Geography 1301: Introduction to Human Geography

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OVERVIEW

Have you wondered what it means to think globally and act locally? Do you realize how you may be connected to people in other parts of the world through your daily actions, such as eating breakfast? Are you interested in the similarities and differences between global cities in Latin America, Asia, and the U.S.? Or about the reasons why ethnic conflict continues in the Palestine? Or about the ways nature is commodified, exported, and fought over? These are the sorts of questions geographers ask to understand the world. Geography is much more than knowing "where" places are by memorizing landmarks on maps. Geography is an exploration of how spatial relationships are fundamental aspects of people's everyday lives.

In this class, we will encourage you to think geographically, to understand the reasons why people make certain kinds of places, like cities, national parks, suburbs, and political territories, or why and how they transform material settings into cultural landscapes. We will explore how and why places and regions are interconnected, how they are unique, and how people, ideas, and things moving from one locale to another can change a place or region. After taking this class, you will see your surroundings in new ways by asking questions like: Why are peoples, cultures, and places what they are? Why are they where they are? How can geography help me understand today's changing world? To think about these questions, we will use case studies from different parts of the world and focus on current world events.

READINGS AND WEB PAGES

There are three types of materials for this class: textbook, supplemental readings, and web pages. To do well in this class, you will need to pay attention to all three.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available in West Bank University Book Store, Blegen Hall)

- Course webpage: http://www.geog.umn.edu/courses/1301

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

The New York Times or a national newspaper with good coverage of world events. See resources page for links to newspapers. A good atlas is also recommended.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS OF COURSE
Being interested in ideas and the world around you can change your life in very positive and powerful ways. Because it is your choice to educate yourself, I see my job as helping you in your journey of critical thinking. I can help empower you to learn. I don't see my job as presenting facts for you to memorize and regurgitate on exams. Rather I will try to challenge you to explore complex social and spatial relations from different points of view. I will encourage you to think geographically. I will ask you to look beyond simplistic either/or choices and black/white reasoning, and to explore the range of possible interactions between peoples and places as they are situated in different contexts. How you decide to claim your education and learn the course material will no doubt be different than the person sitting next to you. But once you have struggled with difficult ideas, no one can take away your ability to think critically.

One way you will be asked to work through new perspectives and concepts is through writing. It is an explicit goal of this course to help you learn to write effectively and concisely, as well as to study effectively and to read and think critically. Another goal is to encourage you to think about world events from a geographical perspective. In order to do so, you will need to have a basic background in world relations. For this reason, and because it is important to your role as a global citizen, I recommend reading a national newspaper at least once a week to keep up with current events. Feel free to raise topics from the weekly news in lecture and section.

CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN ANDERSON 310

Where and how active learning and teaching takes place is important. Creating a positive learning environment is a team project. I hope we can turn this classroom into a stimulating place where new friends and colleagues, working with and responding to the instructors, are challenged by the materials presented. I also hope you will look forward to coming to class because the class dynamics matters. If students are attentive and responsive once class begins and want to stay until the end, I teach more enthusiastically! From time to time, we will ask you for feedback on how the class is going. Of course, we are inspired to work harder when you have nice things to say, but we also want to hear suggestions for improvement.

Although around 150 of us will be in Anderson 310 this semester, we want to allow each person to have the opportunity to think about the world in new ways. We are asking for your cooperation to turn an otherwise uninviting large lecture hall into a positive learning environment. In particular, we ask that you respect the integrity of the learning process by allowing each other and the instructors to perform at our best. We emphasize respect for instructors (by not arriving late or leaving early, and by not reading the newspaper, listening to music, or using a cell phone) and respect for your student colleagues. This means: please be quiet when not engaged in active learning; participate fully and talk when appropriate; and participate in ways that do not put down other individuals or their beliefs.
CLASS CONTRACT

Below I have outlined some guidelines that I expect both students and instructors to follow. Please read them carefully as they may affect your course grade. If you choose to enroll in this class, you should treat these guidelines as a class contract.

