

Geography of the United States and Canada

Course Introduction

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SYLLABUS

Geography of U.S. and Canada

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- **Classroom:** Room 1022 North Bldg.

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REQUIRED BOOKS

- **1. Regional landscapes of the US and Canada** by Birdsell
 - 7th edition, 2009. John Wiley & Sons.
- **2. Atlas of American History**
 - Revised, 2011. Rand McNally.
- **3. Any folded road map of the United States**

RECOMMENDED

Any large, up-to-date atlas of the US and Canada

- Michelin North America Road Atlas 2012
- AAA North American Road Atlas 2012
- Rand McNally Road Atlas 2012

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OBJECTIVES

- **1. To learn about the geography of the United States and Canada, both its physical geography and human geography.**
- **2. To relate the physical environment to the distribution and works of its people (location).**
- **3. To understand its historical geography, especially the sequence of events that has created the present.**
- **4. To apply geographic principles and reasoning to past, present and future developments in the US and Canada.**

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GRADING

- **1. Exams (75%)**
 - 3 exams worth 25 pts each.
- **2. Landscape exercise (25%)**
 - Required internet-based exercise worth 25 pts that will explore the human and physical landscapes features found in the US and Canada.
- **3. Extra Credit Options**
 - Take-home exercise for the three exams.
 - Research paper (4 pages plus bibliography and illustrations) on a specific pre-approved topic.
 - **Geography in the News** exercise
- **4. Class participation**
 - Can only benefit your grade.
- **5. Late submission penalty**
 - A half-grade reduction will lower the earned score of any late submissions.

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SYLLABUS

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Content of all lectures, reading assignments and handouts.
2. Attend class lectures.
3. Take all exams and submit all required work for grading. Extra credit is optional.
4. Have access to the course Home Page via Geography Dept.'s web page.
5. Get approval of topic for extra-credit work.
6. Neat presentation of exams, required exercise and extra credit work.
7. Knowledge of college rules and regulations which are strictly enforced.
8. Awareness that cheating and plagiarism are grounds for failure and disciplinary action by the College.
9. Registration with the **AccessAbility** Office to qualify for accommodation.

CALENDAR for Spring 2013

- Jan. 29 First class meeting.
- Feb. 12 Lincoln's Birthday - NO classes
- **Feb. 14 Thursday. HC on a Tuesday schedule. WE MEET**
- Feb. 28 First Exam (tentative date)
 - > Last day to hand in the extra credit for the First Exam.
- Mar. 26 Spring break - NO classes
- Mar. 28 Spring break - NO classes
- Apr. 02 Spring break - NO classes
- Apr. 11 Second Exam (tentative date)
 - > Last day to hand in the extra credit for the Second Exam.
- May 7 Last day to hand in extra credit research paper.
- May 16 Last class lecture and last day to hand in the required **Landscape Exercise**.
- May 21 Final Exam 5:20 - 7:20 PM
 - > Last day to hand in the extra credit for the Final Exam.
 - > Last day to hand in the Geography in the News extra credit assignment.

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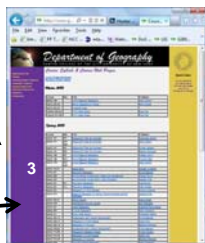
ACCESSING COURSE MATERIAL

1. Go to: <http://www.geography.hunter.cuny.edu>



2. Click on **Course Syllabi**.

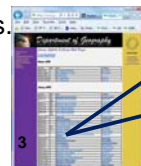
3. Click on **GEOG 251** access class material.



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Course Material

4. Scroll through the links to find the material you wish to view or copy, including lecture PowerPoint presentations.



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List of Chapter Topics

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Introduction | 10. Southern Coastlands |
| 2. Physical Environment and the Natural Landscape | 11. Agricultural Core |
| 3. Human Activity and the Cultural Landscape | 12. Great Plains and Prairies |
| EXAM ONE | EXAM TWO |
| 4. Megalopolis | 13. Empty Interior |
| 5. Manufacturing Core | 14. Southwest Border Area |
| 6. Canada's National Core | 15. California |
| 7. Bypassed East | 16. North Pacific Coast |
| 8. Appalachia and the Ozarks | 17. Northlands |
| 9. Changing South | 18. Hawaii |
| | EXAM THREE (FINAL) |
| | TUESDAY, MAY 21 |

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WHAT IS GEOGRAPHY?

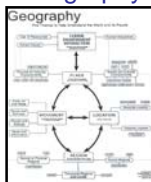
- **Geography is the study of people living on the surface of the earth.**
- It studies the *interaction* of people with the physical elements of the natural environment.
- The result is the creation of the **cultural environment** or **landscape** -- the "human imprint on the natural environment."

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What is Geography?

- All of this is done within the **Five Fundamental Themes of Geography** as developed by the NCGE and AAG.

