

FALL 2006: GEOG 1301
Introduction to Human Geography
Syllabus

www.geog.umn.edu/courses/1301

Syllabus contents

- 1 OBJECTIVES**
- 2 STRUCTURE**
- 3 TEACHING**
- 4 READING**
- 5 WRITING**
- 6 MAPPING THE TWIN CITIES**
- 7 GRADING**

THIS IS THE BLUEPRINT OF THE COURSE
IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONSULT
THIS SYLLABUS AND THE COURSE
WEBSITE REGULARLY

1 OVERVIEW

What is human geography? It isn't easy drawing boundaries between human geography and the other social sciences such as sociology, urban studies or anthropology. Geographers study phenomena other disciplines study too, but we like to think that we give added value through the way we do this. Many argue that this added value inheres in the exercise of *mapping*. We will learn how to understand and use maps in this course. Mapping has been indispensable to the discipline of geography and mapping techniques become more sophisticated every year.

However, there is something more fundamental to geography than mapping: a way of thinking about the world that can use maps, but also statistics, descriptions of places, and media images. In the last few decades, geographers have come to realize that the added value they give to the university is the fact they think in terms of **space**, that is, connections and differences between **places**. The primary objective of GEOG 1301 is to get you to think through space and place.

For example, if sociologists talk about poverty, a geographer will ask *where* is the poverty, and why is it there and not somewhere else? If anthropologists talk about the significance of a religious ceremony to a society, a geographer would emphasize that the locale where the ceremony happens is crucial to understand its significance. And if urban studies shows how a particular city is rapidly changing through the effects of globalization, a geographer might be of help in mapping the international flows of money and business that intersect in that particular city. This course will present a spatial twist to three central concepts of the social sciences: **difference**, **identity** and **globalization**.

GEOG 1301 places a lot of importance on **writing**. It is a Writing Intensive, Social Science Core and four-credit course, so you will be required to put quite some effort in learning how to write academically. Academic writing is very different from what is usually taught in high schools.

Also, as an International Perspectives course, 'Introduction to Human Geography' will expose you not only to a geographical way of thinking, but also to facts about the world you probably haven't learnt yet. This is more than knowing where Nigeria and Ukraine are (though you will learn the countries of the world in discussion section!). It includes understanding how the 'ethnic' neighborhoods in the Twin Cities were formed, why so much rock and dance music comes from London and New York, why there are suicide bombers in Israel, and how drought is not just a natural disaster.

Ultimately, this course will challenge you to think in an informed and independent way about ordinary activities, such as skateboarding, going to the movies, taking the bus, and voting. You will be able to think more completely and critically about your own life, your own body connected to millions of other places in the world.

2 STRUCTURE

The course is organized around **12 topics** spread over 15 weeks. After seven weeks, there will be a mid-term **exam** with only multi-choice questions. In the 15th week we review topics 8 to 12 for the final, non-cumulative exam with essay questions on December 20. Study guides will be posted on the course website a week before the exams.

These are the 12 topics:

What is geography?

1 flows

2 maps

3 place

Difference and identity

4 bodies

5 gender

6 belonging

Global issues

7 food

8 ecosystems

9 companies

10 cities

11 war

12 religion

You'll gradually understand how these topics are related:

Human geography studies **flows** of people, money, cultures, information, objects and biophysical processes across space and time, especially as these flows are becoming almost planet-wide (this is called *globalization*). Geography makes extensive use of **maps** to make sense of these flows, drawn according to what aspect of the world is of interest. The unique convergence of flows in a certain location is what geographers call a **place** (the interconnections and flows between places are called *space*). All places are inhabited, experienced and traversed by human **bodies**, and a place demands from bodies certain behaviors. Bodies are *differentiated* in society according to certain physical characteristics, for example through **gender** and race. What results are *identities* (in the case of gender, men and women). Hence, different kinds of bodies are made to feel they **belong** to different places, the clearest expression of which is racial segregation.

Looking at how places work on a global scale, it is clear many flows have to do with **food**: the production, distribution and consumption of food tells us much about the inequalities and interdependencies of our world. Flows of food are embedded in biophysical processes called **ecosystems**. Ecological problems like climate change show why human geography and biogeography cannot be separated. Most humans today live in **cities**, which is why urban geography is so important. The world order is also defined by **war**, especially since 9/11. Understanding the threat of war includes understanding the global role **religion** plays along with conflicts over security and resources.