1. **Respect the rights of other students to learn: Be responsible and considerate!** This semester we will move through a number of topics quickly. We will ask you to develop your own ideas about course material and ask you to respect the rights of other students to do the same. We will acknowledge the diversity of students by presenting course material and designing assignments in ways that are accessible to different learning styles. If you are disruptive and disrespectful of students and instructors (please see number 4 below), I reserve the right to deduct up to fifty points from your final course grade total.

2. **Acknowledge and respect the diversity of students and instructors in this class.** Discussion of controversial issues is encouraged in this course. Even if you don't agree with the points of view of your instructors, guest lecturers, or fellow students, as citizens of this class you are responsible for respecting all individuals as fair-minded persons. In this class you will be asked to maintain an open mind to the differences around you.

3. **Attendance.** If you have enrolled for other classes meeting so close to this one that you cannot stay from 11:15 to 12:30, you should drop either this class or the other one. You are expected to be present at lecture and recitation sessions. Attendance will affect your grade!

4. **Class Policies.** Based upon our past experiences with a class this size, some basic class expectations are outlined below for both instructors and students.

   - We will be on time to class and not hold you late in class beyond our scheduled times.
   - We will be available during office hours every week and make every attempt to notify you in advance if special circumstances arise if we must change our office hours.
   - We will do our best to prepare for every lecture and recitation.
   - We will grade exams, quizzes, and projects promptly and post grades as soon as possible.
   - We will listen to, and carefully consider, any questions or concerns you have about grading, lectures, or any other aspect of this course.
   - Requests for re-evaluations of graded material must be made in writing. Re-evaluation may result in a lower, higher, or the same grade.
   - We will not grant extensions for graded materials. There are no make-up exams. Extensions or make-up exams are not fair to other students or to us. If you have a valid note from a medical doctor or counselor explaining why an extension or make-up is necessary, we do our best to work with your needs.
• If you have a disability, please make arrangements with the student disability center before assignments and exams are due (see below).
• We will do everything in our power to help you do the best you can.

We will expect the following from you and your fellow students:

• We look forward to seeing you in class (both recitation and lecture) on time. If you are late, we may not allow you in because it is too disruptive of other students.
• You will not leave class until it is finished -- which for lecture and recitation is when the instructor says it is over. People who leave whenever they feel like it are exceptionally disruptive to those who are trying to learn.
• You will not talk during lecture except to raise questions or engage in discussions that involve the whole class. If you would rather talk to your friends do not come to class.
• You will not read newspapers or other non-class related materials during class time.
• Before class you will turn off your cell phone or beeper so as not to disrupt the instructors and other students.
• You will be respectful of your TA and classmates during recitation, making sure to make your contributions in class in a manner that is neither rude nor offensive.
• You will do the best you can to do the assigned readings on time.
• You will turn in all assigned work on time. Late work is not accepted.
• You will take the exams as scheduled: there will be no make-up exams or quizzes.

Remember: You are responsible for doing well in this class! We will help you do the best you can!

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 me or your T.A. at once. If these factors are recognized disabilities under the ADA, please let me know the first week of class so that those needs can be accommodated. Protect your legal rights by contacting your T.A. before any graded assignments are turned in and contacting me before the first exam: accommodations cannot be made retroactively. You may also wish to contact the Office of Disability Services, 12 Johnston Hall, at 624-4037.

ORGANIZATION AND THEMES OF COURSE

This class is organized according to general geographic concepts and themes. We will use a case-study approach from different parts of the world to illustrate concepts like place, landscape,
scale, region, and human-environment interactions. We will also discuss current world events through lecture, films, slides, projects, and small group discussions.

