

**GEOGRAPHY 561
H(3-0) Area II**

Critical Debates in Cultural Geography

Instructor: Dr. Denise Fay Brown

OFFICE: ES 444

EMAIL: dfbrown@ucalgary.ca

OFFICE HOURS: THURSDAYS 10-11 or by appointment

Official Course Description:

In-depth discussion of key topical issues and points of debate in the field, including methodological issues, points of theoretical conflict among the subfields of Geography, moral or ethical issues in Geography.

NOTE: Offered in odd-even dated academic years

Prerequisite:

Geography 361

Supplementary Fees: (*field trips etc*). N/A

Introduction

This seminar is designed to explore the breadth and depth of the sub-field of cultural geography. The primary goal of the seminar is to encourage students to develop, expand, and critique their conceptions about the production and interpretation of culture and space. The student will problematize the role that culture and space play in the constitution of society, identity, and place, and will look at how cultural geographers interpret and critique space. Students will examine the major debates in this subfield emerging from the contested definition of “culture”, the modernity/postmodernity debate, and feminist approaches. Students will trace the emergence of this subfield through an examination of the scholarship of selected distinguished cultural geographers. Students will evaluate research in the field. Assignments are intended to introduce students to the writing style, research interests, and mind set of scholars specializing in the “new” cultural geography. Students will critically examine recent publications in this sub-field, which will introduce them to the themes and design of contemporary research. This seminar provides students with the opportunity to work at developing a command of the fastest-growing sub-field within the greater discipline of geography.

The seminar has several objectives:

- Develop critical thinking and intellectual discussion.
- Trace the emergence of the “new” cultural geography.
- Introduce dominant themes and topics in cultural geography.
- Introduce research design and research methods in cultural geography.
- Encourage responsibility for independent learning.
- Exercise and develop reading, writing and verbal skills.

Fulfilling these objectives will enable the student to:

- Situate his/her own research in the larger theoretical and topical contexts of cultural geography and cultural theory.

- Understand the emergence of theory in the “new” cultural geography, and the state-of-the-art in this new subfield
- Better articulate his/her opinions, interpretations and arguments in both verbal and written form.

Readings:

- Readings will be posted on the BLACKBOARD site, available at the RESERVE desk of the library, or cited with ONLINE information.

Course requirements

- **Seminars- 30%:**

a) *Preparation of assigned readings* (4 reaction papers and leading class discussion on assigned readings, 5% each): 20%

Four times during the semester you will do a 2-4 page critical review of a reading. For these assignments you will be expected to give a short summary or description of the text that you are reviewing (no more than a paragraph or two highlighting the main argument of the reading). Note: It should not simply summarize the reading (though some summary might be useful, especially with difficult readings) but should raise some questions about the reading that you would like to address in class.

b) *Participation in class*- 10%:

You will be expected to participate in class discussions with your own analyses or appreciations of the assigned readings, pointing out strengths and weaknesses of the readings, major contributions (new thoughts) introduced by the authors, etc.

- **Paper, due March 1, 2007- 35%:**

Paper and presentation on assigned Great Thinker in cultural geography: paper 25%, presentation and participation in session: 10% (approximate expected paper length: 3000 words, presentation: 20 minutes)

Each student will be assigned a “great thinker” in the cultural geography of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The student will review this individual’s contributions to the field, including the roots of his/her ideas, the evolution of these ideas through his/her career, and the impact that his/her ideas have had in the field (ie on forming the ideas of other researchers).

- **Paper, due April 11, 2007- 35%:**

Paper and presentation on approved either (a) theme of research in cultural geography or (b) proposal for an empirical research study in cultural geography: paper 25%, presentation and participation in session: 10% (approximate expected paper length: 3000 words, presentation 20 minutes)

As a final project, students will choose one of two possibilities: a) choose a specific theme of research in cultural geography and explore the debates surrounding the theme, the results of research on the theme, and the current state-of-the-art thinking on the theme, or (b) develop a research question and proposal including methodology for an empirical project in cultural geography.

Grading System:

96-100	A+	77-80	B	59-61	C-
90-95	A	71-76	B-	55-58	D+
86-89	A-	65-70	C+	50-54	D
81-85	B+	62-64	C	0-49	F

For additional detailed course information posted by the Instructor see Blackboard at:
<http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/>

Plagiarism

Academic dishonesty is not an acceptable activity at the University of Calgary and students are **strongly advised** to read the Student Misconduct section in the University Calendar. Quite often, students are unaware of what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism. The most common are 1) presenting another student's work as your own 2) presenting an author's work or ideas as your own without proper referencing and 3) using work completed for another course. This activity will not be tolerated in this course and students conducting themselves in this manner will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the calendar.

Disability Resource Centre Accommodations

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

Re: Posting of Grades and Picking-up of Assignments

- All assignments will be handles on Blackboard.
- Their own grades will be available to each student on Blackboard by password access. Grades will **not** be available at Geography's main office.

Contact Information for Student and Faculty Representation

- SU VP Academic Phone: 220-3911 and e-mail: suypaca@ucalgary.ca
- SU Faculty Rep. Phone: 220-3913 and e-mail: socialsciirep@su.ucalgary.ca

Campus Safewalk

Campus Security, in partnership with the Students' Union, provides the Safewalk service, 24 hours a day, to any location on Campus including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones and University residences. Contact Campus Security at 220-5333 or use a help phone, and Safewalkers or a Campus Security officer will accompany you to your Campus destination.