

FALL 2018 - GEO 702 CONCEPTS IN GEOGRAPHY

Tuesdays 2:00 - 4:30
305 Whitehall Classroom
Building

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Office hours
12:30 - 2:30 Thurs/Friday and by
appointment
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Course home page: Available in Canvas and <http://www.uky.edu/~jast239/courses/702/702.html>

Course Rationale.

In this course, we survey recent geographic scholarship. Our intent is to demarcate key concepts in geography that proceed out of its larger history, yet are inclusive of more recent trends. As ideas are evolving and provisional, this course adopts a pragmatic philosophical outlook on geographic scholarship. The truth or usefulness of any particular idea in geographic thought originates with the experiences of the geographic practitioner. Its is only our own interests, values and purposes make some approaches seem better or truer than others. By introducing a wide (but ultimately limited) range of geographic concepts, this course aims to counter some of the narrowing of focus that typifies the commodification of academics. Therefore, this is not a seminar in your specific area of geographic interest, nor is it a readings course customized to fit the niches for which the University of Kentucky Department of Geography specializes and markets itself. The successful student in this class will not be the one with the staunchest opinions or the most critical, partisan perspective. The successful student will be able to communicate a comprehension of a diversity of geographic concepts and be able to explain the logic underlying their emergence and use. Other graduate seminars will give you depth on specific topics and the specific scholarly personalities you are expected to cite for your theses and dissertations..

Specific course objectives

At the completion of this course, students should be able to 1) identify and describe key tensions in geographic thought; 2) engage concepts from geographic thought **outside** of their specific research interests; 3) articulate the pros and cons of geography as a discipline organized around pragmatism and anti-foundationalism

Required materials

It is recommended that these two books be purchased for your use. However, I will have individual copies of each available for you to use. Students will be presenting lectures on the chapters in these books on our second and third class meeting.

Cresswell, T. 2013. *Geographic Thought: A Critical Introduction*.
Holt-Jensen, A. (2018). *Geography: History and Concepts*.

Journal readings are available through the UK Library. Students accessing these readings from off campus will be required to go through the proxy server for full access. Students are expected to download and install Endnote and Cisco AnyConnect VPN Client. Both are freely available from UK Downloads (<https://download.uky.edu/>)

Additional texts

Additional textbooks on geographic thought are available from the instructor.

Evaluation

Final letter grade assignment is based on a percentage of points you earn out of a possible 100 points.

Weekly readings and discussion	100	A	> 90%
Final exam	100	B	80 – 89%
Film paper	50	C	70 – 79%
Research tools assessment	25	D	60 – 69%
Journal test	25	E	< 60%
Total points	300		

COURSE ACTIVITIES

Weekly readings and discussion. Each week there will be assigned readings. Before the start of a class meeting you may be asked to compose a written summary or a statement regarding the reading. Questions may even be assigned for one or more readings the week prior to their discussion. It is also foreseeable that certain readings, passages, or questions will be assigned to particular students.

For all of the readings, please engage the content of the reading. Explain what the author is saying and the concepts presented rather than focusing your attention on your opinion and whether or not you agree with the authors. Also, please consider that the readings are gateways to concepts. They are introductions that should be recognized as incomplete. While you may be familiar with a concept, others may not. Your responsibility is to communicate this idea clearly to the others in the class even if it may seem simplistic or problematic to you. Some strategies to consider in preparation for discussing your readings: What ideas are uniquely the authors? What ideas do they draw from? What is it about this author's work that has been cited by other geographers? Name dropping, hero worship, assuming the class wants to hear all of the ideas that have ever taken form in your head - these are not very productive to the goals of the class.

The student will be expected to locate and download the assigned journal readings online through the UK Library. This allows the library to have a record of the use of journals of relevance to Geography, and hence, a better chance the library will continue to subscribe to them. If materials are not available online through the library, the instructor will post them from the home page.

Each week a student will be asked to be the leader of the discussion. This does not mean that you control the entire class. It simply means that you should come prepared to make opening remarks and to have a set of questions available to pose in order to keep the conversation focused on the content of the reading.

