

Hunter College of the City University of New York
Department of Geography

THE NATURE OF NEW YORK
GEOG 306.04 Section 01 (code 35556)
SYLLABUS – Spring 2018

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COURSE:

The Nature of New York is a regional course that uses geographic perspectives and perceptions to explore and analyze the growth and development of NYS over time. Lectures and readings focus on the interrelationship of NYS's physical and human environments at the state level and required exercises look at specific themes at the county level.

GOALS:

The goals of the course are (1) to learn about the geography of NYS – its physical environment, the distribution of its people and their activities, and the interrelationships between the people and the environment in the NYS; (2) to apply geographic principles and reasoning in a regional analysis; and (3) to explore, navigate through, and use the geographic information available on the Internet, especially the information provided by the State of New York. We will do this by investigating the *nature* of New York.

"Nature" is an English word that is used to refer to the natural setting of a place as well as to indicate or focus on the way things are, including their essential characteristics, quality and importance. Since geography is both a physical and social science, knowledge of the *nature* (basic concepts) of earth systems is necessary to better explain and analyze the *nature* of human interaction with them and peoples' attitude about them. To accomplish this, we take examples from the past as we look at the present and analyze current conditions, noting the changing *nature* of the state's geography and the changing *nature* of the attitudes of its citizens toward *nature* (the environment) over time. Using accumulated knowledge, we then are able to make informed decisions about the *nature* of New York in times to come.

FORMAT:

This course will use and apply the fundamental concepts of geography presented in introductory geography courses. Material is introduced; a topic is presented for discussion; and it is analyzed by the class using background material from previous courses and assigned reading material.

Each student will be **assigned 3 counties** from different geographic areas of NYS which will enable the regional comparison of some of the themes discussed in class. The county assignment will be the basis of the required take-home exercises and as well as any extra credit options. Examples of the themes covered by the exercises, subject to change, are:

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Agriculture</i> | <i>Glacial Features</i> | <i>The Iroquois</i> |
| <i>Canals</i> | <i>Military Geography</i> | <i>Urban Sites</i> |
| <i>Climate</i> | <i>Mineral Resources</i> | <i>Water Resources</i> |
| <i>County Comparison</i> | <i>Population</i> | <i>Wildlife Management</i> |

Material and assignments will be distributed electronically and **stored on the Course Homepage - NOT on BlackBoard** (<http://www.geo.hunter.cuny.edu/courses/cwpages.html>). Students are required to check their Hunter email account or have Hunter email messages forwarded to their personal email account.

The course will analyze the nature of present-day New York State by looking closely at selected parts of its makeup. After introducing its *physical characteristics* (paleogeography, physiography, glacial processes, climates, soil, and water resources) we will focus on the state's *cultural landscape*: people's interaction with the elements of earth environment, settlement decisions, and the use of what is available to them. The nature of the state's location will be highlighted because it was influential in early political control, economic development and access to the interior of North America. NYS's population geography (trends, the aging of NYS, health issues) will be addressed. The evolution of the state's rural landscape (environmental history, conservation, open space, wildlife, forestry and agriculture) and the nature of its urban landscapes (original site location, urban functions, and economic variables) will be examined using geographic principles. The required reading assignments supplement class lectures and discussions.

GRADING:

Grading is based on two exams (15% each = **30%** of the grade) and seven required take-home exercises (**70%**). There is the ability to earn extra credit through additional optional exercises, documented field work and in-class presentations (see below). There is a direct correlation between good attendance and good grades. Attendance is taken.

The **IN** grade (*for incomplete course work*) is given under the most extraordinary circumstances at my discretion after receiving documentation from you. (*FYI: Most IN grades turn into an FIN because the student does not turn in the missing work for grading. It is usually better to opt for a lower passing grade than to try to do catch-up the following semester.*)

THREE EXTRA CREDIT OPTIONS (maximum of 9 to 11 points from a combination below):

You may earn extra credit through optional exercises, documented museum/site visits and short in-class presentations. Extra credit added to your final average from a combination of the options listed below has a maximum value of 11 points depending on the combination selected and the grade received.

Option 1: Museum or Area or Site Visit (see exercises 2 and 3).

From (a) and (b) below you may earn up to 5 points each (10 pts max.) by submitting a 2-3 page write-up documenting a museum, area or site visit. The write-up must be presented in the required format and include maps and illustrations, as appropriate, on separate pages.

