

Syllabus

Marissa T. Isaak (Wald)

Spring 2017

Hunter College: Department of Geography

Course: People and Their Environment

Course Number: GEOG 10100, sections 03 and ECI2

Time and Place: T/Fr 11:10-12:35 in Hunter North 1036

Office Hour: By Appointment/Skype (skype name: MarissaIsaak)

Required Text: The main text for the course will be “Introduction to Geography: People, Places, and Environment” by Carl H. Dahlman and William H. Renwick. I will be drawing from the 6th edition. Unfortunately, earlier versions of the text miss whole chapters and are therefore not recommended. The text will be available in the bookstore or from many online retailers. ISBN-13: 978-0321843333 or ISBN-10: 0321843339. The book is also available on reserve at the library.

Contacting the instructor: Most questions can be answered by reading the syllabus completely and checking the course site on Blackboard. Please do that before asking administrative questions by email. If you still cannot answer your question, be in touch at **mi272@hunter.cuny.edu**. I try to respond to all messages within 24 hours, but allow more time on the weekends or holidays. Please sign all messages with your name as it appears in CUNYfirst.

Course Description

Geography is the ultimate interdisciplinary discipline, drawing from the physical sciences, social sciences and even the humanities to understand the world around us. Geography implores us to ask deep questions about the relationships between humans and our environment and gives a structure to seek answers. It is primarily a problem-solving discipline that helps us to think about human challenges and the spatial distribution of phenomena through the lens of: **Why and How does something happen Here or There?**

In this introductory course, you will be exposed to the core terms, concepts, and theories of Geography, so that each of you will be able to ask - and seek answers - to important geographic questions.

Learning outcomes: In this course you will learn what geographic inquiry is and how to conduct geographical analysis.

- You will gain an understanding of the basic processes that form the climate and land spheres in which humans live, an understanding of drivers of some cultural attributes of human population, and the core processes of global and local human organization.

- You will learn about some of the conflicts that arise from living in a rapidly urbanizing world including pressures on our food, water, and ecological systems.
- And you will gain an understanding of some of the social and economic problems of the modern urban society in which we live, and of the precursors that laid the ground work for our society, as seen in spatial perspective.
- You will learn about the unique analytical tools that geography offers, including: maps, remote sensing, geographic information systems, and varying types of spatial analysis.
- The course will promote independent critical thinking about the topics above and relate geographic ideas to questions of spatial distribution. Course assignments will encourage the development of critical reading and writing skills.

Course Schedule

| Week | Dates | Topics Covered | Readings and Assignments (listed on date due). |
|------|----------------|--|---|
| 1 | Jan 31 & Feb 3 | What is Geography and Core Concepts Syllabus Review How to ask geographic questions | |
| 2 | Feb 7 & 10 | Core Concepts in Geography First Field Assignment during class. "Seeing Like A Geographer" Feb 10 | Dahlman Ch1 |
| 3 | Feb 14 & 17 | Weather, Climate, and Climate Change Landforms | Dahlman Ch 2 <i>Response Reading 1 posted: Environmental Determinism</i> |
| | Feb 19 | Last day to drop without a grade of W | |
| 4 | Feb 21 & 24 | Landforms continued Biosphere | Dahlman Ch 3 Response 1 Due: Feb 21 |
| 5 | Feb 28 & Mar 3 | Biosphere continued Earth's Resources | Dahlman Ch 4 |
| 6 | Mar 7 & 10 | Earth's Resources and Environmental Protection | Dahlman Ch 5 Quiz 1 (covering Ch 1, 2, 3, 4, and in class) Mar 10 |
| 7 | Mar 14 & 17 | Population and Migration | Dahlman Ch 6 <i>Response 2 Readings posted Mar 14: Population Growth</i> |
| 8 | Mar 21 & 24 | Cultural Geography | Dahlman Ch 7 Response 2 Due Mar 21 |
| 9 | Mar 28 & 31 | Food and Agriculture | Dahlman Ch 9 Extra Credit: Food Journal and Mapping Assignment due Mar 28 |

