

THE GEOGRAPHY OF LONG ISLAND
Geographic Issues Facing Long Island, NY
Addendum to the Syllabus

COURSE:

Geography of Long Island focuses on the geographic and environmental aspects of the largest island off the coast of the United States outside of Alaska and Hawaii. Since geography is both a physical and social science, knowledge of the basic concepts of earth systems is important for us to better explain and analyze human interaction with them. Long Island has been shaped by both its physical characteristics and the people who have settled and developed the island since the early 1600s.

GOALS:

The goals of the course are: **(1)** to learn about the geography of Long Island – its physical environment, the distribution of its people and their activities, and the interrelationships between the people and the environment; **(2)** to explore, navigate through, and use the geographic information available on the Internet, especially the information provided by the State of New York, City of New York, and Nassau and Suffolk counties; and **(3)** to become geographically literate when dealing with issues affecting Long Island and its people as we plan for the future.

Upon the successful completion of this course, you will be able to relate the cultural landscape of Long Island to its physical characteristics, make informed decisions using geographic principles and spatial concepts, navigate the Internet to find geographic information and maps of Long Island and, have a credible voice when participating in planning exercises.

FORMAT:

Throughout the semester we will discuss numerous issues facing Long Island, focusing on ten in class. Prior to each scheduled discussion, students are to familiarize themselves with the topic by gathering background material and coming up with two pros and two cons or two important facts that can be used to add to the discussion. The class as a whole will analyze the issue presented.

List of Discussion Topics (subject to revision)

DATE - TOPIC

1. 02/14 - Creating a 51st state (or a 63rd county).
2. 02/23 - Reacting to rising sea level.
3. 02/28 - Sustaining open space.
4. 03/07 - Connecting Long Island to the mainland.
5. 03/14 - Preserving the “Gold Coast” estates.
6. 03/28 - Providing Long Island residents with power
7. 04/04 - Viewing Levittown 60 years Later
8. 04/11 - Dealing with the changing demographics.
9. 05/02 - Encouraging commercial development in eastern Long Island.
10. 05/09 - Evaluating the legacy of Robert Moses on Long Island.

GRADING:

Grading is based on: two exams (15% each = 30% of the grade), five short discussion papers or essays which focus on selective issues facing Long Island residents (8% each = 40%) and one short topical term paper (30%). Graduate students have the option to do an in-class presentation in lieu of one exam. Active participation in classroom discussion is a plus. Check with me about extra credit for field work, museum visits and special research projects.