



Department of Geography & Environmental Sustainability
University of Oklahoma
Autumn 2016

CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHIC THOUGHT

GEOG 6973 | Graduate student seminar | 3 credit hours
We meet Mondays from 3:30-6:20 in Sarkeys

Course Details

Professor Nicholas Bauch

Email: nbbauch@ou.edu

(Note: I am normally able to respond to emails within 24 hours. I am normally not available on weekends and holidays.)

Office hours: by appointment

**** NOTE: There is a required field trip to Oklahoma City on Monday, October 31 from 3:00-7:00pm. Clear your schedules now ☺ ****

Learning Outcomes

Students gain the following skills.

- Become versed in the theoretical and historical foundations of geography's most pressing current debates. You should be able to attend nearly any session at the international AAG conference and be able to ask informed, critical, educated questions of the presenters.
- How to read academic geographical literature. Learn how move through challenging, disciplinary-defining readings and gain from them what is valuable to your own research. At the end of the class you will have a binder of your own notes on some of geography's key writings, invaluable for your career as a geographer in many settings.
- How to articulate your own research agenda in formal academic writing and in various "pitches" to different audiences.
- You will write a publishable book review for a journal.

Even more lasting than these skills, as you take this course you should be inspired to want to go into the world—to experience landscapes and know them richly—in order to make them better. You should *want* to experience places in all of their beauty and complexity, then share that beauty and complexity with others. This is doing geography, or *writing the earth*.

Content you will learn

Some examples of longstanding conversations in geography covered in this class include

- deeply complex relationship between human culture and the **natural world**
- dramatically uneven geographical experiences of culture groups along lines of **class, race, and gender**
- how **ecology and politics** can never be untied from one another
- contested practices and philosophies of **mapping**
- how people form emotional connections with **place**
- description of **regions** as a geographical art and science
- role of **landscape** as a geographic tool for experience and analysis
- assumptions we don't even realize about our **digital tools**, such as GIS
- reconfiguring of **space** as more than a container with a grid
- human history of exerting power by controlling **territory**

Course Description

This course professionalizes beginning graduate students into the discipline of academic geography. It gives students an intellectual foundation necessary for practicing geography, and the chance to trial tools as they begin careers as geographers. As the name of the course—"geographic thought"—suggests, we take an idea-based approach to understanding the discipline. This is important for students entering the field along a variety of different paths. By marking yourself with an advanced degree in geography, the future planner, university researcher, corporate GIS expert, and teacher all share a common philosophical language about space, place, landscape, nature, and technology. The texts we encounter in this class are an invitation, and the keys, for you to explore and participate in the production of geographic knowledge for years to come.

The class functions as a mix between seminar and studio. A seminar is a weekly gathering of minds to discuss a shared topic for everyone's mutual benefit. A seminar is not a lecture. Students and the professor embark on a journey together, discussing and listening, squeezing interpretation out of the topic at hand.

A studio, on the other hand, is a mode of practice, a place in which abstract ideas are turned into things we can see and/or touch. Part of your professionalization is learning how to make things of value to the discipline of geography. This includes things like formal book reviews, conference proposals, and design challenges.

Underlying these two models—seminar and studio—is the assumption that students bring to the class a desire to learn broadly about the concepts presented, and the motivation to craft and complete projects with the help of their classmates and the professor. This is an important step in your training to become a geographer. We learn to move from vision to articulation. There is no "you know what I mean." An important skill to develop as a scholar—in reading, writing, making, and speaking—is to constantly clarify your thoughts for yourself and those with whom you are communicating. Assumptions and zingers are shortcuts to thinking, and do not have a place at the university.

In sum, *geo-graphy* is literally translated as *writing the earth*. In discovering for yourself what it means to write the earth, it is your obligation to know how countless other brilliant people have tried to do this in the past. It is a select few of these other writers and thinkers who we encounter in this course, the giants, as it were, upon whose shoulders we all stand.

How to Approach this Class

You are required to attend every meeting for the entire meeting, and you are required to come each week having done all the readings. In a seminar-style class YOU are responsible for generating discussion and course content. The professor cannot possibly lecture for three hours! How boring. Come with questions, come curious, come with insights that you can teach to your classmates and to the professor.

Please do not take this class if you are not interested in the topic, and/or are unwilling to participate as described here.

