COURSE SYLLABUS

GEOG 701 GEOGRAPHIC THOUGHT AND THEORY

FALL 2016

Tuesday 4:10 – 6:40pm, Room 1004 HN

Instructor: Dr. Marianna Pavlovskaya
Office location: HN 1003F (Hunter College)
Office hours: Tu 3-4pm and by appointment
Email: mpavlov@hunter.cuny.edu (See Email rules)
BlackBoard: http://bb.hunter.cuny.edu
Syllabus page: http://www.geo.hunter.cuny.edu/~mpavlov/ and click on course link GEOG701 Geographic Thought and Theory

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course reviews the modern intellectual history and examines the diverse theoretical perspectives that constitute the field of the American human geography today. We will primarily focus on the key 20th and 21st century developments such as (post)-positivism, Marxism, feminism, post-structuralism, and critical race theory while paying attention to their many contemporary intersections. We will read foundational texts illustrating these perspectives and engage with recent articles and books. We will specifically discuss how the key geographic concepts such as place, space, and time are employed to understand the processes of class, race, gender and sexuality as well as uses of nature. Students will learn to differentiate between theoretical frameworks while reading the literature and theoretically locate their own research. Students will lead discussions, write weekly response papers, a midterm paper and a final paper, and present their final paper in class at the end of the semester.

REQUIRED TEXTS


Other weekly required readings will be posted on blackboard or are available digitally via Hunter and CUNY libraries (see Internet resources). Logging into on-line databases would provide you with access to these readings (e.g. digital books and articles).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The class meets once a week. Each session will begin with my short lecture to introduce a topic and/or presentation of the readings by the students assigned to lead the discussion. The rest of the class will be devoted to the discussion. Final paper presentations will take place during the finals week. You are expected to attend all classes, read the assigned literature and post weekly reaction papers.

The final grade consists of the following:
Reaction papers 15%
Class participation 25%
One midterm paper 20%
Final paper 35%

Short reaction papers (NO MORE THAN 300-500 words) will express your thoughts about weekly readings. Please do not summarize but discuss what you found to be most important, engaging, or troubling. All papers must be proofread and clearly written. They should be posted to the discussion board on BB no later than 7pm Monday evening. They will be read by all students. Posting a paper will earn 1 point each (0 if you do not post it). In the first two weeks, please also print your reaction papers and hand the hard copy in so that I can provide feedback.

Class participation and discussions are essential. You must read ALL the assigned readings and be ready to talk about them. Discussion leaders will briefly introduce the readings (5 min for all readings) to get the discussion going and formulate two questions for discussion.

One midterm paper is due in the middle of the semester. It is a short (max 7 pp.) paper that analyzes class readings to date.

Final paper is to help you to think about your research in relation to the many theoretical, philosophical, and epistemological perspectives in today’s geography. It will include the analysis of the class readings as well as some literature from your research area. Max 10pp.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

CUNY and 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. Plagiarism, dishonesty, or cheating in any portion of the work required for this course will be punished to the full extent allowed according to Hunter College regulations. PLAGIARISM will not be tolerated and all university rules regarding its occurrences will be strictly followed.

EMAIL RULES

Please email questions regarding the course. I usually respond by the next day (excluding weekends). Please specify Geog701 in the subject line and sign your full name.

INTERNET RESOURCES

All students have personal e-mail accounts, BlackBoard and internet access. The current class schedule with the assigned readings and discussion schedule will be on Black Board: http://bb.hunter.cuny.edu (syllabus, course schedule, grades, discussion board, digital readings). With questions about your account please contact Student Helpdesk, studenthelpdesk@hunter.cuny.edu, 212-650-3624, Thomas Hunter Hall, 4th Floor.

While libraries provide access to many on-line publications, only articles and books published by academic press should be used as a source for your papers. This means that they went through a review process and their academic quality is guaranteed.
ADA Policy statement

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. If you need disability-related accommodations for your work in this course, please let me know.
COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change):

**Week 1. 8/30 Introduction and logistics. Theories and paradigms.**
Course overview. Scope of the course, organization, expectations, and assignment of discussion leaders. Paradigms and theories in contemporary geography.

Creswell Ch. 1 Introduction.
Creswell Ch. 2 Early geographies
Entries from TDHG (The Dictionary of Human Geography) on ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

Assignment for Week 2
Examine on-line contents of the latest issues of these flagship US geography journals. Read research article abstracts. Do not worry if you do not fully understand what the articles are about (by the end of the class you should be able to do it well).

Urban Geography, [http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rurb20/37/6?nav=tocList](http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rurb20/37/6?nav=tocList)
Which paradigms (post-positivist, Marxist, Feminist, post-structuralist, critical race theory and maybe others) do the articles in each issue engage, in your opinion? A single article can straddle more than one paradigm. We will compare notes in class.

