

**POSTCARDS FROM AMERICA:
A Geographer's View of Changing Landscapes**

LESSON PLAN RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT
(Exam Replacement for Education Sequence MA and History MA Students)

- ❖ **This classroom presentation will take the historical geography approach to landscape development. It will provide a basis for discussion of how people have influenced landscape development by the process of diffusion (taking things from one area and establishing them in another area after they have relocated there). You are deconstructing a present-day landscape for your students to assess by looking at how it became what it is today.**

- **For this class the focus is on an aspect of the visible cultural landscape.** Present landscape development over time within the framework of the five fundamental themes of geography. You can focus on just one or two themes. In addition, address the topic within the physical, cultural, political, economic and/or social context that it is found.

- **Begin by identifying a topic that has historic roots outside of the area in question;** then research it. Use Colten & Buckley “North American Odyssey” as an initial research tool taking advantage of the chapter bibliographies.

- **Look at the influence people's actions have had on landscape development in one area of the US or Canada.** Create a time line. Collect illustrations, especially before and after images.

- **Describe why the findings are important or meaningful or distressing or encouraging.** This is an opportunity to interject what the results mean to you and what they contribute to both the specific area of study and the bigger picture. It also becomes a catalyst for classroom discussion.

- **Think critically.** Discuss the limitations and alternative explanations for the results you found or the actual appearance of the landscape. No study is perfect; it is OK to disagree as long as it is backed by evidence.

- **End by indicating future directions for discussion/investigation** or what you would like to see studied. This is a good way to finish the written discussion and to get a verbal discussion going. **Be sure to include two questions you would use to start a discussion AND explain why these are important questions.**

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- a. **Read** “*North American Odyssey: Historical Geographies for the 21st Century*” edited by Colten and Buckley.
- b. **Select** an example from the book to become the basis of research to create a lesson plan.
- c. **Use content** from any of the “landscape” titles to enhance your discussion.
- d. **Do the following for the project which will have both written and classroom presentation portions:**

1. **Identify** a topic for the project that interests you and you feel comfortable to present to the class.
2. **Research** the subject to find material that is appropriate to your topic. (Each book on the reading list has a bibliography.) These can be classics or recent studies or current events articles.
3. **Present** the information/scenario to the reader. (Photographs/images, maps and diagrams may be helpful to you in presenting your discussion.)
4. **Comment** upon the situation in discussion format **within 7-9 pages of text**. This can be from your point of view or that of the geographic community or a field of experts. *No discussion is wrong*. However, any statement made needs to be backed by facts and presented in a logical way. Grading is based on this.
5. **Include** a bibliography of works consulted on a separate page. (Remember to use footnotes or endnotes within the text.)
6. **Provide me with a working draft copy by the date of the second undergraduate exam. Late submission of this phase will be penalized.**
7. **Present the topic to the class by May 12, 2017** and lead a discussion on the topic. PowerPoint slides and/or handouts can support your presentation (about 20 minutes total).
8. **Final written presentation of research and the final version of PowerPoint slides are due by the date of the undergraduate final exam. Late submission will be penalized.**
9. **Grading** will take into account both written and classroom presentation, logic of discussion and supporting material.