Course Overview

This course examines the intellectual history and the diverse theoretical perspectives that constitute the field of geography today. Given the breadth of the discipline, we will focus primarily on key later developments while paying attention to the many contemporary theoretical intersections. We will read foundational texts illustrating these perspectives and engage with recent articles and books. We will discuss how these works employ key geographic concepts, such as place, space, and territory to understand the processes of class, race, gender and sexuality, and uses of nature. By reading the literature, students will learn to differentiate between theoretical frameworks and to theoretically locate their own research. Students will lead discussions, and compose weekly reaction papers, a midterm paper and a final term paper.

Course Requirements

This is a reading-intensive seminar and it is crucial that students keep up with the readings. Yet while we will cover a lot of material, it is not possible to be exhaustive. This course is a survey, meant broadly to give students the direction and tools to situate and pursue their own research. The class meets once per week, and sessions will consist of a short lecture on the weekly material, a student presentation of the assigned readings, and a class discussion. Each week a different student will be responsible for presenting the readings and composing at least two discussion questions. As this is a graduate-level course, students are responsible for putting in sufficient time outside of class to learn the material so that we can have productive discussions. I will help to guide discussions, but will mostly be interested in students’ own analysis of the works. Depending on the number of students enrolled in the course, each student may have to present more than once. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to read the assigned literature and post the reaction paper.

This syllabus and weekly assignments are posted on Blackboard. If you do not have access to Blackboard yet, please let me know immediately. I will communicate any scheduling or syllabus changes through Blackboard. Please make sure that the email listed for you in Blackboard is current and that you change your personal settings so that you receive an email when a notification is posted. Many of the weekly readings have been placed on an eRes site at the Hunter library. Readings that are not posted on the eRes site are available through the digital journal subscriptions at the Hunter library and students will be responsible for obtaining these readings on their own. Hunter College journal subscriptions can be found by clicking on the “List of Journals / Magazines” link at: library.hunter.cuny.edu.

Reaction Papers and class participation: Each student must post a reaction paper on Blackboard by 9pm on the Tuesday evening before our weekly class. Reaction papers should be between 400 and 500 words, and consist of an analysis, comparison, and discussion of the main arguments and implications of each text. Reaction papers that merely summarize the readings will receive a lower grade. All papers must be proofread and clearly written. Reaction papers will assure that students have thought about each text and are prepared.
for weekly class discussions initiated by student presenters. Reaction papers will answer questions such as: What are the main arguments of the text? What methods does the researcher use? How does the researcher present evidence to support the main argument? How is the combination of evidence and methodology either sufficient or insufficient in answering the primary research questions? The questions listed here do not exhaust the analytical questions that students can ask of each text. They should be seen as examples for students to follow in composing their own creative questions. Reaction papers will be graded on a scale of 1 to 5: 0 points for no paper posted or rushed, unclear papers, and 5 points for outstanding papers.

Midterm paper: The midterm paper is due in the middle of the semester and is a short 7 page paper in which students will choose from a variety of questions and analyze weekly class readings to date. Midterm paper questions and requirements will be posted on Blackboard on Wednesday, October 15. The paper is due by class time two weeks later, on Wednesday, October 29. You may submit the paper to me via email or in print.

Final paper: This paper is to help you think about your research in relation to the many theoretical, philosophical, and epistemological perspectives in today’s geography. It will include a deeper analysis of the course readings as well as a literature review in your research area. A one page final paper proposal and a preliminary bibliography will be due on October 15. The final paper is due via email at 5pm on Wednesday, December 17.

Evaluation: Grades will be calculated according to the following weights for each class requirement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class participation, presentations, and reaction papers</th>
<th>40%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final term paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Important Course Dates:
- Wednesday, September 3: First class meeting.
- Wednesday, September 24: No class.
- Wednesday, October 15: Final paper proposals due.
- Wednesday, October 29: Midterm papers due in class or via email.
- Wednesday, December 10: Final class meeting.
- Wednesday, December 17: Final papers due by 5pm via email.

Expected Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to trace some of the main theoretical and historical developments within the discipline of geography, particularly in the latter half of the 20th century. They will be able to define, compare, and contrast the various ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies of coexisting research paradigms within geography in particular and the social sciences in general. They will be able to explain where the various theoretical perspectives overlap and how they are at odds. They will have gained the skills to identify and situate academic articles within particular research currents, the reading proficiency to recognize the structure and main arguments of academic papers, books, and other texts, the ability to research a literature review for a thesis project, and facility leading classroom discussions and analysis. Finally, they will be able to situate their own academic interests within particular traditions of inquiry, looking toward the goal of completing the Master's thesis or final project.
**Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity**

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.

**ADA Policy**

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 E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772- 4857 or (212) 650-3230.

**Weekly Topics and Reading Assignments:**

**Week 1 – September 3:** First day of class, no readings.
Introductions and course overview: scope, organization, expectations, and assignment of discussion leaders.

**Week 2 – September 10:** Introduction to Social Theory and Contemporary Geographic Thought


**Week 3 – September 17:** Introduction (cont.)


**September 24 – No Class**

**Week 4 – October 1:** Geography, Enlightenment, and Empire


**Week 5 – October 8: Regionalism**


**Week 6 – October 15: Culture and Landscape**

*Final Paper proposals are due today in class.*


**Week 7 – October 22: Economic Geography, Globalization and Neoliberalism**


**Week 8 – October 29: Political Geographies: Nation, state, territory**


**Week 9 – November 5: Space and Scale**

*Midterm Papers are due today in class.*


**Week 10 – November 12: Urban Geographies**


**Week 11 – November 19 Geospatial Technologies and the production of knowledge**


Week 12 – November 26: Nature/Society

Week 13 – December 3: Post-Colonial Geographies

Week 14 – December 10: No readings, student presentations of final papers