So this course is focused on concepts, *not* on facts about places, which are traditionally associated with *regional geography*. Nevertheless, there are places you can expect to return to as case-studies during the course, including the Twin Cities, Sicily, New York City, New Orleans, London, Israel and Palestine, Chiapas, Rio de Janeiro, Iraq, China, Mumbai and Colorado.

2 TEACHING

The course is divided into **lectures** and **discussion sections**. The 1301 team this semester consists of an instructor, Arun Saldanha, who is responsible for the lectures and one of the sections, and three Teaching Assistants (TAs), who lead the other sections. The table below shows you who your TA will be and where and when you meet.

Instructor



Dr Arun Saldanha

office 432 Social Sciences Tower
office hrs Mondays, 2.00-4.00
ph 612 625 9660
fax 612 624 0144
email saldanha@umn.edu
web www.geog.umn.edu/faculty/saldanha.htm

Section 2 (1301V, Honors): Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1.25-2.15, Blegen Hall 430

Teaching Assistants

pic

...

pic

Nathan Clough

...

...

The course website and email **communication** with your TA are indispensable for obtaining the required materials, for helpful links, and for remaining up to date with the course. The lectures will expand on the reading of that particular week to illuminate the geographical topic. There is a definite logic to the sequence of topics. Hence, though no attendance is taken, it will be quite obvious when you miss a class (lecture or discussion), because you'll have difficulties understanding and taking part in the discussions. The PowerPoint files of the lectures will be available online after the lectures, but they are mostly visual and *cannot* substitute for your own notes.

In the discussion sections, you will work closely with the TAs and the other students in an interactive environment to ensure that the readings and lectures are properly *understood*. Through a variety of learning techniques (field trips, in-class reading and thinking exercises, homework, debates, small group discussions, video, presentations, quizzes, etc.) you will elaborate on the material of the lectures. The TAs coordinate their sections with each other and the lectures, but they adapt to the specific make-up and dynamics of the section.

If you want to ask or comment on something or disagree with something, you can put up your hand at any time or send an email after class. Our job is to explain. If you remain silent we get worried, because it is quite impossible that you understand everything straight away, as we ourselves surely don't understand everything. Being capable of asking questions (and there are no stupid questions) is the first step to becoming better at thinking. If you cannot apply the geographical concepts to other cases, or put definitions in your own words, or find your own examples, you should jot down what you don't understand and take it to the discussion section or lecture.

WE LOVE QUESTIONS

**NEVER HESITATE TO APPROACH THE
INSTRUCTOR OR YOUR T.A. IF THERE IS
SOMETHING YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND**

4 READING

Each geographical topic is explored through assigned **readings** for every week, which are bundled in the **course packet** available at Paradigm in the Dinkydome. You will also buy a book from the U of M Bookstore, *The Skin Between Us: A Memoir of Race, Beauty, and Belonging* by Kym Ragusa (list price \$23.95 but available at amazon.com from \$11.20). This book and the readings have corresponding **reading guides** in the course packet. The most important points are summarized and some questions are given to guide your reading.

Thus *there is no textbook*. In previous years we have found that students made little use of the textbooks, partly because they were just too long. Also, the textbook emphasized topics and approaches that are outdated in the social sciences. And of course, textbooks are expensive.

This also means that **taking notes is essential**. Studying the reading guides and readings won't be sufficient to help you through the mid-term and final exams – your own notes will be your best material. Again, this course meets the Writing Intensive requirement, and the writing starts in the classroom. We will help you to get used to taking notes in the beginning of the semester.

You need to possess an **atlas** to be able to locate the places mentioned in the lectures and readings, as well as do the topographical exercises during discussion sections. The atlas we recommend is Rand McRally's *Atlas of World Geography*, available at the U of M Bookstore. If you already have an atlas, bring it to the section so your TA can approve it.

You will also be required to follow **newspapers**. Getting into the habit of following the news online and through newspapers will be critical in deepening geographical knowledge and in participating in the discussions.

