

**Cultural Geography**  
**Geography 155**  
**California State University, Los Angeles**  
**Winter 2012**

Professor: Nicholas Bauch, Ph.D.

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(Note: I will happily respond to emails within 24 hours during the business week, but I may not be available on weekends or holidays.)

Meeting location: KH D4057

Section 1 meeting time: M & W; 9:50-11:30

Section 4 meeting time: T & R; 11:40-1:20

Professor office hours: Tues 1:30-3:30 & 5:00-6:00; Weds 11:30-12:30; and by appointment

Professor office location: KH D4059

## Course Information

### Description and Objectives

This course gives you a solid foundation in the core concepts of thought and practice in cultural geography. The *four core concepts are place, landscape, nature, and space*. We treat each of these concepts in order during the ten weeks of the class through lectures, readings, in-class activities, and assignments.

Some explanation:

Firstly, we are geographical beings. That is to say: we experience the world as people who constantly observe, move in, and interact with our surroundings. We also experience the world as people who constantly alter those surroundings. When the concepts we study in class seem obvious to you, that's because you are a geographical being! This class, however, gives you a way to organize, recognize, and become more aware of how you exist in the world. It gives you the tools to observe and think about your surroundings more deeply. The lessons you learn in this class may stay with you forever because you will apply them in your everyday life whether you know it or not. So, we are geographical beings because we experience the world through the core concepts of place, landscape, nature, and space.

Secondly, while we personally experience the world through the four core concepts, we also train ourselves to *know and explore* the world using the four core concepts. When we become curious and ask questions about other places, like cities, countries, neighborhoods, parks, malls, etc., we answer those questions through analysis. The analysis we use is – you guessed it – the four core concepts of place, landscape, nature, and space.

### How to do well in this class

To do well in this class you have to do all the readings and come to all the lectures. My courses are interactive, so be curious, ask questions in class, come to office hours. You will not succeed in this class if you sit passively and expect me to feed you information, then memorize it and

regurgitate it back to me. That's not how this class works. Everything you are graded on is based on readings and lectures.

### Journaling

During class there are journaling periods in which students hand-write what they are learning in real time. These are used to foster large- and small-group discussions during class, as well as to help you remember what you've learned. They become part of your self-made course reader.

### Textbook & Readings

- You do not have to buy a textbook for this course. You must, however, spend money to print out the readings that I provide for you electronically each week. It is required that you *make your own reader*, as described in the instructions available on Moodle. I will check your reader twice during the quarter for points.
- Readings are available on the Moodle web page: < <https://moodle.calstatela.edu/>>
- Why do we have to print out the readings?
  - Because a large part of what you learn in this class is how to read slowly, carefully, and critically. This is a different type of reading than what we are used to doing on computer and phone screens. While I value the power of dissemination and flexibility of electronic readings through Moodle, I do not believe you can read for retention unless you underline and physically write down questions and key points on the page; this is an invaluable skill to learn. Additionally, by printing and binding the course materials, you are left with a physical artifact of what we did – and what you learned – during the quarter.

### Assignments

1000 points total for the course

Syllabus quiz	25 points
Moodle profile	25 points
Reading quizzes	400 points (9 quizzes / 50 pts each / lowest discarded)
Reader checks	100 points (2 checks / 50 points each)
Surf Map presentation	150 points
Final Paper	300 points

### Rules

- No computers or phones may be used in class. If you need to communicate with someone during class, do not come to class. Often there is a break during which you can check your phone or email if you need to.
- There are *NO* make up quizzes.
- Any late assignment receives a penalty of 10% off per calendar day, deducted from the original earned score.

# Lectures & Readings Schedule

## Week 1

### Class 1

Topic: Introductions  
Due today: N/A  
Readings due before class: N/A

### Class 2

Topic: Experiencing the world geographically I  
Reading: Bunkse, Edmunds V. 2004. *Geography and the Art of Life*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press; "Geographic Sensibilities."

## Week 2

### Class 1

Topic: Experiencing the world geographically II  
Due today: Moodle Profile  
In class: Syllabus Quiz  
Reading: Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1998. *Escapism*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press; "Earth."

### Class 2

Topic: Place I: Defining place  
In class: Place-making  
Reading: Cresswell, Tim. 2004. *Place: A short introduction*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell; "Defining Place."

## Week 3

### Class 1

Topic: Place II: Public Urban Places  
In class: Paper workshop  
Reading: Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage; "The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety."

### Class 2

Topic: Place III: Public Urban Places  
In class: Design a corporate plaza  
Reading: (Film) "The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces." 1980. William H. Whyte. 58 minutes.

## Week 4

### Class 1

Landscape I: Reading a landscape  
**Field trip to the intersection of Ramona Blvd. & Eastern Ave.**  
Meet at this intersection at your normal class time.  
For directions, see the Google map, available on Moodle.

Class 2

Topic: Landscape II: Vernacular landscapes

Readings: Swentzell, Rina. 1997. Conflicting Landscape Values: The Santa Clara pueblo and day school. In *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, edited by P. Groth and T. W. Bressi. New Haven: Yale University Press.

And

Norris, Kathleen. 1993. *Dakota: A spiritual geography*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

**Week 5**

Class 1

Topic: Landscape III: Imperial County

In class: Reader check no. 1

Readings: Vollmann, William T. 2009. *Imperial*. New York: Viking.

And

The Problem of the Salton Sea. 1907. *New York Times*, Jan. 20.

Class 2

Topic: Nature I

Reading: Price, Jenny. 2006. Thirteen Ways of Seeing Nature in L.A. *The Believer*, April; part I.

**Week 6**

Class 1

Surf Map presentations

Class 2

Surf Map presentations

**Week 7**

Class 1

Topic: Nature II

Reading: Price, Jenny. 2006. Thirteen Ways of Seeing Nature in L.A. *The Believer*, April; part II.

Class 2

**Library research visit**

Meet at the JFK library at your normal class time.

**Week 8**

Class 1

Topic: Nature III

Reading: McPhee, John. 2005. Los Angeles Against the Mountains. In *Land of Sunshine: An environmental history of metropolitan Los Angeles*,

edited by W. Deverell and G. Hise. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Class 2

Topic: Nature IV: The Los Angeles Urban Rangers

Readings: Ng, David. 2009. Los Angeles Urban Rangers go on 'safari' in the city. *Los Angeles Times*, August 16.

And

Ydstie, John. 2011. Urban Rangers Quest For The Natural L.A. From *Around the Nation*. National Public Radio Podcast; 7 min., 16 sec.

And

Bauch, Nicholas, and Emily Eliza Scott. (Forthcoming, 2012). "The Los Angeles Urban Rangers: Actualizing geographic thought." *Cultural Geographies*.

**Week 9**

Class 1

Topic: Space I: Mental maps

Readings: Gould, Peter, and Rodney White. 1986. *Mental Maps*. Second ed. Boston: Allen & Unwin; "Perception of the Environment."

Class 2

Topic: Space II: Typologies of space

In class: Roll up map activity

Reading: White, Richard. "What is Spatial History?" 2010. Stanford Spatial History Lab.

**Week 10**

Class 1

Topic: Space III: Contesting space and place

In class: Viewing of film *The Garden*, Dir. Scott H. Kennedy. 2008. 80 min.

Class 2

Topic: Wrap up

In class: Reader check no. 2

**Final Paper Due**

Wednesday, March 21 @ 10:30am. This is submitted electronically through the Moodle site. There is no final exam in class. Do not show up to the classroom during the scheduled final exam time.

\*\*Please note: This syllabus is subject to change\*\*