GEO 3421-U01
CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY
Fall 2009

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Class specs: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:15
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:00

Course description: This course provides an overview of the field of Cultural Geography. You will be introduced to the full breadth of classic and contemporary writings by cultural geographers, as well as scholars in cognate disciplines. You will utilize brief contemporary writings, Internet-based materials, and classroom discussions to illustrate and extend core course themes presented in the Reader.

Learning objectives: At the end of this course you will have a broad overview of the field of cultural geography. You will be able to identify the key scholars, themes, and terms utilized by cultural geographers. You will be able to apply key terms and themes to understanding the cultural world around you. Your critical thinking, discussion, and writing skills will improve.

Course materials:

⇒ Blog: http://culturalgeographygeo3421.blogspot.com/
⇒ Additional brief readings TBA.

We will use The Cultural Geography Reader as our primary written resource for this course. It is available at the bookstore, or online, for around $53 new or cheaper used. I wrote this book because I wanted to use it in my classes. However, by assigning it to my students, I also earn royalties on sales of the book. Royalties are around $3.50 per book sold, and I split royalties with my co-editor. Given the obvious conflict of interest, I donate $300 per year – far beyond what I earn on this Reader! – to the Department of Global & Socio-Cultural Studies, which is distributed as awards to graduating majors.

The blog will be the main way that I distribute materials to you, and how we communicate with each other outside of our face-to-face time in the classroom. You will receive an invitation to join my blog during the first week of class, sent to the email address you give me on the first day. If you do not already have a Google account, you will need to set one up, because my blog is hosted on Google. You will use your Google username and password to log into my blog. Bookmark it in your favorites for easy access.
Additional readings will be of a newspaper or popular press variety, and I’m still in the process of digging those up. They will be distributed to you as links through my blog. This reading will be fun and ‘lite’ … enough heavy lifting already with the Reader!

Ground rules: The first thing you will do in this course is access the course blog. The second thing you will do is print out this syllabus and bring it to class on Thursday, August 27. The third thing you will do is read through all the blog postings, and reply to the posting that says “Classroom Contract”. Your reply will consist of the following text: “I have read all of the blog postings to-date and the syllabus handed out in class, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures that govern this course.” This will constitute our agreement.

In general I expect you to behave in a courteous and age-appropriate fashion. Respect yourself, your fellow students, and your professor. Details are posted on the course blog:
- Late work and coursework make-up policy: blog post dated August 24, 2009
- Attendance policy: blog post dated August 21, 2009
- Study skills: blog post dated August 20, 2009
- Electronic media in the classroom policy: blog post dated August 20, 2009
- Netiquette: blog post dated August 20, 2009
- Disability Services at FIU: blog post dated August 20, 2009
- Academic misconduct: blog post dated August 13, 2009

Grading: Ah, the age-old questions. Where does my grade come from? What’s the grading scale? Do you curve? Is there extra credit? Your questions … answered.

Components of your final grade are as follows:
- 3 exams @ 20 points each = 60 possible points
- 3 field notes projects @ 10 points each = 30 points
- 2 discussions @ 5 points each = 10 points

Total points possible: 100

Grade scale is standard. What you see is what you get, so, no, I don’t curve (‘curving’ forces equal proportions of ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘D’, and ‘F’ grades to be assigned).

A: 93%-100%  C: 73%-76%
A-: 90%-92%  C-: 70%-72%
B+: 87%-89%  D+: 67%-69%
B: 83%-86%  D: 63%-66%
B-: 80%-82%  D-: 60%-62%
C+: 77%-79%  F: Below 60%

Exams are short answer and brief essay questions. You will not need to bring a blue book.

“Field notes” projects involve an activity that requires you to conduct a field exploration in Miami, and write up your notes. The activities will be posted on the blog by the dates stated in
the week-by-week schedule (below). The format for field notes is posted on the blog (dated August 25).

We will be discussing a total of 31 readings (not including readings assigned for Week 2). During Week 2, I will assign each of you two readings for which you and another student (in some cases, three total students) will be responsible for introducing to the class. Prepare to present the article’s main points (summarize), key terms (list), and why it’s relevant to cultural geography. Be brief – 5 minutes only, and turn your typed notes in at the end of class. You and your partner(s) will be assessed on accuracy (3 pts) and clarity (2 pts) and will receive the same grade.

There will be very limited opportunities for extra credit for this course that may require your participation outside of regularly-scheduled classes (for example, guest lectures). These will be announced as (and if) they arise. Don’t rely on extra credit to get your desired grade; instead, attend class regularly, participate, and meet your deadlines.

See the “late work and coursework make-up policy” on the blog for specifics on those issues.
Week-By-Week Schedule

*Note: check the Google Calendar (dynamic blog post dated August 17, 2009) frequently for any changes to syllabus deadlines, additions, or updates.

Week One: course overview and introduction
* Cultural Geography Reader (heretofore, CGR) readings for this week: “Introduction” (pp. 1-8)
  - August 25: Introductions, sign-up for blog access.
    - At home: read all blog posts, and post your reply to the “Course Contract” thread (see mandatory reply text, in the “ground rules” section above). Print out syllabus. Purchase Reader if not done already.
  - August 27: Course overview. Bring syllabus to class.
    - At home: begin your readings for this week and next. Remember: finish readings before the week they are assigned.

Week Two: Segment One begins. Themes: Culture, history of cultural geography, landscape.
* CGR readings for this week: Part One: “Introduction” (pp. 11-13), “Culture” by Raymond Williams (pp. 15-19); “Thick Description” by Clifford Geertz (pp. 29-39), and “Beyond ‘Culture’” by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (pp. 60-67)
  - September 1: What is culture, cultural geography, and why study them?
  - September 3: Ed Soja lectures at UM Campus, 3:00. 1 extra credit point available to those who attend the whole thing and make an informed comment via blog post afterward.