For your university career it is indispensable to become familiarized with the **library**. We organize trips to the Wilson Library, including the Map library, for this purpose. You will significantly lose marks on this Writing Intensive course if you only rely on information obtained via Internet.

Below are the readings for each topic. They are meant to demonstrate the geography inherent in the press. Together with the accompanying reading guides, they will teach you **how to read and think geographically**.

dates	topics	readings
-------	--------	----------

What is geography?

Sept 5	1	FLOWS	a. Manfred Steger, 'Is globalization a new phenomenon?'
Sept 7			b. Kym Ragusa, <i>The Skin Between Us</i>
Sept 12	2	MAPS	a. Jennifer LaFleur, 'In Katrina's mess, maps as good as lifesavers'
Sept 14			b. John Logan, 'The impact of Katrina'
			c. James Rubenstein, 'Thinking geographically'
Sept 19	3	PLACE	Doreen Massey, 'A global sense of place'
Sept 21			

Difference and identity

Sept 26	4	BODIES	a. Eugene Robinson, 'On the beach at Ipanema'
Sept 28			b. Andrews, Sudwell and Sparkes, 'Towards a geography of fitness'
Oct 3	5	GENDER	a. Kevin Bales, 'Because she looks like a child'
Oct 5			b. Joan Nestle, 'Restriction and reclamation'
Oct 10	6	BELONGING	a. Kym Ragusa, <i>The Skin Between Us</i>
Oct 12			b. Winona LaDuke, 'The political economy of wild rice'
Oct 17			
Oct 19		MID-TERM EXAM	9.45 – 11.00 a.m.

Global issues

Oct 24 Oct 26	7	FOOD	Cynthia Enloe, 'Carmen Miranda on my mind'
Oct 31 Nov 2	8	ECOSYSTEMS	Jared Diamond, 'The last Americans'
Nov 7 Nov 9	9	COMPANIES	Manfred B. Steger, 'The economic dimensions of globalization'
Nov 14 Nov 16 Nov 21 Nov 23	10	CITIES No class	a. Robert Neuwirth, 'Rio de Janeiro' b. Philippe Bourgois, 'Workaday world, crack economy'
Nov 28 Nov 30	11	WAR	Susan Sontag, 'What have we done?'
Dec 5 Dec 7 Dec 12 Dec 14 Dec 20	12	RELIGION Review week FINAL EXAM	Jeff Sharlet, 'Soldiers of Christ' 1.30 - 3.30 p.m.

These are the full bibliographic details of the readings. Note how they are **referenced**: this is how you will be asked to write the references of your research paper. The following book you will be required to purchase:

Ragusa, Kym (2006) *The Skin Between Us: A Memoir of Race, Beauty, and Belonging*. New York, Norton.

The following are in the course packet, in the order of when they will be read.

Steger, Manfred B. (2003) 'Is globalization a new phenomenon?' in *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

LaFleur, Jennifer (2005) 'In Katrina's mess, maps as good as lifesavers,' *Dallas Morning News*, 11 December, n.p. [available online].

Logan, John R. (2005) 'The impact of Katrina: race and class in storm-damaged neighborhoods,' unpublished research report. Providence, RI, Brown University.

Rubenstein, James (2005) 'Thinking geographically,' in *The Cultural Landscape: An Introduction to Human Geography*. New York, Prentice Hall.

Massey, Doreen (1994) 'A global sense of place,' in *Space, Place and Gender*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

Andrews, Gavin J., Mark I. Sudwell and Andrew C. Sparkes (2005) 'Towards a geography of fitness: an ethnographic case study of the gym in British bodybuilding culture,' *Social Science and Medicine*, 60(4)877-891.

Robinson, Eugene (1999) 'On the beach at Ipanema,' *The Washington Post*, August 1, p. W8.

Bales, Kevin (2004) 'Because she looks like a child,' Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds. *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. New York, Holt.

