

GEOG 247 Cultural Geography Course Introduction

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SYLLABUS

GEOG 247 Cultural Geography

A thematic introduction to the principles and component parts of the geography of human presence on Earth.

- **Meeting times:** MON and THU from 1:10-2:25 PM
Classroom: Room 1022 North Bldg.
- **Instructor:** Anthony F. Grande
- **Contact Information:**
Email: agrande@hunter.cuny.edu
Office: Room 1032 North Building
Telephone: (212) 772-5265 or 5266
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Office Hours: Walk-in before and after class;
also by appointment.

SYLLABUS: Readings and Reference

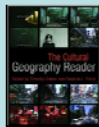
REQUIRED:

Terry Jordan-Bychkov et al. *Jordan's Fundamentals of the Human Mosaic: A Thematic Introduction to Cultural Geography, 2nd ed.* (WH Freeman, 2014)



Supplement:

T. Oakes and P. Price, editors.
The Cultural Geography Reader (Routledge, 2008)



Recommended :

Any world atlas that shows world and regional distribution of cultural themes such as the Goode's World Atlas and the National Geographic Collegiate Atlas of the World.

SYLLABUS: Objectives

- ✓ **To learn about the field of cultural geography and its parts** within the parameters of human geography, focusing on its unique combination of overarching themes.
- ✓ **To relate aspects of the physical environment to the development, distribution and works of people.**
- ✓ **To explore and use geographic data available on the Internet to illustrate aspects of the origin and spread of "culture."**
- ✓ **To analyze and interpret this information geographically.**
- ✓ **To make regional comparisons based on mapped, statistical and other spatial information.**
- ✓ **To apply geographic principles/reasoning to what we see.**

SYLLABUS: Grading

- Exams (30%)**
Two required exams worth 15 pts each focusing on definitions/principles.
- Topical Exercise Project (70%).** Instead of a required term paper you will complete five required topical exercises (14 pts each) which explore the five major themes in cultural geography.
- Extra Credit Options.** You don't have to do them.
 - Exam extra credit** (adds points to each exam).
 - Select one of the following;** adds up to 7 pts to your term average.
 - Discussion Paper.** Addresses a theory or issue or debate within cultural geography that is been **pre-approved** by me.
 - Research Paper.** Write on a specific topic under the umbrella of cultural geography that is been **pre-approved** by me.
 - "Geography in the News" Collection.** Find and explain the geography behind 14 current news items (June 2017-Dec 2017) with a cultural theme.
- Class participation:** Can only benefit your grade.
- Late penalty.**
 - A **half-grade reduction** will lower the earned score of any required work submitted after the due date.
 - Make up exams are essay format.
 - Extra credit work will not be accepted after the due date.

SYLLABUS

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Content of all lectures, reading assignments and handouts.
- Attend class lectures.
- Take both exams and submit all required work for grading. Extra credit is optional.
- Have access to the course Home Page via Geography Dept.'s web portal – NOT BlackBoard
- Get approval of any topic for extra credit work.
- Neat presentation of exams, required exercises and extra credit work.
- Knowledge of HC rules and regs which are strictly enforced.
- Awareness that **cheating and plagiarism are grounds for failure** and disciplinary action by the College.
- Register with the **AccessAbility Office** to qualify for accommodation.
- Report any sexual harassment.

CALENDAR for Fall 2017

Exam dates and work submission deadlines are subject to change.

- Mon., Aug. 28 First class meeting.
 - Mon., Sep. 04 Labor Day (No class)
 - Thu., Sep. 14 **Exercise 1 is due.**
 - TUESDAY, Sep. 19 >>> **THURSDAY SCHEDULE AT CUNY: WE MEET!**
 - Thu., Sep. 21 No class
 - Mon., Oct. 02 Tentative date of EXAM I
 - Thu., Oct. 05 **Exercise 2 is due**
 - Mon., Oct. 09 No class
 - Thu., Oct. 26 **Exercise 3 is due.**
 - Thu., Nov. 16 **Exercise 4 is due.**
 - Thu., Nov. 23 No class
 - Thu., Dec. 07 **Exercise 5 is due.**
- Last day** to hand in the pre-approved extra credit project (research paper/discussion paper)
- Mon., Dec. 11 Last class lecture.
 - Thu., Dec. 14 Exam II (Final Exam) from 1:45-3:45 PM. Note different time.
- Last day** to hand in Geography in the News extra credit assignment.

Penalty for late submission of an exercise.

ACCESSING COURSE MATERIAL

1. Access via Geography Dept Home Page
NOT on BlackBoard.
<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu> > Academic depts. > Geography
<http://www.geo.hunter.cuny.edu/courses/cwpages.html> > shortcut
2. Click on Course Syllabi
3. **GEOG 247**
4. Scroll down to our course number and click on the link.

ACCESSING COURSE MATERIAL

5. Access the links to get the material you wish to view or copy, including PowerPoint lecture presentations.

<http://www.geo.hunter.cuny.edu/courses/geog247-grande/index.html> Direct link to home page

Major Topics based on the Textbook

PART 1: The Basics

- Course Introduction
- Themes in Cultural Geography
- The Physical Base for Culture
- Folk and Popular Cultures – the Human Uniqueness

PART 2: Human Differentiation

- The Human Basis of Culture – Demographics
EXAM ONE (midterm)
- The Human Basis of Culture – Language, Ethnicity, Politics and Religion

PART 3: Human Imprint

- Agriculture and the Landscape
- Economic Development and the Landscape
- Urbanization and the Landscape
- Cultural Areas inside the City
EXAM TWO (final)

WHAT IS GEOGRAPHY?