In-Class Technology Policy

- No laptops or phones in class. Your grade goes down if you use laptops or phones in class. There will be a break during which you can check messages if necessary.
- The reason I have this policy is because our class time is sacred space. We are on a journey together to build and refine our knowledge about geography. With open laptops and phones at the ready, you *will* be distracted at some point, or worse, you *will* distract others, and at the absolute worst, you *will* distract the professor.
- Having said this, I love exploring digital technology and building things with it. When the time comes, I will tell you when it's ok to use your devices in class, when we're working on projects together.
- Thank you for understanding.

Weekly Readings

The readings are all challenging. Be prepared to spend time on them. You will likely need to teach yourself how to read very slowly and carefully, a different type of reading than what most people are used to. You will need to get into a different kind of head space to do these readings. Do not do them frantically or at the last minute. I will help you with this when you're feeling overwhelmed or confused. Remember that you are learning new things, and you are being challenged.

Although we are reading sections of nearly 40 books, you do not need to buy any books. I will distribute the selected chapter sections to you via our class webpage, Canvas.

This part is important: If I were you, I would print out all the readings for each week and make a three-ring binder for the course. As a graduate student you are permitted to print at no charge using the department printers. You will then have assembled so many key, original geographic readings in one place. The notes you make on the sides of the pages as you read (called "marginalia") will serve you for the rest of your career as a geographer (preparing for job interviews, oral exams, teaching a class, writing articles, etc.). It will be difficult to read around 100 pages per week on a computer screen. And extra bonus: this is far cheaper and easier to store than me requiring you to buy around 40 books.

Assignments

1. **Active and positive participation (20%).** This includes things like coming to class fully prepared with questions, consistent vocal contribution in class discussions, punctuality, attendance, and respect for the technology policy. But the main thing to earn these points is a semester-long demonstration of a curious, involved, and *positive attitude towards the mission of the course*. The class introduces you to many aspects about the present and history of geographic thought, and as such will almost never be the exact topic you study. It is your responsibility as a budding professional to learn these intellectual foundations, as they will crop up at the most unexpected times in your life as a graduate student and beyond. It is your responsibility to show me how you value this mission throughout the semester.
2. **Author Report Sheets (20%).** Each week students arrive to class with an Author Report Sheet for each author assigned that week. These Report Sheets are at least 750 words each. I will outline in detail how to do this. You are required to print out as many copies of your Report Sheet as there are students in the class, plus one for the professor. At the beginning of class everyone distributes their Report Sheets to each other. This is how we reference the text and generate discussion points. You will be graded on the depth and thoughtfulness of each report. Do not take shortcuts, it will be obvious. At the final class meeting, you will turn in a 3-ring binder of all your Author Report Sheets.
3. **Formal Book Review (15%).** From a list of top geography journals that I will distribute, select one that is in your area of research. Contact the book review editor to obtain that journal's "books received for review." Choose one of those books, obtain it, and read it. After learning how to write a formal academic book review, you will write a review of your chosen book. Finally, you will submit it for publication to the journal you chose to see if the editor would like to publish it.
4. **AAG Conference Preparation (15%).** This pair of assignments prepares you to participate in the international geography conference that takes place each year in a major U.S. city.
 - a. Write a **session description**. This is a 250-word document that describes your dream research paper "session" at the conference. The description succinctly details the big questions and themes that the group of presenters will talk about in their individual presentations. You are the organizer of your dream session.
 - b. Write your own research paper **abstract**. This 250-word document differs from the session description. This is you describing your research, giving conference attendees a teaser for what you will talk about in your conference presentation. It is your graduate school thesis distilled, a challenging literary genre that we will practice together.
5. **Final Project (30%).** Details TBA. Some possibilities include:
 - Self-publish a "Geographer's Guide to Oklahoma City" using Blurb
 - Self-publish an illustrated research proposal using Blurb
 - Apply to a faculty job position (for real or practice)
 - Write and submit an article for publication
 - Make a professional-personal website

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

1 | August 22: Introduction

Readings Due: N/A

In Class: Key journals in geography and how to use them. In-class writing on “what is geography?” Record aloud reading of intro texts.