Week Three: Segment One continues
* CGR readings for this week: Part Two: “Introduction” (pp. 79-82), “Culture” by Friedrich Ratzel (pp. 83-89), “The Physiogamy of France” by Paul Vidal de la Blache (pp. 90-95), “The Morphology of Landscape” by Carl Sauer (pp. 96-104), and “Process” by Wilbur Zelinsky (pp. 113-122)
  - September 8: discuss Ratzel and Vidal de la Blache
  - September 10: discuss Sauer and Zelinsky

Week Four: Segment One continues
* CGR readings for this week: Part Three: “Introduction” (pp. 149-152), “The Word Itself” by J.B. Jackson (pp. 153-158), “California” by Don Mitchell (pp. 159-164), “Geography is Everywhere” by Denis Cosgrove (pp. 176-185), and “Reconfiguring” by Michael Bull (pp. 194-200)
  - September 15: discuss Jackson and Mitchell
  - September 17: discuss Cosgrove and Bull
    - At home: field notes project #1 distributed on blog by 12 noon Friday September 18.

Week Five: Segment One ends
Readings: TBA

- September 22: Case Study: looking at landscape
  - At home: **Field notes project #1 due** by 11:59 PM Wednesday September 23 on turnitin.com
- September 24: **Exam #1**

**Week Six: Segment Two begins. Themes: Nature, identity, and belonging**
*CGR* readings for this week: Part Four: “Introduction” (pp. 203-206), “Nature” by Raymond Williams (pp. 207-211), “Living Outdoors” by Ajax (pp. 220-223), “Nature at Home” by Alexander Wilson (pp. 224-231), and “Le Pratique Sauvage” by Glen Elder et al. (pp. 241-249)

- September 29: discuss Williams and Ajax
- October 1: discuss Wilson and Elder et al.

**Week Seven: Segment Two continues**
*CGR* readings for this week: Part Five: “Introduction” (pp. 253-256), “A Global Sense of Place” by Doreen Massey (pp. 257-263), “New Cultures for Old?” by Stuart Hall (pp. 264-274), “National Geographic” by Liisa Malkki (pp. 275-282), and “Shades of Shit” by Keith Basso (pp. 283-286)

- October 6: discuss Massey and Hall
- October 8: discuss Malkki and Basso

**Week Eight: Segment Two continues**
*CGR* readings for this week: Part Six: “Introduction” (pp. 307-309), “The Stranger” by Georg Simmel (pp. 311-315), “The Production of Mobilities” by Tim Cresswell (pp. 325-333), “Of Nomads and Vagrants” by Jon May (pp. 334-342), and “The Tourist at Home” by Lucy Lippard (pp. 343-350)

- October 13: discuss Simmel and Cresswell
- October 15: discuss May and Lippard

**Week Nine: Segment Two continues**
Readings: TBA

- October 20: Case study: language
- October 22: Finish case study, discuss field notes project #2
  - At home: **field notes project #2 distributed** on blog by 12 noon Friday October 23.

**Week Ten: Segment Two ends**
Readings: none

- October 27: film
  - At home: **Field notes project #2 due** by 12 midnight Wednesday October 28 on turnitin.com
October 29: **Exam #2**

**Week Eleven: Segment Three begins.** Themes: Difference, culture as resource

*CGR* readings for this week: Part Seven, “Introduction” (pp. 353-355), “Imaginative Geography and its Representations” by Edward Said (pp.357-364), “Mapping the Pure and the Defiled” by David Sibley (pp. 380-387), and “Some Thoughts on Close(t) Spaces” by Robyn Longhurst (pp. 388-394)

- November 3: discuss Said
- November 5: discuss Sibley and Longhurst

**Week Twelve: Segment Three continues**

*CGR* readings for this week: Part Seven, “On not Excluding Half of the Human” by Jan Monk and Susan Hanson (pp. 365-372), “Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination” by bell hooks (pp. 373-379), “Contested Terrain” by Gill Valentine (pp. 395-401), and “The Geography Club” by Brent Hartinger (pp. 402-407)

- November 10: discuss Monk and Hanson, and hooks
- November 12: discuss Valentine and Hartinger

**Week Thirteen: Segment Three Continues**

*CGR* readings for this week: Part Eight, “Introduction” (pp. 411-412), “Whose Culture? Whose City?” by Sharon Zukin (pp. 431-438), “The Invention of Regional Culture” by Meric Gertler (pp. 439-447), “Destination Museum” by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (pp. 448-456), and “Performing Work” by Linda McDowell and Gill Court (pp. 457-465)

- November 17: discuss Zukin and Gertler
- November 19: discuss Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, and McDowell and Court

**Week Fourteen: Segment Three Continues**

Readings: TBA

- November 24: Case study: race, ethnicity, and immigration
  - At home: **field notes project #3 distributed** on blog by 12 noon Wednesday November 25.
- November 26: Thanksgiving Holiday, no class

**Week Fifteen: Segment Three ends**

Readings: none

- December 1: Course wrap-up, exam review, and evaluations.
  - At home: **Field notes project #3 due** by 12 midnight Wednesday December 2 on turnitin.com
- December 3: **Exam #3**

**Week Sixteen: Finals week – no class.**
If you have no exam make-ups, you are done! Grades to be posted on PantherSoft no later than December 16.

- **Make-up exam**: in-class, date TBA by Registrar’s Office