❖ **Geography is the study of people living on the surface of the earth.**

- It studies the **interaction** of people with the physical elements of the natural environment (the physical landscape).
- The result is the creation of the **cultural environment or landscape** -- the “**human imprint on the natural environment.**”

Studying Geography

The **Five Fundamental Themes of Geography** as developed by the NCGE and AAG help us to do this.

1. Location
2. Place
3. Movement
4. Region
5. Human-Environment Interaction

The Five Fundamental Themes of Geography

Source: Michigan Geographic Alliance

All have a relationship to **Cultural Geography** when we look at people and their works.

FIVE FUNDAMENTAL THEMES

1. LOCATION

- Addresses the question: **Where?**

Absolute location = site

Relative location = situation

2. PLACE

- Addresses the **special features** of location that make it unique.

Includes size and physical and human characteristics (traits)

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Five Fundamental Themes

3. MOVEMENT

- Addresses the idea of **mobility** to, from and within a location. Also applies to **change**.

Studies the movement of people, goods and ideas.

Analyzes diffusion (or spread) from a point of origin.

4. REGION

- Addresses the **unifying factors** of location.

Identifies similar characteristics.

Studies formation and change over time.

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Five Fundamental Themes

5. HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

- Addresses the **relationships** within locations between people and the physical environment.

It includes aspects that create and shape a landscape:

- Perception
- Technology (tools)
- Decision making (location and land use)
- Impact

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Five Fundamental Themes

To the Five we add a sixth aspect:

Earth Science tradition of Geography

Addresses the processes, cycles and systems that constantly modify the natural world and therefore influence people and their works, creating unique human responses to natural phenomena which in turn help to create cultural phenomena.

These include:

- geologic and atmospheric processes.
- seasonal and ecological cycles.
- biomes and ecosystems.

CULTURE

➤ **The overarching theme of the course is human culture: development, impact and analysis.**

- ❑ What is “culture”?
- ❑ How is it defined in geography?
- ❑ How does culture impart or convey information about an area?

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Culture?

DEFINITIONS

1. Prepare for growing, as crops in soil.
2. Growth within a controlled setting, as in a lab.
3. Improvement of the mind and manners; intellectual.
4. Condition created by special training or circumstances, as a way of doing something.
5. Stage of development of a civilization; skills, arts and/or abilities of a people.

SYNONYMS

- Civilization
- Society
- Background
- Traditions
- Ethnicity
- Customs
- Philosophy
- Ways of life
- Sophistication
- The Arts
- Urbanity

VERBS

- To grow
- To cultivate
- To nurture

OTHER

- Folk culture
- Street culture
- Culture of giving (or fear or waste)
- Cultural symbolization
- Cultural backwater
- Culture shock

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COMPONENTS of CULTURE

❖ Is culture a part of the natural environment? Is it biological?

➤ **NO. It is learned.** It develops over time by imitation, instruction and example.

❖ Is culture homogenous?

➤ **NO. It varies.** It changes and evolves according to the whims of society both over time and by location.

❖ Is culture limited to one area of the earth (where it was created) or to one group of people?

➤ **NO. It is mobile.** Culture moves with the people who created it (from the hearth) and by their means to spread it (by diffusion).

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DEFINITION

According to the textbook **culture** is:

❖ *the learned collective human behavior; a total way of life held in common by a group of people, including learned features as speech, ideology, behavior, livelihood, technology and government.*

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WHAT IS CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY?

❖ **Cultural Geography is a major sub-discipline of human geography.**

➤ It looks at people and their works.

✓ It uses evidence-based social theories to study cultural practices and politics.

✓ It focuses on the spatial aspect of the location and movement of the innate characteristics and sensory expressions of cultural phenomena (sights, sounds and aromas).

✓ It studies the diversity of culture.

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DEFINITION

❖ **Cultural Geography** according to the textbook is:

the study of the spatial variations among culture groups and the spatial functioning of society.

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Underlining Themes of Cultural Geography

1. **Region** (area)
2. **Diffusion** (spread)
3. **Ecology** (physical environment)
4. **Interaction** (relationships)
5. **Landscape** (human imprint)

✓ These themes are the basis of the term project that consists of five topical exercises and are worth 70% of your final grade.

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Term Project: 5 Topical Exercises

Each exercise has **several parts**, including **maps and a bibliography**, and a **due date**. All parts of each exercise must be addressed for full credit.

Exercise 1: Human Adaptation (*Cultural Ecology*).

Select two areas from the list of unique locations and discuss the adaptations the people (culture groups) living there made to them.

Exercise 2: Spread of Cultural Phenomena (*Cultural Diffusion*).

Select a topic and through a series of maps show its linear and temporal movement from point of origin to present day spread.

Exercise 3: Complexity of Cultural Areas (*Cultural Interaction*).

Select two periods from the list of time eras and discuss a "cultural interaction" that occurred between people during those periods.

Exercise 4: Associated Images (*Cultural Landscape*).

Select one image for any 8 of the world regions listed and tell what makes people readily link that image with the world region (recognize its location).

Exercise 5: My Neighborhood (*Cultural Region*).

Select a neighborhood and describe it as a culture region.

Survey of Traditional Cuisine

Food products and the way we select them, prepare them, serve them and ingest them vary with habitat, abundance, technology and human values.

Food varies with culture.

Diet vs Cuisine?

Diet: Combination of foodstuffs ingested for nutritional gain.

Cuisine: a style or method of cooking food, especially as characteristic of a particular country, region, or establishment.

National (regional) Dish: a culinary dish associated with a particular country or area.

<https://travel.usnews.com/features/countries-that-eat-bugs>



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NEXT

DEFINING CULTURE
and
USING MAPS TO PORTRAY
CULTURAL ASPECTS

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