

GEOGRAPHY FINAL COURSE OUTLINE: FALL 2019

GEOGRAPHY 697.01 H(3-0)

Seminar in the Philosophy and Nature of Human Geography

Section	Days	Time	Location
LEC 01	We	14:00 – 16:45	ES 332

Instructor: Byron Miller	Office: ES 328
Telephone: 220 7321	Email: bavrmill@ucalgary.ca

Please note: The appropriate emergency evacuation assembly point for courses taught in Earth Sciences is the ICT Food Court.

Official Course Description:

The course will be structured as follows:

- I. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science: *what is science?* Inductive reasoning and its place in science; theory as the base for method (deduction); theory and validation (verification and falsification); dialectical reasoning, hermeneutics.
- II. Conceptions of Social Science: *a science of human behavior?* Human nature; materialism and idealism; approaches to social science (positivism, realism and poststructuralism); understanding and explaining human action.
- III. The Basic Forms of Geographical Inquiry: *are space and spatial differences important?* The meanings of space and spatiality; basic and distinct forms geographical study.
- IV. Objectivity and Values in Social Science: *should the social sciences seek to be objective?* The meanings of objectivity and the role of subjectivity; social justice and values, ethical standpoints.
- V. Can Geography be considered a unified discipline?

Course Objectives

Philosophies of science and theories of social and physical processes underlie our understandings of how the world works, i.e., what the prime causes of various processes are, what entities are crucial to examine, how they relate to each other, how we can study and know them, etc. Philosophies of science and theories of social and physical processes are often inter-related: our ontological assumptions and epistemologies set the limits of what we believe it is possible to know.

Philosophy and theory, together, are foundational to knowledge construction. The crucial question, then, is not whether one relies on philosophy and theory, but rather what type of philosophy and what type of theory, and what the implications of one's philosophical and theoretical assumptions are for constructing geographical knowledge. Since the beginning of the 20th century there have been several major debates within geography, each representing shifts in the philosophical and theoretical bases for geographical research. Many of these debates are on-going--some of them hot and heavy. In this course we will examine the major debates and shifts that have taken place in geography over the past century.

The assigned readings and class discussions should give you a good basis for understanding the wide range of research being conducted in geography today, as well as help you reflect on the ontologies, epistemologies, theories that may guide your own research

Prerequisite: Consent of the Department

Learning Resources

Required Texts (most can be inexpensively purchased used):

Hollis, Martin (2010) The Philosophy of Social Science, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Peet, Richard (1998) Modern Geographical Thought, Oxford and Malden: Blackwell.

Sayer, Andrew (2010) Method in Social Science, New York and Oxon: Routledge.

Additional required readings will be posted to D2L

Highly Recommended Supplemental Texts:

You may find it helpful to read the short overviews of the major reading topics in the Dictionary of Human Geography. These overviews should help you to identify the issues to focus on in the readings and are an invaluable resource for graduate students. As of March 2017 the AAG International Encyclopedia of Geography: People, Earth, Environment, and Technology became available--it is now the standard reference source for Geography. The library has it--you'll find it useful.

Livingstone, D. (1992) The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise, Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell. (**very highly recommended**)

Gregory, Derek, Ron Johnston, Geraldine Pratt, and Michael Watts (eds) (2009) The Dictionary of Human Geography, Oxford and Malden: Wiley-Blackwell. (you should be able to **find a pdf on-line**)

Agnew, J., D. Livingstone, and A. Rogers (eds) (1996) Human Geography: an Essential Anthology, Oxford: Blackwell.

Castree, N., A. Rogers, D. Sherman (eds) (2005) Questioning Geography: Fundamental Debates, Oxford and Malden: Blackwell. (an upper level undergraduate book, but a good introduction)
<http://www.muthar-alomar.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Questioning-Geography.pdf>

Gregory, Derek (1993) Geographical Imaginations, Oxford and Malden: Blackwell.

Harvey, D. (1997) Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference, Oxford and Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Livingstone, D. (2003) Putting Science in Its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Course Format and Grading (Weighting):

This course revolves around discussion of the assigned readings (listed below). Prior to each class you will need to read the assigned readings and write a brief (approximately 2 to 3 page) reaction paper. Your reaction papers should touch on the major issues raised in the readings and then focus on one or two issues that are of particular interest to you. Your reaction papers need not be comprehensive (in fact, they probably can't be comprehensive). You will most likely find some of the reading challenging, not unlike your first venture into statistics, GIS, economics, or chemistry. Please do not bang your head against the wall! I do not expect you to come to class with a perfect understanding of all the nuances of the readings. Make a good faith effort to understand the major points of the readings and then come to class prepared to ask

questions and discuss. Your reaction papers count for 40 per cent of your grade.

