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

THE NATURE OF NEW YORK  
GEOG 383.19 Section 01 (code 27853)  
SYLLABUS - Fall 2013

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COURSE:  
GEOG 383.19. The Nature of New York focuses on the geographic aspects of the State of New York. The prerequisite for this course is GEOG 150 and one other GEOG, GEOL or PGEOG course. This course is categorized as “W: web enhanced” because of its reliance on Internet sites to provide information and discussion topics.

GOALS:  
The goals of the course are (1) to learn about the geography of New York State – 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 GEOG 150. Material will be introduced; a topic will be presented for discussion; and it will be analyzed by the class using background material from previous courses and assigned reading material.

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

The course will analyze 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, forestry and agriculture) and the nature of the state’s urban landscapes (original site location, urban functions, and economic variables) will be examined using geographic principles.

GRADING:
Grading is based on two exams (35% each = 70% of the grade) and one research paper (30%). There is the ability to earn extra credit through optional exercises, documented field work and short in-class presentations (see section below). There is a direct correlation between good attendance and good grades. The required reading assignments supplement class lectures and discussions. 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 then to try to do catch-up the following semester.)

EXTRA CREDIT OPTIONS:
You have the ability to earn extra credit through optional exercises, documented museum/site visits and short in-class presentations. Maximum extra credit from a combination of the options listed below is 9-11 points added to your final average.

Option 1 Museum or Area or Site Visit.
From (a) and (b) below you may earn up to 5 points each (10 pts maximum) by submitting up to 2 documented visits. Each write-up is to be 1-2 pages in length plus illustrations.

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 one aspect of the museum display or exhibit and discuss its geographic nature and its relevance to the nature of present day New York. Include examples of what you viewed from an information brochure or 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. Select one aspect of NYS’s geography evident there. Discuss the nature of the area based on the themes of the course. Include examples of what you viewed from local brochures (if available), travel guides and photographs you took.

Option 2 Classroom Presentations.
Research an approved topic pertinent to class discussion or visit a museum or exhibit or do original field work and present your findings to the class in a 15 minute PowerPoint presentation. You may earn up to 5 points each (10 pts maximum) by making up to 2 presentations to the class. Submit a PDF of the PowerPoint presentation plus a list of sources.

Option 3 Take-home Exercises.
Complete and submit any five Internet-based 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 thereof) of New York.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:
2. Rand McNally Easy-to-Read New York State Road Map (2009) SKU 0528881922 (or any highway map of NYS).

RECOMMENDED REFERENCE MATERIALS:
1. Eisenstadt, Peter and Moss, Laura-Eve. The Encyclopedia of New York State, Syracuse University Press, 2005

SUGGESTED ATLASES:
3. New York State Road Atlas, Hagstrom Map Co., Inc, Maspeth, NY, 2006. This atlas provides a detailed road map NYS by region.

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 and in class. This material is NOT on HC BlackBoard.
2. Attendance is important. Historically, there has been a direct correlation between poor attendance and poor grades. Exercise grades are reduced by missed deadlines caused by absence.
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. Then an IN (incomplete) grade may be given. Late written presentations will be penalized. Do not schedule your travel plans to begin before the date of the final exam! See calendar below.
4. Approval is required prior to beginning research. The topic of your research paper or project must be approved in advance to make sure the topic is manageable. Each student must submit in writing two different proposals and I will select one topic based on your written justification.
showing your interest in the topics 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.

5. **Neatness counts.** On exams if I cannot read it, it is wrong. All class work must be typed, printed and presented neatly. Consult the Hunter College Reading and Writing Center for citation and bibliographic formats (http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu).

6. **Hunter College rules and regulations are strictly enforced,** including the CR/NC option and IN grades.

7. **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.** Any assignment may be randomly scanned by a search engine seeking key words.

8. **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 this office to qualify for the accommodations.**

**CALENDAR for FALL 2013**

This class meets on Tuesdays and Fridays from 12:45 – 2:00 PM in Room 1022HN.

- **Fri., Aug. 30** First class meeting.
- **Tues., Sept. 03** Only day of this week that classes are scheduled. WE MEET!
- **Fri., Sept. 06** NO classes scheduled.
- **Fri., Sept. 13** NO classes scheduled.
- **Tues., Oct. 15** MONDAY schedule at CUNY. >> NO class for us.

**WEDNESDAY, NOV. 27 is a FRIDAY schedule at CUNY. >> WE MEET!**

- **Fri., Nov. 29** Thanksgiving Recess. NO classes scheduled.
- **Tues., Dec. 10** Last day to submit required research paper without lateness penalty. Last day to make an Extra Credit Option 2 presentation.
- **Fri., Dec. 13** Last NYS class lecture.
- **Fri., Dec. 20** FINAL EXAM from 11:30 PM - 1:30 PM in Room 1022HN Last day to hand in Extra Credit Options 1 and 3.

*Do Not Make Holiday Travel Plans for the Day of the Final!*