

Geography 15000-01: World Regions in Global Context

Fall 2024

TuFr 1:00PM-2:15PM

North Bldg 510

Instructor: Brendan O'Connor

Email: boconnor@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Office Hours: Fr 11:30AM-12:30PM or by appointment

Course Overview

In this course, we will familiarize ourselves with keywords in critical geography like “uneven development,” “racial capitalism,” and “scale,” grappling with their utility as we survey regions around the world. We will work from both a textbook and secondary readings and films; PDFs and links to all required readings (including the textbook) will be posted on Blackboard.

As we move across different world regions, we will consider how the unique histories of specific places are tied to broader, more general experiences, and vice versa—in other words, how the particular and the universal are indelibly linked. We will practice thinking critically about current events by contextualizing and historicizing them. By the end of the course, students will have begun developing the tools to answer what Ruth Wilson Gilmore identifies as the fundamental question of the geographer: “Why do things happen where they do?”

Required textbook: *World Regions in Global Context: Peoples, Places, and Environments* (6th Edition) by Sallie A. Marston, Paul L. Knox, Diana M. Livermant, Vincent Del Casino Jr., and Paul F. Robbins.

Please note: This syllabus is subject to revision.

Grading

There will be no final exam in this course. There will be an opportunity to earn extra credit with an end-of-semester essay.

Quizzes (30%): There will be five short quizzes throughout the semester. Students may consult all course materials and notes.

Discussion (30%): In predetermined groups, students will be responsible for presenting on and leading class discussion about secondary materials assigned by the instructor.

Commentary (30%): Students will write a 1,000-word essay responding to one of the secondary materials—not one that you led discussion about, but a different one.

Attendance (10%): I will take attendance at random.

Email Policy

Please feel free to email me with any questions; however, please include “Geog150” in the subject line.

Names and Pronouns

Everyone has the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, you will have the chance to indicate the name that you prefer to be called and to identify pronouns with which you would like to be addressed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly and support classmates in doing so as well.

Course Schedule

Week 1

- Friday, August 30 – Introductions

Week 2 – What is Geography? Part I

- Tuesday, September 3 – David Livingstone, “A ‘Sternly Practical’ Pursuit: Geography, Race, and Empire”
- Friday, September 6 – Ruth Wilson Gilmore, “Race and Globalization”

Week 3 – What Is Geography? Part II

- Tuesday, September 10 – Doreen Massey, “Uneven Development: Social Change and Spatial Divisions of Labour”
- Friday, September 13 – Neil Smith, “Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale”

Week 4

- Tuesday, September 17 – Lecture: Europe
- Friday, September 20 – Discussion
 - Ellen Meiskins Wood, excerpt from *The Origins of Capitalism*
 - Cedric Robinson, “Racial Capitalism” and “The English Working Class as the Mirror of Production” from *Black Marxism*

Week 5

- Tuesday, September 24 – Lecture: the Russian Federation, Central Asia, and the Transcaucasus
- Friday, September 27 – Discussion
 - China Mieville, “The Prehistory of 1917” in *October*
 - *Plus Electrification* (1972)

Week 6

- Tuesday, October 1 – Lecture: Middle East and North Africa
- Friday, October 4 – NO CLASS

Week 7

- Tuesday, October 8 – Discussion
 - Mike Davis, “Sand, Fear, and Money in Dubai” in *Evil Paradises*
 - Laleh Khalili, “Palimpsests of Law and Corporate Sovereigns” in *Sinews of War and Trade*
- Friday, October 11 – NO CLASS

Week 8

- Tuesday, October 15 – NO CLASS; MONDAY SCHEDULE
- Friday, October 18 – Lecture: Sub-Saharan Africa

Week 9

- Tuesday, October 22 – Discussion
 - Walter Rodney, “The Historical Roots of African Underdevelopment” in *Decolonial Marxism*
 - *Miners Shot Down* (2014)
- Friday, October 25 – Lecture: U.S. and Canada

Week 10

- Tuesday, October 29 – Discussion
 - Bobby Wilson, excerpts from *America’s Johannesburg*
 - Neil Smith, “Gentrification and Uneven Development”
- Friday, November 1 – Lecture: Latin America and the Caribbean

Week 11

- Tuesday, November 5 – Discussion
 - *Chicago Boys* (2015)
 - Eduardo Galeano, excerpt from *Open Veins of Latin America*
- Friday, November 8 – Lecture: East Asia

Week 12

- Tuesday, November 12 – Discussion
 - Pun Ngai, excerpt from *Made in China*
 - Kean Fan Lim, “Peasant Mobilization, the ‘Land Question’ and Spatial Egalitarianism in an Urbanizing China”
- Friday, November 15 – Lecture: South Asia

Week 13

- Tuesday, November 19 – Discussion

- o Rupal Oza, “Wrestling Women”
 - o *Shipbreakers* (2004)
- Friday, November 22 – Lecture: Southeast Asia

Week 14

- Tuesday, November 26 – Discussion
 - o Lamb et al., “Trading Sand, Undermining Lives: Omitted Livelihoods in the Global Trade in Sand”
 - o Vincent Bevins, excerpt from *The Jakarta Method*
- Friday, November 29 – NO CLASS

Week 15

- Tuesday, December 3 – Lecture: Oceania
- Friday, December 6 – Discussion
 - o Lisa Uperesa, excerpt from *Gridiron Capital*
 - o *Patu!* (1983)

Week 16

- Tuesday, December 10 – Final discussion
- Friday, December 13 – Reading day

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.

A Note on “AI”

I am not going to spend time trying to figure out if students are using so-called artificial intelligence to help write presentations or responses; however, what I will ask is that if you *do* use ChatGPT or similar software, that you explain to me how you used it and what it did for you that you couldn’t do on your own. Basically, I am asking you to show me your work.

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 AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure

necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: [\(212\) 772- 4857](tel:(212)772-4857) or [\(212\) 650-3230](tel:(212)650-3230).

Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are resources available at Hunter College to assist you. The Counseling and Wellness Services division at Student Affairs offer free and confidential short-term counseling to students. Please visit their website for all contact information: <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/cws/counselingservices/welcome>.

Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).

All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

For the full CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/diversityandcompliance/repository/files/cuny-policy-on-sexualmisconduct.pdf>