2 | August 29: Into Modernity

Geography Readings Due

Capra, Fritjof. 1982. *The Turning Point: Science, society, and the rising culture*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Sack, Robert David. 1986. *Human Territoriality: Its theory and history*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Glacken, Clarence J. 1967. *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and culture in Western thought from ancient times to the end of the eighteenth century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Professional Development Readings Due

Jarvis, Helen. 2015. "Book Reviews." In *Publishing and Getting Read: A guide for researchers in geography*, edited by Alison Blunt, Fiona Nash, Madeleine Hatfield and Catherine Souch, 13-14. London: Royal Geographical Society.

“Book Reviews.” 2016. The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Assignment Due

Explore Three Journals

3 | September 5

** No class – Labor Day **

4 | September 12

Geography Readings Due

Humboldt, Alexander von. 1997 [1858]. *Cosmos: A sketch of a physical description of the universe*. Translated by E.C. Otte'. Vol. I. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Snow, C.P. 1959. *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dutton, Clarence E. 1977 [1882]. *Tertiary History of the Grand Cañon District: With atlas*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Peregrine Smith.

Professional Development Readings Due

- “An Overview of Effective Speaking.” No date. *Oral Communication Program, Center for Teaching and Learning, Stanford University.*
- “Power Pointers: Using PowerPoint to your advantage.” No date. *Oral Communication Program, Center for Teaching and Learning, Stanford University.*
- “Overcoming Speech Anxiety: Top ten ways to conquer your fear of public speaking.” No date. *Oral Communication Program, Center for Teaching and Learning, Stanford University.*

Assignment Due

Obtain your book to review and read 50% of it. Presentation in class on your book and how it relates to your research interests.

5 | September 19: Regional Geography

Geography Readings Due

- Strabo. 1970. *Geography, Books 10-12*. Translated by Horace Leonard Jones. 8 vols. Vol. 5. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Hartshorne, Richard. 1939. *The Nature of Geography: A critical survey of current thought in the light of the past*. Lancaster, Pa.: The Association of American Geographers.
- Kimble, George H.T. 1996. "The Inadequacy of the Regional Concept." In *Human Geography: An essential anthology*, edited by John Agnew, David N. Livingstone and Alisdair Rogers. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Professional Development Readings Due

McPhee, John. 2013. "Draft No. 4." *The New Yorker*, April 29, 32-38.

Assignment Due

Finish reading your book for review, complete with full notes.

6 | September 26:

Geography Readings Due

None--Time to work on book review

Professional Development Reading Due

- Tomorrow's Professor. 2016. "Three Keys for Graduate Student Success."
- Rochner, Maegen. 2015. *The Dos and Don'ts of Attending an International Conference: Insights from a grad student at the Association of American Geographers*. University of Tennessee.
- Newcomer's Guide to the AAG Annual Meeting*. 2016. Association of American Geographers.

Assignment Due

First draft of book review

In Class

In class writing workshop to re-work book reviews. Demo how to find and read through AAG session descriptions for specialty groups.

7 | October 3: Birth of Marxist Geography

Geography Readings Due

Garner, B.J. 1967. "Models of Urban Geography and Settlement Location." In *Models in Geography*, edited by Richard J. Chorley and Peter Haggett, 303-360. London: Methuen & Co.

Harvey, David. 1973. *Social Justice and the City*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Smith, Neil. 1984. *Uneven Development: Nature, capital, and the production of space*. New York: Blackwell.

Professional Development Reading Due

Grafton, Anthony. 2006. "The Nutty Professors: The history of academic charisma." *The New Yorker*, October 23, 82-87.

Assignment Due

Read through AAG session descriptions. Write your dream session description (250-275 words) with you as the session organizer for your area of research with two specialty group sponsors in mind.

8 | October 10: New Natures

Geography Readings Due

Cronon, William. 1996. "Introduction: In search of nature." In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the human place in nature*, edited by William Cronon. New York: W.W. Norton.

Castree, Noel, and Tom MacMillan. 2001. "Dissolving Dualisms: Actor-networks and the reimagination of nature." In *Social Nature: Theory, practice, and politics*, edited by Noel Castree and Bruce Braun, 208-224. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

Whatmore, Sarah. 2002. *Hybrid Geographies*. London: Sage.

Professional Development Reading Due

Rilke, Rainer Maria. 2013. *Letters to a Young Poet*. Translated by Charlie Louth. New York: Penguin.