- Nestle, Joan [1997] 'Restriction and reclamation: lesbian bars and beaches in the 1950s,' Anne-Marie Bouthilette, Yolanda Retter and Gordon Brent Ingram, eds. *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance*. Seattle, Bay Press.
- LaDuke, Winona [2004] 'The political economy of wild rice: indigenous heritage and university research,' *Multinational Monitor*, April, pp. 27-29.
- Cynthia Enloe, 'Carmen Miranda on my mind: the international politics of bananas,' in *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, updated edition. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001.
- Diamond, Jared [2003] 'The last Americans: environmental collapse and the end of civilization,' *Harper's Magazine*, June, pp. 43-51.
- Steger, Manfred B. [2003] 'Globalization as economic process,' in *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Bourgois, Philippe [1985] 'Workaday world, crack economy,' *The Nation*, December 4, pp. 706-711.
- The Economist* [2006] 'Jerusalem: the key to peace', 'The last conquest of Jerusalem' and 'The heart of holy war', April 15, pp. 13 and 27-29.
- Sontag, Susan [2004] 'What have we done?' *The Guardian* [UK], May 24, n.p. [available online].
- Sharlet, Jeff [2005] 'Soldiers of Christ: inside America's most powerful megachurch,' *Harper's Magazine*, May, pp. 41-54.

5 WRITING

This is a Writing Intensive course. All writing follows certain rules, and the kind of writing that you will learn in this course is **academic writing**. A social-scientific research paper is different from what most of you wrote in school. Make sure to visit the website of the Centre for Academic Writing [writing.umn.edu] and go through it carefully.

- All good research and learning, whether at university or at your future job, starts with taking **notes**. We get worried, and you get sleepy, if you're not constantly trying to jot down the information that is being offered to you. *Everything that happens in lecture or discussion section can reappear at the exam*. You will be assisted in this essential skill in the beginning of the semester.
- Academic writing has to conform to principles of **academic honesty**. Any form of plagiarism (taking someone's words without clearly giving them due) will get you into serious trouble. It is your responsibility to find out about academic honesty at writing.umn.edu.

- Academic writings contain an easily identifiable and original **argument** (also called thesis). This is the point *you* are making and trying to convince the reader about, a point nobody has ever made before. You will formulate a particular problem within your section and discuss it with your TA; then you will do your own research in a systematic and careful manner; the research leads you to certain conclusions; finally, you make your argument in the research paper.
- A research paper is **well-structured**, with a clear introduction telling the reader in brief what to expect: what you will argue and how you will do that; a middle in which you develop your argument through a number of sections highlighting various aspects of the problem and telling the reader what evidence you found; and a conclusion, in which you summarize your evidence and reiterate the argument.
- A social-scientific paper is supported by **references**, and often quotes. Academic writing becomes convincing when you can show the reader you know what research has already been done on your problem. We ask you to refer to at least 3 books and 5 journal articles in your research paper. You will learn how to distinguish between popular and academic titles during discussion sections.

You will write two short **2-page assignments** to learn what academic writing consists of, one on postcolonial nations and one on commodity chains. Your TA's comments on these two papers will prepare you to write the course's main writing assignment, the research paper, which conforming to the criteria of a Writing Intensive course has to be 10 pages long. The TA will correct a draft version of this paper and you will learn how to comment on each other's writing through a process called **peer review**. The final draft should show how you have learnt to re-write a research paper.

In terms of **citation format**, this course uses the format of the American Psychological Association, *not* that of the Modern Language Association (MLA). We do this because the APA format is easier, more accurate, and the most common format across the social sciences and humanities.

Example of citation within the text of the research paper:

David Harvey (1996) argues for a Marxist interpretation of ecology.

Example of a quote:

As Harvey writes (1996: 43), 'The three words "space," "place," and "environment" encompass much of what geographers do.'

This is how you list the references in the alphabetical bibliography at the end of your paper:

books

Harvey, David (1989) *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Oxford, Blackwell.

journal articles

Butzer, Karl W. and David M. Helgren (2005) 'Livestock, land cover, and environmental history: the tablelands of New South Wales, Australia, 1820-1920,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 95(1):80-111.

book chapters

Longhurst, Robyn (1999) 'Pregnant bodies, public scrutiny: "giving" advice to pregnant women,' in Elizabeth Kenworthy Teather, ed. *Embodied Geographies: Spaces, Bodies and Rites of Passage*. London, Routledge.

press

Chin, Richard (2006) 'Map book takes readers into formerly uncharted territory,' *St Paul Pioneer Press*, July 16, p. G5.

websites

Twin Cities Marathon (2005) 'The most beautiful urban marathon in America,' <http://www.twincitiesmarathon.org>, accessed May 22, 2005.