**Week 2. 9/6 Paradigm shifts in geography. Geography and Empire.**
Creswell Ch. 3 The emergence of modern geography
Creswell Ch. 4 Thinking about regions
Creswell Ch 13 Geography’s exclusions.


Week 3.  **9/13 Spatial science and quantitative revolution**

Creswell Ch 5 Sp Sci and the Quant Rev


- This is a chapter from a contemporary textbook that explains the scientific approach as used by geographers today.


- Argument for the GIS as the only viable identity for geography.


**Overview of urban research that became classic in this tradition**

Take a look at these descriptions. How useful are they, in your opinion?

Knox, Paul. 1994. Urban structure: The CBD, sectors, and zones. And residential ecology. Pp. 92-103 and 212-216 in Urbanization: An introduction to urban geography. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ. This is an overview (from a textbook) of the various theories and models developed in the tradition of spatial science. Serves to illustrate what kind of science was produced in this tradition. Read it to just get a sense.

Basset, K. A., and John Rennie Short. 1980. The ecological tradition. Ch.2 in Housing and residential structure, 9-24. London: Routledge. This is an overview (from a textbook) of the various theories and models developed in the tradition of spatial science. Also for illustration purposes. Read it to just get a sense.

Week 4.  **9/20 GIS and post-positivist geography today**


Other readings TBA

Week 5.  **9/27 Marxist geography and class**

Creswell Ch 7 Marxist Geographies


Engels, F. (1845) 1997. The great towns. From The conditions of the working class in England. Published in 1845.

- This is a piece by that Friedrich Engels who was an intellectual companion, colleague, co-author, and friend of Karl Marx. It shows what pushed both of them to see capitalism as
exploitation (as opposed to freedom, as is in case of neoclassical and neoliberal economics). Note how geographic the description of Manchester is.


- This is the description of the differences between two major outlooks on economics – neoclassical and Marxist – written by post-modern anti-essentialist Marxists. Please note that post-modern Marxism is different from other strains of Marxism that essentialize class as a dimension of social experience. The discussion, however, is very good for understanding the paradigmatic divide between Marxism and the mainstream economics.


- This is from David Harvey’s first Marxist book. Note that he wrote it as an established “positivist” geographer, the author of a still cited book “Explanation in geography.” It illustrates the paradigmatic shift.


- Marxist analysis of a landscape. Also see the context for the Handbook of cultural geography volume to get a sense of the scope of research that has roots in the humanistic tradition.


Week 6. 10/14 – Tuesday schedule (No class 10/4, 10/11) Humanistic geography and a sense of place

Creswell Ch 6 Humanistic Geographies


- This is a seminal piece of the time. Focus on a general message. Instructively, pay attention that this text was edited to replace the outrageously gendered language that used to be the norm.

(Optional) Cloke et al. 2004, Doing ethnography in Practising Human Geography.

- Discussion of methodology – how it is different from the previous paradigms. They also talk about David Ley’s The Black Inner City (see under recommended).

Jones, Phil. Performing the city: a body and a bicycle take on Birmingham, UK. Social & Cultural Geography, Dec2005, Vol. 6 Issue 6, p813-830, 18p, 1 map, 5bw; DOI: 10.1080/14649360500353046; (AN 19235667)

- An example of autobiography as a research method.

**Week 7. 10/18 Feminist geography and gender**

Creswell Ch.8 Feminist Geographies


**Week 8. 10/25 Urban spaces and scales**

Creswell Ch. 11 Relational geographies


Gordon, David M. Capitalist development and the history of the US cities.
• This is a Marxist account of the development of the internal structure of the city from the class relations perspective. It contrasts with liberal explanations that prioritize technological innovation in transportation as a driving force.


• Feminist account of urban development


Week 9. 11/1 Post-structuralism

Creswell Ch. 9 Post-modernism and beyond

Creswell Ch. 10 Toward post-structuralist geographies


Week 10. 11/8 Post-colonial geographies, new empires


Week 11.  **11/15  Critical GIS and critical quantitative research**


Week 12.  **11/22  Nature and society**

Creswell Ch. 12 More than human geographies

Jody Emel, Chris Wilbert, and Jennifer Wolch 2002 Animal Geographies.


Week 13.  **11/29  Geoweb, surveillance, (in)security, militarization**


- An example of the insiders’ critique of surveillance potential of GIS.

**Week 14.** 12/6 (No class on 11/24) **Enacting other worlds: The politics of possibility**


Amanda Huron 2012 The Work of the Urban Commons: Limited-Equity Cooperatives in Washington, D.C. Earth and Environmental Sciences Program, City University of New York Graduate Center. Read ch.2, Ch8 is recommended.


**Week 15.** 12/20 **Final paper presentations. Final papers are due in my mailbox after the class.**