content and organization, (c) the quality of your writing, and the extent to which you make it sound like you **really did** take the trip you are describing.

## LANDSCAPE EXERCISE

The purpose of this Web-based exercise, which is worth 25% of your final grade, is to increase your knowledge of selected human and physical landscape features that characterize various parts of the United States and Canada.

You are required to submit a 20-page portfolio, to which is attached an additional cover page. Each page is to be headed by a title that corresponds to an item in the list below. The contents of each page must consist of at least one photo and/or map of the topic, together with a write-up that describes the subject and, if applicable, its significance. The written description **MUST** be in your own words, and **NOT** merely something that you have cut-and-pasted from an online source. The verbal portion should be done in regular 12-point type and take up at least half the page. Typing should be single-spaced and have standard 1.5-inch margins to either side (just like this page).

The landscape features you choose should be entirely different than materials you include in your hypothetical trip across North America – the subject of a different course requirement.

While information may be garnered from anywhere on the Web, I recommend you take a good look at Google, which has an excellent inventory of images, maps, and aerial/satellite photographs on a wide range of subjects. Sources of information should be cited where they are used. Every illustration must have a title and source. A separate bibliography is not required.

EXTRA CREDIT: You may earn up to 3 points to your final course average by submitting extra pages on the formula of 1 point per 3 pages. A maximum of 3 points (9 pages) may be earned.

### Landscape features

Long lots of the St. Lawrence Valley and Southern Louisiana.  
The Welland Canal (example of the locks that connect the Great Lakes)  
The Finger Lakes of Upstate New York  
New York City's reservoir system  
Containerization ports (e.g., Elizabeth, NJ; Oakland, CA)  
The site and situation of Boston  
The landscape of gentrification  
The folded Appalachians  
The "Amish country" of Southeastern Pennsylvania  
The street pattern of Washington, DC  
The poultry landscape of the Delmarva Peninsula  
Strip mining and mountaintop removal in Appalachia  
Residential development of the Atlantic coast  
Florida's Gold Coast (Palm Beach to Miami Beach)  
The Florida Keys

Agricultural and urban encroachment on the Everglades  
The tourist landscape of Greater Orlando  
The metes and bounds survey system  
The Mississippi River Delta  
The site and situation of New Orleans  
Meander loops and oxbow lakes of the Mississippi flood plain  
Rust belt landscapes of Detroit  
The site and situation of St. Louis  
Garden City, Kansas: feed lots  
The Congressional Survey System  
Wisconsin dairy farms  
Farms in the area of "The Corn-Soy Complex"  
The site and situation of Chicago  
Wheat fields of the Dakotas or Prairie Provinces  
Soil polygons in the tundra  
A Native American Pueblo of the Southwest  
Denver: From CBD to suburban fringe  
The geysers of Yellowstone National Park  
The U.S./Mexico border at El Paso/Juarez  
The site and situation of Salt Lake City  
Basin and Range topography  
Aspen (conversion of mountainous areas to ski resorts)  
Basin and Range topography  
Open pit mining in the Southwest  
The saguaro cactus landscape of southern Arizona  
The San Andreas fault  
The apple orchard landscape of the Columbia River Valley, Washington State  
Suburbia and enclosed malls  
The Freeways of Los Angeles  
The site and situation of San Francisco  
Farming and irrigation in the San Joaquin Valley, CA  
Napa Valley (CA) wine country  
Big Sur  
"Redwood country" of Northern California  
The fjorded coast and "Inside Passage" of the Pacific Northwest  
Clear cutting in the Pacific Northwest  
The Cascade Range  
Dams on the Columbia River  
The site and situation of Vancouver, BC  
The Hoh Rainforest, Olympic National Park, WA  
Recent lava flows on the island of Hawaii  
The site and situation of Honolulu  
The site and situation of Valdez  
The Alaskan tundra

### **Attendance**

I take attendance every class session and regard your overall attendance record as a “tie-breaker.” That is, if your final average is on the borderline between two letter grades, then I will use your attendance record to determine whether or not I should “round up” and award you the higher grade. Also, a majority of exam questions come from lecture. Thus, poor attendance normally results in a poor final grade.

### **College Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. Acts of plagiarism, dishonesty, or cheating related to any portion of the work required for this course will be punished to the full extent allowed according to Hunter College regulations. In a nutshell, academic dishonesty is a serious matter. And although I take no pride in telling you this, I once got a CUNY doctoral candidate expelled from the university on account of plagiarism.

### **“Professor, do you give a review sheet for your exams?”**

No. You are strongly advised to attend every class and take notes. The result will be the best review sheet you could possibly have.