Assignment Due

Final book review

9 | October 17: Political Ecology

Geography Readings Due

Robbins, Paul. 2007. *Lawn People: How grasses, weeds, and chemicals make us who we are*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Watts, Michael. 1983. *Silent Violence: Food, famine & peasantry in northern Nigeria*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Latour, Bruno. 1999. *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the reality of science studies*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Professional Development Reading Due

- Eco, Umberto. 2015 [1977]. *How to Write a Thesis*. Translated by Caterina Mongiat Farina and Geoff Farina. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

In Class

- How to present your research to others. Practice three different research pitches verbally and in writing.
- Describe final project options

10 | October 24: Space

Geography Readings Due

- Gray, Jeremy J. 2006. *Janos Bolyai, Non-Euclidean Geometry, and the Nature of Space*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.
- Lefebvre, Henri. 1991 [1974]. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.
- White, Richard. 2010. *What is Spatial History?* Stanford University: Spatial History Lab.

Professional Development Readings Due

- "Abstracts." Ca. 2014. The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill.
- Eco, Umberto. 2015 [1977]. *How to Write a Thesis*. Translated by Caterina Mongiat Farina and Geoff Farina. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Assignment Due

- AAG paper presentation abstract due.

11 | October 31: Landscape Field Works

Geography Readings Due

- Sauer, Carl O. 1963 [1925]. "The Morphology of Landscape." In *Land and Life: A selection from the writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer*, edited by John Leighly. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cosgrove, Denis E. 1998. *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*. 2nd ed. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. 1994. *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Professional Development Reading Due

- Tuan, Yi-Fu. 2001. "Life as a Field Trip." *The Geographical Review* 91:41-45.

In Class

- Field Trip to OKC

12 | November 7: Place

Geography Readings Due

- Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1977. *Space and Place: The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Pearce, Margaret Wickens. 2008. "Framing the Days: Place and narrative in cartography." *Cartography and Geographic Information Science* 35 (1):17-32.
- Lopez, Barry. 1988. *Crossing Open Ground*. London: MacMillan.

Professional Development Readings Due

- Karjaluoto, Eric. 2014. *The Design Method: A philosophy and process for functional visual communication*. Berkeley: New Riders.

In Class

Work on final projects

13 | November 14: Feminist Geographies

Geography Readings Due

- Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14 (3):575-599.
- Rose, Gillian. 1993. *Feminism and Geography: The limits of geographical knowledge*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press.
- Massey, Doreen B. 1994. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Professional Development Readings Due

- Kelsky, Karen. 2015. *The Professor Is In: The essential guide to turning your Ph.D. into a job*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

In Class

Work on final projects

14 | November 21: Geographies of Race

Geography Readings Due

- Leitner, Helga. 2012. "Spaces of Encounters: Immigration, race, class, and the politics of belonging in small-town America." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102 (4):828-846.
- Heuser, Ryan. 2014. "An Open Letter from a White Protester, to White People Everywhere [cc: POCs]." December 16, *Medium*.
- Jackson, Peter. 1998. "Constructions of 'Whiteness' in the Geographical Imagination." *Area* 30 (2):99-106.

Professional Development Readings Due

Strunk Jr., William, and E.B. White. 2000 [1935]. *The Elements of Style*. Fourth ed. New York: Longman.

In Class

Work on final projects

15 | November 28: GIS and Society

Geography Readings Due

Harley, J. B. 1989. "Deconstructing the Map." *Cartographica* 26 (2):1-20.
Elwood, Sarah, Nadine Schuurman, and Matthew W. Wilson. 2011. "Critical GIS." In *The Sage Handbook of GIS and Society*, edited by Timothy L. Nyerges, Helen Couclelis and Robert McMaster. Los Angeles: Sage.
Pickles, John, ed. 1995. *Ground Truth: The social implications of geographic information systems*. New York: Guilford Press.

Professional Development Reading Due

Rilke, Rainer Maria. 2013. *Letters to a Young Poet*. Translated by Charlie Louth. New York: Penguin.

16 | December 5: Critical Cartographic Design

Geography Readings Due

Monmonier, Mark S. 1991. *How to Lie With Maps*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
MacEachren, Alan M. 1990. *Some Truth With Maps: A primer on symbolization and design*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers.
Brewer, Cynthia A. 2016. *Designing Better Maps: A guide for GIS users*. Second ed. Redlands: ESRI Press.