Your lowest reaction paper score will be dropped. If you want to replace a reaction paper score, you will also have an opportunity to view and review a film (e.g., *The Botany of Desire*) which deals with a major issue in geographical knowledge construction; a film review may be used to replace another reaction paper score.

Discussion is extremely important in this seminar and you are expected to attend and participate in all class meetings. Class discussion is a significant part of your grade (20 per cent). Absence will be excused in the case of death in the family or illness (hopefully neither of these will occur!), with documentation, please.

The remainder of your grade (40 per cent) is based on an approximately 15 page (plus bibliography) seminar paper. Your paper may be on any topic of your choosing related to philosophical or theoretical issues in geography. You could, for instance, choose to write on debates over the role of structure and agency in socio-spatial processes, contrasting approaches to landscape interpretation, varieties of feminist geography, social understandings of climate change, prospects for the unification of human and physical geography, or innumerable other topics. You could also choose to pick one of the weekly topics of this course and address it in more detail. I highly recommend that you meet with me (preferably early in the semester) to discuss your topic so that we can be sure that it is well focused and do-able in one semester. I will be happy to provide you with feedback on your paper--including comments on early drafts--over the course of the semester. Your paper should draw from at least 16 scholarly sources, at least 8 of which should be in addition to the assigned readings. The paper is due Friday, December 13.

Exemptions to the Examination and Tests Regulations (if applicable)

Instructors are required to follow university regulations regarding Examinations and Tests, which are specified in the University Calendar at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g.html There are no examinations in this course.

Grading System

A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
A	4.00	Excellent-superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject
A-	3.70	↑
B+	3.30	
B	3.00	Good
B-	2.70	minimally satisfactory
C+	2.30	unsatisfactory for graduate level study

and below

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be marked down 5% per day late. Exceptions will be made in the case of illness or death in the family.

Supplementary Fees

There are no supplementary fees.

For additional detailed course information posted by the instructor, visit the course Desire2Learn page online at <https://d2l.ucalgary.ca/d2l/home>.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Principles of Conduct

The University Calendar includes a statement on the principles of conduct expected of all members of the university community (including students, faculty, administrators, any category of staff, practicum supervisors, and volunteers), whether on or off university property. This statement applies in all situations where members of the university community are acting in their university capacities. All members of the university community have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the principles of conduct statement, which is available at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html.

Plagiarism, Cheating, and Student Misconduct

The University of Calgary is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect.

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 at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html. 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 adequate citation, and (3) using work completed for another course. Such activities will not be tolerated in this course, and students suspected of academic misconduct will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the calendar at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Information on Instructor Intellectual Property can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/Intellectual%20Property%20Policy.pdf>

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation in Alberta disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, such as outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc. Term assignments will be returned to students individually, during class or during the instructor's office hours; if students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they must provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Human subjects

Students will not participate as subjects or researchers in human subject research as part of this course.

Internet and electronic communication device information

There are no restrictions on the use of laptops and tablets in class if they are used to take notes or find information relevant to the class, and if there is no disturbance or distraction of other students or the instructor. Phones must be turned off during class, unless you have previously identified yourself to the instructor as a health care or law enforcement professional.

Posting of Grades and Picking-up of Assignments

Graded assignments will be returned by the instructor or teaching assistant personally during scheduled lecture or laboratory periods, unless they are made available electronically through the course D2L webpage. Grades and assignments will not be available at the Department of Geography's main office.

Academic Accommodations

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations, according to the university policies and procedures listed in the University Calendar.

The student accommodation policy can be found at: www.ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf.

Students needing an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need, preferably in writing to their instructor or the Department Head (email: david.goldblum@ucalgary.ca).

Documentation for Absences or Missed Course Assessments

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform the instructor as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

Copyright Legislation

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Act.

Wellness and Mental Health Resources

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness, and academic success and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support, or skills-building available through the SU Wellness Centre (Room 370, MacEwan Student Centre, <https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/services/mental-health-services>) and the Campus Mental Health Strategy website (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>).

Contact Information for Student and Faculty Representation

- Student Union VP Academic 403-220-3911, suypaca@ucalgary.ca
- Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts – 403-220-3913, arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca
- Student Ombuds Office information can be found at: www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/

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 station, 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.