Final exam. The test will consist entirely of terms for the student to identify and define. Students may use any handwritten or typed and printed materials on the exam. Photocopies of textbooks, glossaries, journal articles, encyclopedia entries are not allowed. These notes will be collected at the end of the exam. Students are expected to develop this list throughout the semester rather than attempt to prepare for it the last couple of weeks of class as there will also be an essay assignment due at the end of the semester.

Film essay. A documentary film will be viewed for the first time around midterm. The date and meeting time for the film will be organized and announced in class. This film will be shown outside of the regular meeting period. Students will view it as a group but will work individually. You are expected to draw out the geographic concepts and ideas reflected in this film, and write an essay summarizing them. Emphasis is to be placed on situating the central conflicts, characters, and situations in the film around **multiple** concepts in geographic thought. In other words, do not frame the film solely through your area of interest. Nor should you take a cookie cutter approach and force a hundred geographical concepts onto the film in a simplistic, inventory-like manner. You might also consider how these geographic concepts relate to film making; in other words, keep in mind that what you are watching is a result of a technical/creative process. The way in which the film was made, its representations, its photography, editing, and score contribute to its geographies as much as its content and subject. Don't go overboard with film theory aesthetics and film theory. Retain a focus on the content of the film and how it illuminates ideas and tensions in geographic thought. You should also rent and view the video on your own again, and as needed, given that you will need to consider topics that also come after we watch the film at midterm.

The goal of this paper is to show how well you understand the **breadth** of geographic concepts. Writing an essay that views the documentary only through, say, your knowledge of neoliberalist politics, assemblage theory, or performativity will receive a lower grade because you have communicated that you cannot see the world outside of your own intellectual box.

Required length is **3000 words**, excluding any citations. Please submit files electronically via email.

Journal test. Students will be expected to list 25 peer-reviewed geographic journals from memory.

Research tools assessment. Students will be asked to document with the instructor their competency in 1) the assembly of an Endnote bibliography inclusive of printing a bibliography using a specific journal style that will be assigned to them; 2) signing up for a table of contents alerts; 3) signing up for a citation alert for a journal article; 4) use of the UK Interlibrary Loan service; and 5) use of VPN to access library materials from off campus.

COURSE POLICIES

Dead Week. The university rules for dead week permit the continuation of activities that have been announced ahead of time and are part of the normal routine throughout the semester.

Attendance. I will notify the chair and the graduate director of any absences you accrue in this class. Unexcused absences will impact your final grade. Upon a second unexcused absence, your final grade will be lowered by ten points. Each subsequent unexcused absence will lower your final grade ten points. Conference presentations, job interviews, or that paper you had due in another class do not qualify as excused absences. Students who miss class may be given written assignments. This decision, and how I will apply this work is left to the discretion of the instructor in consultation with the graduate director and the department chair. If a student has excused absences in excess of one-fifth of the class contact hours for the course, the student shall have the right to receive a withdrawal (W), or the instructor may award an incomplete (I) for the course grade if the student declines to receive a W.

Communication. Communications in the classroom will be prioritized over electronic media. I will not respond to all emails, particularly those with questions that can be answered by the syllabus or that were answered in class. If you email me, use the address jast239@uky.edu. Do not use Canvas to send me messages. You will receive emails from the instructor on a regular basis. Please check your UK email often or make sure it is being forwarded to your main email interface.

Excused Absences. The university defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: a) illness, b) illness or death of family member, c) University-related trips, d) major religious holidays, and e) other circumstances found to fit "reasonable cause for nonattendance" by the professor. Job interviews, job fairs, standardized test administrations, family weddings, possession of airline tickets do not qualify as excused absences. Students with chronic medical conditions that jeopardize attendance must go through UK Disability Services to have these absences investigated and documented. In other words, if you inform me you will be missing a lot of classes due to migraines, or if you end up missing a lot of class because of a medical condition, you will have to get this approved through UK Disability Services for these absences to be approved.