The course has five general parts. In the first part, you are introduced to a geographic perspective through basic concepts and questions. We will also briefly consider the world in which we now live, that is, the world after September 11. How is this event being remembered in and through places? How were the lives of different people around the world affected? Some of the themes we will introduce the second week of class will appear throughout the rest of the course, such as globalization, war and migration, and place and memory. In week three, we begin the second section about "Nationalisms and Political Identities." Nation-states are modern human inventions. How and why have they developed? How and why do human societies draw boundaries around space to claim territory ("turf")? Political boundaries also affect movement of peoples between places, a theme we explore in section three about "Cities and Urban Life." Two thirds of the world's population live in cities. But what are cities? Why and where do cities grow? What is life like in them? How does urbanization affect both rural life and the natural environment? We will look at examples from past and present, Global North and Global South, and even in the Twin Cities. In your first large project, "Ethnic landscapes in the Twin Cities" you will visit a local neighborhood to explore the interconnections between migration, urban development, and cultural landscapes.

After the midterm exam, we will focus on nature and society, that is, how humans have transformed nature and how the physical environment conditions human activities, from tourism to agriculture. In your second large project, the environmental debate, you and your section colleagues will assume a particular social role to argue for or against the restoration of the lower Colorado River Delta, a watershed that extends across the U.S./Mexico political boundary. The Colorado River is currently at its lowest point in 150 years and is only at 14% of its volume capacity (as of 8/02). There are many users of this water resource, from nations, states, cities, farms, and factories, to residents, developers, local Native American communities, and environmentalists. Through the debate, you will examine the relationships between different social groups, their visions of nature, and the political, economic, national, and cultural structures that may have an influence on those relationships. In section four, we look at "Cultural Landscapes," including sacred places, social memory, and cultural identities. We will look at the beliefs, values and practices that structure how people construct cultural landscapes, as well as what people are present in those landscapes. After the class debate, we will end the course by considering the larger course themes and returning to our initial reflections on the events and memories of September 11. Rather than systematically discussing one world region at a time and then moving onto another part of the world, this class is structured around basic geographic concepts and themes. We will use a case-study approach from different parts of the world to illustrate concepts like place, landscape, scale, region, and human-environment interactions. We will also discuss current world events through lecture, films, slides, projects, and small group discussions.
HOW THE COURSE WORKS

There are different, interrelated components of the course. Please note that you must attend a number of lecture and recitation sections to get credit for written projects.

- **Lecture**: We will meet twice a week to discuss basic concepts and themes. To illustrate this material, I will describe historical case studies and explore current events. I will use different formats to do so, including lecture, visualization (through slides and other media), group activity, and films. Lecture material will be related to, but quite distinct from, materials presented in recitation and required readings. To do well on exams, I highly recommend regular attendance.

- **Recitation**: The large lecture format is complemented with the opportunity for small group learning in recitation sections, and by small and large written projects. In recitation sections, you will cover new material, discuss skills that will help you do well in the course, work on your projects, and review course material. Recitation sections will also provide you with more in-depth material and new case studies that cannot be covered in lecture. To do well on projects and section assignments, you must attend section.

- **Required Readings**: Webpage material, the textbook, and reserve readings will supplement, but not substitute, the material covered in lectures, films, and recitation. **HINT**: Do the readings before class, and look up a place in an atlas whenever it is mentioned in the course. You need to visualize where the dramas we discuss are taking place to understand why they are happening where they are.

- **Webpage**: The 1301 webpage is a mandatory text as well as an important resource for projects and recitation activities. It provides access to an on-line student handbook, containing all the basic information you need to complete the course, ranging from classroom expectations to outlines, names and contact information for instructors, dates and deadlines, project descriptions, study skills, and links to other resources. Links include web pages for the textbook (maintained by the publisher), research sources for some projects, and additional links allow you to explore on your own. **NOTE**: The webpage has mandatory reading materials for section. Please arrange access to a computer to print out materials before section.

- **Office hours**: Please visit your T.A. and me if you are having problems with the course material right away. Many students come right before an assignment is due or the day before the exam which is a poor strategy for success. Because this class will build upon earlier concepts and information, if you fall behind, it will be difficult to "catch up."