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|----|---|--|---|
| 10 | Apr 4 & 7 | Cities and Urbanization | Ch 10 Quiz 2 (covering ch 6, 7, 9 and in class) Apr 4 My Brooklyn Film Apr 7 |
| | Apr 10-18 | Spring Recess – no class | <i>Second Field Assignment: Fulton Mall</i> |
| | Apr 19 | Last day to withdraw from a class with a grade of W. | |
| | Apr 20 | Classes Follow Mon schedule – no class | |
| 11 | Apr 25 & 28 | Cities and Urbanization | Dahlman Ch 10. Field Work Assignment Due Apr 28 |
| 12 | May 2 & 5 | A World of States | Dahlman Ch 11 <i>Response 3 Readings Posted: May 5</i> |
| 13 | May 9 & 12 | Economy and Development | Dahlman Ch 11 Response 3 Due: May 12 |
| 14 | May 16 | Final Class Review Session and Wrap Up | Dahlman Ch 12 |
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| 15 | Tues May 23 rd . 9am-11am | FINAL EXAMINATION. Cumulative. | Final Exam – cumulative, with special section on Ch 10, 11 & 12. |

Assignments

The relative contribution of each of the assignments to your total grade is:

- Reading Responses (3): 10% each, totaling 30%
- Quizzes (2): 15% each, totaling 30%
- Field Assignment: 15%
- Final Exam: 25%

Attendance in this class is mandatory. The quizzes and exam will draw heavily from class discussions and reading assignments. It is your responsibility to get class discussion/lecture notes if you are absent. Attendance will be taken.

Response Assignments (3): Response assignments will push you to respond to course readings by incorporating your own opinions and drawing from your life experiences to illustrate or describe geographic concepts. Each response assignment will have a number of questions about the readings for you to respond and consider.

Response assignments can be completed in a variety of ways.

A. Traditional Paper: Using this method, I would like you to answer the questions in the assignment in a written format. It will **be at least 2 pages**, 12 point font, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins, double spaced. Please submit these assignments in the portal on blackboard. If you have trouble submitting on blackboard, please send the assignment to my email as a backup. Do not leave assignments in my box.

B. If you want to try something a bit different, you can complete your assignment by making a **video or audio recording of yourself** answering the questions about the reading. For this option, you must answer ALL THE SAME QUESTIONS listed in the assignment. Make a video with a phone or computer that **lasts about 5 minutes** and post it to youtube or another video sharing site. Then upload the link to the site to blackboard, so that I can view your response. For this option, I still expect you to think through and take notes before answering. This should be a polished response free of excessive “ums” and mistakes. It will likely take a few recordings to get this perfect.

All assignments regardless of the method used will be graded for their use of geographic concepts, content, and structure. You should edit assignments for proper spelling, grammar, and style. **Assignments must be received by midnight on the date they are due for the possibility of full credit.** If they are received the following day (the grace day) they will receive a 20% penalty for being one day late. **ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS ONE DAY GRACE PERIOD.**

The Field Assignment: Details of this assignment will be distributed when the assignment is discussed in class.

Quizzes/Exams: This course will have two quizzes and a final exam. The quizzes are meant as an assessment to make sure that you are retaining the information that you have learned throughout the term. The quizzes will draw heavily from material covered in class in addition to content from the readings. It will be impossible to do well on quizzes without attending class and completing the readings. The final exam will be cumulative and will integrate ideas, issues, and geographic tools that you have learned throughout the course. Quizzes will include short answer questions, graph and map analysis, and definitions. Quizzes/Exams cannot be made up without **documented** serious/ medical reason for missing class.

Course Policies: **You may not use ANY electronic devices in my class.** Only in documented medical reasons will laptops be allowed to take notes. It is my experience that you are more engaged learners when you are taking notes by hand. I encourage typing up your notes after class time. I am happy to review notes if you would like to submit them for review to make sure they are complete before quizzes/exams.

The grade of IN (incomplete) will only be given under the most extraordinary and documented conditions (i.e., death in your immediate family, your own hospitalization, etc.) and you must notify me, in writing, no more than 48 hours from the day and time of the final exam that you are requesting an IN. At that time you will arrange to complete a Contract to Resolve an Incomplete Grade and together we will decide how and when you will complete the work to resolve the grade. If you do not comply with these terms I will average the grades you have earned (including any earned zeroes) and record your final grade.

Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity

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 the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

ADA Policy

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 Accessibility, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772- 4857 or (212) 650-3230.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice by email and/or class announcement. All additional syllabus information will be listed on the course's blackboard site. Please check often.