Verification of Absences. Students should notify the professor of absences prior to class whenever possible. The instructor has the right to request appropriate verification to document the status of an absence as excused or unexcused. Written notification or verification must be provided within one week of the absence. Appropriate written notification of absences due to university-related trips will consist of a formal letter or email sent by the faculty in charge of your travel before the trip occurs.

Please keep in mind that if you are absent, I will keep this absence logged in my gradebook whether it is excused or unexcused. I do not revert absences to presences. I reserve the right to make decisions about whether or not an absence is excused or unexcused based on your overall record of attendance. In other words, you can and should follow up on any absence with the required documentation, but in some instances I will not weigh in on its status as excused or unexcused until I see your entire record of attendance for the semester.

Students must contact the instructor the night before the administration of a test if they become ill and expect to be absent the next day. No makeups will be given unless the absence is announced well ahead of time and it meets formal university criteria as an excused absence. Even then, any makeup will remain contingent upon the students overall record of attendance. If a student has been absent repeatedly in the days leading up to a test, the student will be required to improve attendance before a makeup can be given. Even then, the instructor reserves the right to offer makeup tests after the last test at the end of the semester. Students who contact me just before or after a test has been administered or who are absent unexcused on the day of the test will receive an automatic zero. No tests will be administered once the first test has been completed.

University Health Services (UHS) recognizes the important public health and policy reasons why a sufficiently ill student ought to be absent from class and also not make a visit to UHS. UHS provides in this circumstance an "Explanatory Statement of Absence from Class" that students may complete and submit to the Instructor to document an excused absence from class. This is a UHS "Tier 1" document. Faculty will decide whether this Tier 1 document is acceptable as "appropriate verification" of the student's illness. Whether a Tier 1 excuse is acceptable will be decided in each individual circumstance, with the final decision also contingent upon the overall attendance record for the semester.

The UHS Tier 2 document is an email sent to the student, at the student's request. The email confirms that the student made a medical visit to UHS. In order to provide the Instructor with verification of an illness, the student will forward the email from UHS to the Instructor of Record. The forwarded Tier 2 email informs the faculty member that she or he may confirm the UHS visit by emailing the identified sender of the confirming email and request that the sender verify the authenticity of the Tier 2 email sent to the student. Tier 2 excuses are not automatically excused absences. Whether a Tier 2 excuse is acceptable will be decided in each individual circumstance, with the final decision also contingent upon the overall attendance record for the semester.

The Tier 3 document emailed to students "states any applicable restrictions [on the student] based on illness or injury." Such a restriction may be that the student must be absent from class for a defined number of days. Whether a Tier 3 excuse is acceptable will be decided in each individual circumstance, with the final decision also contingent upon overall attendance record for the semester.

As with UHS documentation, whether outside doctor or hospital notes are acceptable will be decided in each individual circumstance by the instructor, with the final decision also contingent upon your overall attendance for the semester.

Academic Integrity. Per university policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, up to suspension from the university may be imposed. Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

Part II of Student Rights and Responsibilities (<http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about the question of plagiarism involving their own work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission. When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work, whether it

be a published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or something similar to this. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be.

Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is done, it must be done by the student, and the student alone. When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources of information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain (Section 6.3.1). Please note: Any assignment you turn in may be submitted to an electronic database to check for plagiarism.

Accommodations due to disability. Students with a documented disability and requesting academic accommodations must provide the instructor with a Letter of Accommodation from the UK Disability Resource Center (DRC). If the student is not registered with the DRC, she or he may contact David T. Beach (dtbeac1@uky.edu). The DRC is located in Suite 407 of the Multidisciplinary Science Building, 725 Rose Street, 0082. To contact the DRC by phone, please call V/TDD (859) 257-2754.

Classroom behavior policies. Due to growing issues with inattentiveness in class, I have switched back to a no cell phones and no laptops class policy. They are to be kept out of site during class and students who use them run the risk of a lowered participation grade and the possibility of being asked to leave the classroom. Laptops will be allowed only when class activities require them.