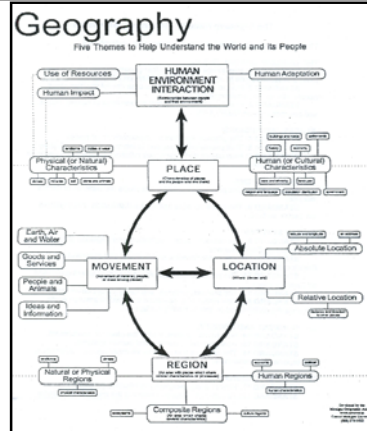
1. *Location*
2. *Place*
3. *Movement*
4. *Region*
5. *Human-Environment Interaction*



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Five Fundamental Themes of Geography

Source: Michigan Geographic Alliance



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 (landscapes)

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Five Fundamental Themes

3. MOVEMENT

- Addresses the idea of mobility to, from and within a location.

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.

- > Perception
- > Technology (tools)
- > Land use and location decisions
- > Impact

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Five Fundamental Themes

To the Five we add the

Earth Science Tradition of Geography

- Addresses the processes, cycles and systems that constantly modify the natural world and therefore influence people.

These include:

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

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GEOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGIES

Geographers study the earth in a number of different ways.

Time reference:

- Past
- Present
- Future

Viewpoints:

- Physical - Human
- Topical - Regional
- Descriptive - Analytical

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Geographic Methodologies

Geography of the Present

- Studies current conditions, interrelationships and happenings.
- It focuses on today.
- It goes back in time to set the scene.
- It evaluates the present for future interactions.

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Geographic Methodologies

Geography of the Past

- *Historical Geography* looks at and analyzes the conditions that have led to or influenced the actions of people over time.
- It emphasizes developmental processes.
- It studies change.

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Geographic Methodologies

Geography of the Future

- *Regional and Urban Planning* uses the knowledge gained from the past and present to make assumptions about the future.

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Geographic Methodologies

All three (past, present and future)

- are studied from geographic dualisms
points of view: physical-human, topical-regional, descriptive-analytical
- use geographic research methods to **gather and analyze data:** field work, library research, remotely gathered information, and data analysis software programs.
- use cartographic methods and GIS to **portray information spatially:** mapping

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GOOGLE MAPS

<http://maps.google.com/maps>

- Using **Google Maps** you can get a bird's eye view of present-day US and Canada.
- Start off with the "SATELLITE" view and then zoom in on various areas of the continent.
- Switch to "MAPS" view.
- Under "MORE" click on "TERRAIN" to see 3-D representation.

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WHAT IS A REGION?

- A **region** is a part of the earth exhibiting **similar traits**. Dividing the world up into regions helps us to bring order to a diverse planet.
- **All regions have**
 1. Location (an area on the earth)
 2. Spatial Extent (the area that can be measured)
 3. Boundaries (the area can be enclosed; most are "fuzzy")

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Region

As part of location, spatial extent and boundaries **all regions exhibit:**

Core: point of origin exhibiting the most intense representation of its characteristics

Domain: surrounding core, still majority feature

Sphere: area oriented to the core with a gradual tapering toward regional boundary

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REGIONS of the US and Canada as identified by the textbook.

Regions can overlap each other and/or blend into each other.

Characteristics of a region may, can and do change over time.



Regions

All regions also have

4. Categorization

- a) formal (or uniform)
- b) functional (or nodal)
- c) vernacular (or mental)

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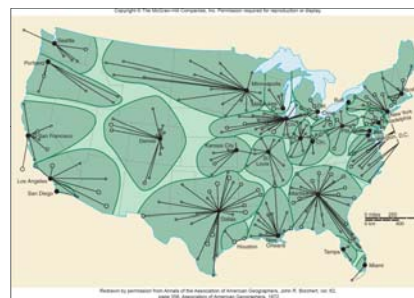
Formal Region



ALSO
Climate region
Landform region
Ecoregion
Agricultural region
Cultural region

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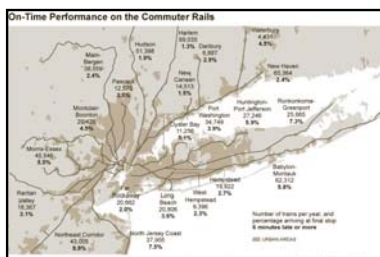
Functional Region



Functional regions based on banking centers.

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Functional Region



NYC-focused transportation region.

ALSO
Banking region
Delivery area
Cell phone coverage

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Vernacular or Perceptual (mental) Region



US regions as defined by students from Ohio (Fig. 1.1 in textbook)

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Vernacular or Perceptual (mental) Region

The Midwest region is defined differently by people.



(a) John H. Garfield, ed., *The North American Midwest*, New York: Wiley, 1955. (b) John H. Garfield and Jane McGugin, *Geography of the New World*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1961, and (c) P. Stanley and J. Lewis Robinson, *The Anglo-American Realm*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969.

ALSO
Bible Belt
Good neighborhood
Rust Belt

What is your definition of Long Island, NY?

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Regions

All regions also have

5. Hierarchical Arrangement

- a) major (includes smaller regions)
- b) minor (parts of larger regions)

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Hierarchy of Regions



Regions within regions within regions.

The State of Delaware, the Delaware shore and Rehoboth Bay Watershed are smaller regions.



Mid-Atlantic, East Coast, and North America are larger regions.

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