- **Writing help**: This course is writing intensive (as described by CLA requirements). If you need help with the writing assignments for this course, please visit our web page. Also think about contacting [Student Writing Support](http://writing.umn.edu/sws/index.htm), 15 Nicholson Hall (625-1893) at: http://writing.umn.edu/sws/index.htm
There will be two exams, two large projects, discussion, and weekly activities (that include written exercises). The exams are all essay and will cover materials from lectures, films, recitation discussions, projects, and the textbook. Study guides will be handed out before the exam. Absolutely NO make-up exams (except for validated medical emergencies. Students must contact me in advance or by the day of exam). Students registered on a S/N basis must do at least "C" level work, turn in all recitation projects and weekly assignments, and take all exams to receive a "S." Otherwise they receive a "N."

**1301 GRADE WORKSHEET**

### IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES AND EXAMS

(Total: 45% of grade, or 180 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Possible points</th>
<th>Enter score below</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam One (week 8, Oct.22)</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam Two (Tuesday, Dec.17, 10:30-12:30)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class activities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total possible points from exams &amp; in-class</strong></td>
<td><strong>180</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### RECITATION ACTIVITIES, DISCUSSION, AND PROJECTS

(Total: 55% of grade, or 220 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Possible points</th>
<th>Enter score below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project 1: Migration project</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>week 6: draft maps, field notes, typed answers, and draft papers due</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>week 9: revised papers and maps due</td>
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<td><strong>Project 2: Environmental Debate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>week 12: group reports due and mandatory section attendance</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>week 14: in-class debate (mandatory attendance in</td>
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lecture)  

week 15: final journals and papers due

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments, participation, attendance</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total possible points from weekly activities:</strong></td>
<td><strong>220</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **Total possible points in the course:** | **400** |

Convert your total points to a percentage (divide by 400) to calculate your grade for the course according to the following scale (which will apply unless an unusual grade distribution occurs):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-95%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83-85%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-82%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>76-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>73-75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>65-72%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49%</td>
<td>F</td>
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**Extra credit:** During the quarter, we will randomly announce extra credit assignments in class. Students may earn up to 16 extra credit points.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty and integrity is expected at all times. Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism and cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct, will not be tolerated. Cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University guidelines. If you are unsure of these policies please see the instructor.

**STANDARD STATEMENT ON COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. The two major grading systems used are the A-F and S-N. Departmental majors must take major courses on the A-F system; non-majors may use either system. The instructor will specify criteria and achievement levels required for each grade. All students, regardless of the system used, will be expected to do all work assigned in the course, or its equivalent as determined by the instructor. Any changes you wish to make in the grading base must be done in the first two weeks of the semester.

2. The instructor will specify the conditions, if any, under which an "Incomplete" will be assigned instead of a grade. The instructor may set dates and conditions for makeup work, if it is
to be allowed. "I" grades will automatically lapse to "F"s at the end of the next semester of a student's registration, unless an instructor agrees to submit a change of grade for a student during a subsequent semester to maintain the grade as an "I".

3. Inquiries regarding any changes of grade should be directed to the instructor of the course; you may wish to contact the Student Dispute Resolution Center (SDRC) in 321 CMU (625-5900) for assistance.

4. Students are responsible for all information disseminated in class and all course requirements, including deadlines and examinations. The instructor will specify whether class attendance is required or counted in the grade for a class.

5. A student is not permitted to submit extra work in an attempt to raise his or her grade, unless the instructor has specified at the outset of the class such opportunities will be afforded to all students.

6. Scholastic misconduct is broadly defined as "any act that violates the right of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work. Scholastic dishonesty includes, (but is not necessarily limited to): cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, which means misrepresenting as your own work any part of work done by another; submitting the same paper, or substantially similar papers, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of all instructors concerned; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student's work."

7. Students with disabilities that affect their ability to participate fully in class or to meet all course requirements are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the instructor so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. Further information is available from Disabilities Services (30 Nicholson Hall).

8. University policy prohibits sexual harassment as defined in the December 1998 policy statement, available at the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Questions or concerns about sexual harassment should be directed to this office, located in 419 Morrill Hall.