Professional Development Reading Due

Kelsky, Karen. 2015. *The Professor Is In: The essential guide to turning your Ph.D. into a job*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Assignment Due

Three-ring binder of all author report sheets

****Final Project: due Monday, December 5 at 3:30—strict deadline!****

Discipline of Geography – Historical Overviews

- Castree, Noel, Alisdair Rogers, and Douglas Sherman, eds. 2005. *Questioning Geography: Fundamental debates*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Cresswell, Tim. 2013. *Geographic Thought: A critical introduction*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Dear, Michael J., and Steven Flusty, eds. 2002. *The Spaces of Postmodernity: Readings in human geography*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Glacken, Clarence J. 1967. *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and culture in Western thought from ancient times to the end of the eighteenth century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Godlewska, Anne Marie Claire. 1999. *Geography Unbound: French geographic science from Cassini to Humboldt*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Holt-Jensen, Arild. 1980. *Geography: Its history and concepts*. Translated by Brian Fullerton. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books.
- Hubbard, Phil, and Rob Kitchin, eds. 2011. *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Hubbard, Phil, Rob Kitchin, and Gill Valentine, eds. 2008. *Key Texts in Human Geography*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Hubbard, Phil, Rob Kitchin, Brendan Bartley, and Duncan Fuller. 2002. *Thinking Geographically: Space, theory and contemporary human geography*. New York: Continuum.
- Johnston, Ron, and James D. Sidaway. 2016. *Geography and Geographers: Anglo-American human geography since 1945*. Seventh ed. New York: Routledge.
- Livingstone, David. 1993. *The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the history of a contested enterprise*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Martin, Geoffrey J. 2005. *All Possible Worlds: A history of geographical ideas*. Fourth ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Martin, Geoffrey J. 2015. *American Geography and Geographers: Toward geographical science*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Peet, Richard. 1998. *Modern Geographical Thought*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

Additional Reading (ones that pain me to cut!)

- Bennett, Jane. 2010. *Vibrant Matter: A political ecology of things*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Clark, William A.V. 1998. *The California Cauldron: Immigration and the fortunes of local communities*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Clay, Grady. 1973. *Close-Up: How to read the American city*. New York: Praeger.
- Cresswell, Tim. 2004. *Place: A short introduction*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Dear, Michael. 2000. *The Postmodern Urban Condition*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- FitzSimmons, Margaret. 1989. "The Matter of Nature." *Antipode* 21 (2):106-120.
- Gandy, Matthew. 2002. *Concrete and Clay: Reworking nature in New York City*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

- Gregory, Derek. 1994. *Geographical Imaginations*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Groth, Paul, and Todd W. Bressi, eds. 1997. *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Harvey, David. 1969. *Explanation in Geography*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Koelsch, William A. 2004. "Squinting Back at Strabo." *The Geographical Review* 94 (4):502-518.
- Mathewson, Kent. 2006. "Alexander Von Humboldt's Image and Influence in North American Geography, 1804-2004." *The Geographical Review* 96 (3):416-438.
- Meinig, D. W., ed. 1979. *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Minteer, Ben A., and Stephen J. Pyne, eds. 2015. *After Preservation: Saving American nature in the age of humans*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Murdoch, Jonathan. 2006. *Post-Structuralist Geography: A guide to relational space*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Nyerges, Timothy L., Helen Couclelis, and Robert McMaster, eds. 2011. *The Sage Handbook of GIS and Society*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Peck, Jamie. 2002. "Neoliberalizing Space." *Antipode* 34 (3):380-404.
- Pickles, John. 2004. *A History of Spaces: Cartographic reason, mapping and the geo-coded world*. New York: Routledge.
- Soja, Edward W. 1989. *Postmodern Geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory*. New York: Verso.
- The topological imagination : spheres, edges, and islands
- Thrift, Nigel. 1996. *Spatial Formations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Watts, M. T. 1999 [1975]. *Reading the Landscape of America*. Rochester, N.Y.: Nature Study Guild Publishers.
- Weart, Spencer. 2003. *The Discovery of Global Warming*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Williams, Raymond. 1980 [1972]. "Ideas of Nature." In *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays*, edited by Raymond Williams. London: Verso.
- Wolch, Jennifer, and Michael Dear, eds. 1989. *The Power of Geography: How territory shapes social life*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Wood, Denis, and John Fels. 1992. *The Power of Maps*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Wylie, John. 2007. *Landscape*. New York: Routledge.