GEOG 101: PEOPLE & THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Spring 2022

Hunter North 1022 | Saturdays 9:10am – 12:00pm

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Stephen Jones
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OFFICE HOURS: Hunter North 1032
Saturdays 12:30pm – 1:30pm and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Geography & Environmental Science 101: People & Their Environment is a broad overview of the scientific discipline of geography. Over the course of the semester, we will explore the social, political, and geographical dimensions of weather and climate, landforms, resource management, cultural and religious practices, urban development, infrastructure, transportation, economic relations, and other topics, as well as the relationships between them.

Our course will be organized around the loose theme of water, a prerequisite for all life on Earth. We are water people living on a water planet. A critical approach to the geography of water will therefore allow us to explore a wide swath of topics and settings, as well as appreciate the interrelations between the physical and social science approaches to the discipline of geography.

COURSE GOALS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

Over the course of the semester, students will:

- Appreciate the breadth of the discipline of geography, possibly the most internally diverse of the sciences
- Define “geography” in their own terms
- Gain an introductory understanding of how society and space are co-constituted
- Gain an introductory understanding of the theory and practice of geographical analysis, especially as it relates to water geographies
- Develop college-level reading and writing skills

REQUIRED READINGS

Reading assignments will be available online, on our course webpage and Dropbox. And I will provide printed copies of all our assigned readings. Please see the course schedule below for reading assignments.

FORMAT & PROCEDURE

Students will be expected to attend classes, complete their readings before our meetings, and be prepared to participate in our discussions. Our class sessions will combine lecture, group work, in-class writing assignments, and student presentations.
The topics we will be discussing in class touch on a number of sensitive issues. All of us come to the table with different histories, experiences, and understandings. During open discussion, group work, and otherwise, it is essential that we maintain a safe, respectful, and open-minded environment within the classroom. Disagreement and debate are encouraged; disrespect is unacceptable.

ACCESSIBILITY

Please let me know if you need anything to make this course accessible to you; I will be happy to accommodate you. You may contact the Office of AccessABILITY, which coordinates accessibility arrangements at Hunter College. They can be reached on campus in Room 1214B, East Building, or via email at accessABILITY@hunter.cuny.edu.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

I will use email to communicate with the class, so please be sure to check your inbox regularly. If you need to contact me, please email me at sjones2@gc.cuny.edu.

COURSE EVALUATION

*Participation (20%)*

Students will be expected to attend classes, complete their readings before our meetings, and be prepared to participate in our discussions.

*One-Pagers (25%)*

Students will be required to hand in several one-page reading reflections. There are seven (7) opportunities to submit one-pagers; but you are only required to complete five (5). I will describe these assignments in more detail in class.

Please see the course schedule below for one-pager due dates.


Due May 14.

Imagine that you are having a conversation with a family member, friend, or loved one. During your discussion, you share with them that you are taking a Geography 101 course at Hunter College. “That’s so cool!” your family member/friend/loved one responds. It soon becomes clear, however, that they do not really know what geography is. “Are you learning,” they ask, “about maps, state capitals, stuff like that?” You inform that no, that’s not really what Geography is about; although you have been spending time looking at a lot of cool maps! Puzzled, but interested, they ask you, “So, what is Geography?”

For our final course paper, you will develop an answer to your family member, friend, and loved ones’ questions. First, you will give them a short, pithy definition of the discipline of geography, about one to three (1-3) sentences in length. Then, you’ll share a bit more about what you have been learning this semester, and your evolving understanding of the science of Geography. Your final paper will be about three (3) pages long, equivalent to roughly five minutes of explanation.
You will be required to discuss specific examples from our readings and in-class discussions, as well as give general, overarching examples of the theory and practice of geographical analysis.

More information will be provided in class, beginning in late February. And several of our later classes will be dedicated to developing the paper.

_Final In-Class Presentation (20%)_

Due May 14.

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COURSE SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS

*Note: all readings are listed on the day they are due. Readings may be replaced or adjusted as the semester proceeds, but not without warning.*

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION & KEYWORDS IN GEOPGRAPHY

January 29

- Course overview, introductions

February 5


February 12

- NO CLASS

February 19


February 26


UNIT 2: WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE – THE VIEW FROM NORTH AMERICA
March 5


March 12


March 19


March 26


April 2


April 9


April 16

- NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

April 23


April 30


May 7

May 14
- Peer-review
- Final paper due

May 21
- Student presentations
- FINAL CLASS – END OF SEMESTER