- a. **Museum Visit: Document a visit to a museum or exhibit that focuses on an aspect of the nature of New York State's past, present or future.** Select an aspect of the museum display or exhibit and discuss its **geographic nature** (significance) and its relevance to the nature of present day New York. Include examples of what you viewed. You may include an information brochure, exhibit guide or digital photographs you took of the exhibit.
- b. **Area or Site Visit (field work): Document a visit to an area of New York State or to a particular site within NYS.** ***This is a location analysis exercise. *** Select important aspects of the site's geography, such as its location, physical appearance, historical significance, economic value or ecology. Discuss the **nature of the area** based on the themes of the course. Include examples of what you viewed from local brochures (if available) and travel guides and from the digital photographs you took.

Option 2: Classroom Presentation.

- a. **Research an approved topic pertinent to class discussion and present your findings to the class in a 15-minute *PowerPoint* presentation.** You may earn up to 5 pts for each presentation to the class (10 pts max.) that is in addition to the required presentation. Submit a PDF of the *PowerPoint* presentation plus a list of sources for grading. You will need to consult with me about the topic and date of presentation.
- b. **This may also take the form of a 15-minute “Highlighted County” *PowerPoint* presentation** where you feature one of your three assigned counties. I have a *PP* format template for you to use.

Option 3: Take-home Exercise.

Complete and submit for grading additional themed exercises from those distributed during the semester. Each exercise is worth up to 2 points. You may earn up to a maximum of 10 points by submitting 5 completed exercises.

OUTCOMES:

Upon the successful completion of this course you will be able to intelligently discuss the nature of New York State from all angles of the definition of the word. You will be able to relate the cultural landscape of the state to its physical characteristics, analyze historic and current aspects of location, and make informed decisions using geographic principles and spatial concepts about the future (or nature) of NYS.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

1. Stradling, David. *The Nature of New York: An Environmental History of the Empire State*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2010. ISBN 978-0-8014-4510-1
2. Reitano, Joanne. *New York State: Peoples, Places and Priorities – A Concise History with Sources*. Routledge, New York, 2016. ISBN 978-0-41581998-5. Also available as an e-book.
3. Isachsen, Y.W., et al, editors, *Geology of New York: A Simplified Account, 2nd edition*, New York State Museum, NYS Geological Survey, Albany, NY, 2000. ISBN 978-155571627. Out of print. Used copies available. Also in PDF on the course home page.
4. Rand McNally *Easy-to-Read New York State Road Map* (2016) ISBN 9780528881923 (or any highway map of NYS).

RECOMMENDED REFERENCE MATERIALS:

1. Schwietert-Collazo, Julie, *Moon Handbook: New York State, 7th ed.*, Avalon Travel, Berkeley, CA 2017. ISBN 978-1-6131215100
2. Eisenstadt, Peter and Moss, Laura-Eve. *The Encyclopedia of New York State*, Syracuse University Press, 2005
3. Homberger, Eric. *The Historical Atlas of New York City*, revised edition, Henry Holt and Co., New York, 2005 (Owl Books edition, soft cover).
4. Klein, Milton M., editor. *The Empire State: A History of New York*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, with the NYS Historical Association, Cooperstown, NY, 2001
5. Jenkins, Jerry with Andy Keal. *The Adirondack Atlas: A Geographic Portrait of the Adirondack Park*. Wildlife Conservation Society, Syracuse Univ. Press and the Adirondack Museum, Bronx, NY, 2004
6. Sanderson, Eric W. *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City*, Abrams, New York, 2009.
7. Thompson, John H. *A Geography of New York State*, Syracuse University Press, 1966 (out of print).

SUGGESTED ATLASES:

1. *New York Atlas and Gazetteer*, 9th edition, DeLorme, Yarmouth, ME, 2011. *This atlas provides a detailed topographical rendering of NYS.*

2. *New York State Atlas, 4th edition*, NYS Department of Transportation, Albany, NY, 1998. *This atlas has each county mapped out individually and is in the Library's Reserve.*
3. *New York State Road Atlas*, Hagstrom Map Co., Inc, Maspeth, NY, 2006. *This atlas provides a detailed road map NYS by region.*

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

In addition to the pages listed below, there will be handouts and links to Internet web pages to supplement the material and to add detail to certain topics.

I. For the Midterm:

A. **Geology of New York – a Simplified Account, 2nd edition.**

IMPORTANT: *There is a glossary at the end of the book.*

Chapter 1 Introduction, pp. 3-4

Chapter 2 Geologic Time, pp. 5 and 8

Chapter 3 Plate Tectonic History, p. 11 Summary

Chapter 4 Adirondacks, pp. 23-25, 28-29 (mid), 37-38, 42

Chapter 5 Hudson Highlands and Manhattan Prong, pp. 45-51

Chapter 6 Hudson Lowlands and Taconic Mts., pp. 53-54 top Summary & Description

Chapter 7 Northern Lowlands and the Tug Hill Plateau, pp. 67-68 Summary

Chapter 8 Allegheny Plateau, pp. 101-104 top; plants and animals, pp. 126-129

Chapter 9 Newark Lowlands, pp.139-44

Chapter 10, Coastal Area, pp. 149-50.