6 MAPPING THE TWIN CITIES

If this course is designed to teach you how to write, it is the **research project** that is going to be most important in this regard. This semester's project will be called *Mapping the Twin Cities* and will be duly explained in the discussion sections. All students form groups of three to four, who will go for two **field trips**, one to the Minneapolis **farmers market** to learn research skills, and then to a geographically interesting area in the Twin Cities of their own choosing, preferably a place you've not been to before. Examples:

Lake Street East (22nd-24th St)	Northeast Minneapolis
Mercado Central	Popular bus lines
Downtown Minneapolis	Theater District
Loring Park	Lynlake
Dinkytown	Eat Street
Nicollet Mall	Mall of America
'Frogtown' in St Paul	Grand Avenue in St Paul
Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport	Mill City
Snelling Avenue	Cedar-Riverside
Metrodome	Lake of the Isles
Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Sculpture Garden	Ikea
Wal-Mart	YMCA

You will prepare for the fieldtrip together with your fellow researchers and TA. After the fieldwork and reading the relevant literature, you are to present and discuss your findings during discussion sections. The fieldwork itself will consist mainly of making observations, collecting data such as flyers and local newspapers, and drawing a thematic map. All fieldwork follows a previously well-defined **research problem**, which

is different for each student. The research problem (or question) reflects what new ideas *you* as an individual researcher are trying to form about a particular area.

The project ends with a research paper of **10 pages**, of which two drafts will be corrected by the TA as required from a Writing Intensive course. You will use at least 3 academic books and 5 journal articles to back up your argument. The basic goal of the research project, apart from learning how to interpret the cities where we live, is to learn the basics of cartography, using statistical data, and explore relevant academic literature so that you can apply these skills further on in your university career.

7 GRADING

To obtain an A for this course, you will at least:

- attend all lectures and take notes throughout;
- make sure you can explain all concepts with your own words and examples;
- participate in all discussion sections, summarizing every discussion;
- weekly summarize the readings and reading guides in your own words;
- complete the two short writing assignments;
- complete all components of the research project, including the two drafts of the research paper;
- make a separate summary of all the material to study for each exam.

None of the above is explicitly graded, but if you don't follow them through it is guaranteed to show in your final grade. This is how the grade is broken down:

Participation	20 points
Assignments	30 points:
1. postcolonial nations	15 points
2. commodity chains	15 points
Research project	60 points:
field work materials	5 points
thematic map	5 points
peer review	5 points
presentation	5 points
two drafts of the research paper	40 points
Mid-term exam	40 points
Final exam	50 points
Total	200 points

Your final grade at the end of the semester will be specified using the following **approximate** distribution:

96-100%	A	76-79%	C+
90-95%	A-	73-75%	C
86-89%	B+	65-72%	C-
83-85%	B	50-64%	D
80-82%	B-	0-49%	F

It is your responsibility to keep (electronic) copies of all your papers to document any cases of disagreement about your final grade. If you have a question about a grade, please talk to your TA immediately, not many weeks later. **Incompletes** are not an option unless there is a valid, documented medical reason. If you feel by the 10th or 11th week of the course that you may not be able to complete GEOG 1301, please talk to your TA. You may consider using a **discretionary withdrawal**, but it is your responsibility to be aware of U of M policy and potential consequences.

Also, remember that all activities at the U, including this course, are governed by the U of M **Student Conduct Code** (www1.umn.edu/twincities/code). If you in any way disrupt the learning environment that we take so much trouble to create, you can be subject to disciplinary action.

Students with special needs

All of us learn in different ways and with varying degrees of success. If you know of any factors in your life that may hinder your abilities to learn up to your potential in this course, please notify us at once. If these factors are recognized disabilities under the ADA, please contact your TA the first week of class so that those needs can be accommodated. Students unable to use the course web site should notify their TA of this during the first week.

You may also wish to contact the **Office of Disability Services**, located at the McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak St SE, Suite 180. They can be reached at ds@umn.edu or 612-626-1333.

Good luck! And remember, learning and thinking are easiest when you have fun along the way.