Chapter 11 Tertiary Period, pp. 157 -159

Chapter 12 Glaciation, pp. 161-81.

Chapter 13 Glacial Features, pp. 185-193

Chapter 14 Holocene Epoch - the present, pp. 195-198

Chapter 15 Mineral Resources, pp. 201-222

Chapter 16 Hydrogeology, pp. 225-30

Chapter 17 Earthquakes, p. 231 Summary, pp.235-38

Chapter 18 Engineering Geology, pp. 239-42

B. **The Nature of New York: An Environmental History of the Empire State.**

Introduction plus Chapters 1-3

C. **New York State: Peoples, Places and Priorities**

Introduction plus Chapters 1-4

II. For the Final Exam:

A. **The Nature of New York: An Environmental History of the Empire State.**

Chapters 4-7 plus Epilogue.

B. **New York State: Peoples, Places and Priorities**

Introduction plus appropriate sections of Chapters 5-10

PLEASE NOTE

1. **You are responsible** for the content of all the lectures, reading assignments and class handouts. Assignments and handouts are distributed via the course home page on the Geography Department web site (<http://www.geo.hunter.cuny.edu/courses/cwpages.html>) and in class.
2. **Attendance is important.** Historically, there has been a direct correlation between poor attendance and poor grades. The readings from the textbook, the Web and handouts may supplement lectures.
3. **All exams must be taken and required assignments submitted.** Failure to do so by the end of the semester will result in a reduced grade unless arrangements are made with me in advance. If arrangements are made in advance, then an IN (incomplete) grade may be given. (See statement under **GRADING** above. Late assignment and other required presentations will be penalized. Do not schedule your travel plans to begin before the date of the final exam! See calendar below.

4. **Extra credit assignments are optional.** Your final grade will not be adversely affected if you choose not to do them. The deadlines associated with them are firm. Late submissions will not be graded.
5. **Approval is required prior to beginning any research project.** The topic of your extra credit research or discussion paper must be approved in advance to make sure the topic is manageable. ***Any student planning to do the research or discussion paper extra credit option must submit in writing a proposal with a justification*** showing your interest in the topic proposed and an outline of major points to be covered. It is important that your proposal be narrow in scope and focused on a topic.
6. **Lateness penalty.** There will be a penalty for lateness of assignments with specific due dates including missed exams. This will reduce the grade earned by either 5 points or one +/- letter grade
7. **Neatness counts.** All graded work must be typed, printed and presented neatly. On exams, if I cannot read your writing, it is wrong. Consult the Hunter College Reading and Writing Center for citation and bibliographic formats (<http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu>).
8. **Hunter College rules and regulations are strictly enforced** including those governing the grades CR/NC and IN.
9. **Academic Dishonesty.** Cheating and plagiarism are grounds for failure and disciplinary action by the College. 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 the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. The Internet is a resource for information, NOT a source of verbatim script. Every person has a unique writing style and use of grammar. **Do not cut and paste text found at an Internet web site into your write-ups, research paper or project without proper citation.** Any assignment may be randomly scanned by a search engine seeking key words. Plagiarism comes with an automatic failure for the assignment and referral to the Dean of Students for appropriate action. **Don't do it!**
10. **Office of AccessABILITY.** In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (emotional, medical, physical and/or learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1124 to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance please call (212-772-4857)/ TTY (212- 650- 3230). **You must be registered with the Office of AccessABILITY to qualify for the accommodations.**
11. **Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct.** In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College affirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationship. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.
 - a. **Sexual Violence:** Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444)
 - b. **All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct:** Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barr7@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

The CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link is: <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf>

CALENDAR for SPRING 2018: Meeting times Tue/Fri from 12:45 – 2:00 PM in Rm 1022HN.

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| Tues., Jan 30 | First class meeting. |
| Tues., Feb 20 | This is a MONDAY schedule at CUNY. NO CLASS for us. |
| Tues., Mar 13 | Tentative date for Midterm Exam |
| Fri., Mar 30 | NO classes scheduled. |
| Tues., Apr 03 | NO classes scheduled. |
| Fri., Apr 06 | NO classes scheduled. |
| WED., Apr 11 | This is a FRIDAY schedule at CUNY. WE MEET. |
| Tue., May 15 | Last NYS class lecture. |
| Fri., May 18 | FINAL EXAM from 11:30 AM-1:30 PM in Rm. 1022HN. <<Note earlier time! Do Not Make Holiday Travel Plans for the Final Exam Period! |

Geography

Five Themes to Help Understand the World and its People

