

# **GEOG 502: Approaches to Geographic Research**

CR# 45574, Tues 5:30-8:00pm, Bandelier West 104

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30-3:00pm

This seminar examines recent scholarship in the discipline of Geography, focusing on both theory and method. It is intended to be taken after GEOG 501 as part of the required two-course sequence for M.S. students in Geography. Throughout the course, we will read, discuss and critique recent research within the broad intellectual context of academic and practical geography. Students will also be guided in the formal design of an independent research project in Geography, suitable for a master's thesis.

## ***What will you get out of this course?***

By the end of the class, you will have a firm grasp of the key concepts and theories that are currently used to understand key research areas in the discipline of geography. You will also be able to identify which of these concepts and theories are applicable for your own independent graduate-level research. The course structure is designed to provide a learning environment in which each student can achieve the following:

1. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the theory and methods currently used in at least one major area of geographical research.
2. State an original research question appropriate for geographic analysis.
3. State how a research project contributes to an existing body of geographic literature.
4. Design legitimate geographic methodology suitable for answering the research question.
5. Communicate clearly and effectively in an oral format.
6. Communicate clearly and effectively in a written format.
7. Identify all of the faculty members who will serve on his or her graduate committee.

## ***What are your responsibilities in this course?***

This class is extremely demanding and requires considerable time outside of class for completing mandatory readings and assignments. It will be taught in a format that combines both seminar and workshop elements. Full participation in the seminar environment requires a thorough and critical reading of all assigned texts and an active engagement with the ideas presented by authors and fellow students. Full participation in the workshop environment requires conscientious completion of all assignments and a willingness to engage in charitable critique of your fellow students' work.

I expect significant progress toward defining your master's project over the course of this semester. By the end of the semester, Plan I students should be ready to present a full proposal and begin thesis research. By the end of the semester, Plan II students should feel confident enough with research design and procedure to schedule and complete a field problem.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Required readings for each week are listed in the course schedule and will be drawn from the following sources:

- Mills, Amy (2010) *Streets of Memory: Landscape, Tolerance, and National Identity in Istanbul*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Robbins, Paul (2007) *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- and numerous articles and book excerpts posted on the class WebCT site.

Please note that you will need to buy a copy of Robbins' *Lawn People* immediately, since we will read it in the first week.

## REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

You will demonstrate course content mastery through the following required assignments. Written assignments are always due (through WebCT) before the beginning of class.

### **Participation in Seminars and Workshops (weekly)**

This includes regular attendance, active engagement with ideas presented in required readings, and respectful consideration of peers' comments. In order to ensure that you are ready to discuss and critique an assigned text, you should identify in advance the author's main argument, the literatures cited, the methodologies used, and the findings presented. You should also be prepared to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the author's claims.

### **Attendance at Departmental Seminars (numerous Fridays)**

In this class, you are expected to attend all public research presentations in the Department of Geography & Environmental Studies. We will use these presentations as a basis for discussion of scholarly approaches to research topics and methods, so it is critical that you attend on a regular basis. In general, colloquia are scheduled for alternating Fridays at noon, with a 45-minute seminar presentation followed by questions, informal discussion, and light refreshments. Because you are expected to attend these out-of-class presentations throughout the semester, I have designed the course schedule to include several weeks without class meetings (in the last month of the semester). These weeks should provide a time savings that offsets your required attendance at the Friday seminars. Please talk to me directly if you anticipate any scheduling conflicts.

### **Book Review (due 3/19)**

For one of the major course texts, you will submit a written book review (750-1000 words) on the day we discuss the book in class. This review should provide a charitable re-statement of the author's goals, methods, and arguments, along with a critical analysis of the book's strengths and weaknesses. Detailed guidelines are posted in WebCT.

### **Proposal Progress Elements (weekly)**

Throughout the semester, you will be required to submit a range of assignments that lead you through the process of producing a research proposal. Although the submission requirements range widely for each week (see detailed schedule), you are expected to work consistently throughout the semester to develop a research proposal. This expectation applies equally to students intending to proceed through the M.S. program under Plan I and Plan II.

### **Peer Critiques (weekly and due 4/9)**

In our weekly research workshops, you will frequently be asked to critique your fellow students' work. In the week after full proposal drafts are due, you will also be assigned to provide a formal written critique of two of your classmates' submissions. The purpose of this assignment is twofold: (1) to broaden your perspectives on the potential strengths and weaknesses of a research proposal, and (2) to provide additional critical feedback that you can incorporate into the final proposal draft. You will use a standard form and specific guidelines to record your critique, which should be analytical and impersonal.

### **Final Thesis Proposal (due 4/16)**

The culmination of weekly workshops and independent work is the formal thesis proposal, which you will submit in both oral and written formats. Your written proposal will be judged at the highest standard. This document should be suitable for immediate distribution to a thesis committee, and it is expected that all Plan I students will schedule a proposal presentation to his/her committee for the final weeks of the semester, when we do not have class meetings.

As you can see in the course schedule, you are required to complete reading and written assignments every week in this course. **There is simply no way around the fact that this class requires a significant amount of work.** Please arrange your semester schedule in such a way that you can devote considerable time to this course.

## **WORKSHOPS**

Half of each week's class will be devoted to a workshop session on research processes. We will use a variety of resources as a basis for understanding and critiquing the various elements of scholarly research. These resources will include: (1) the week's assigned readings, (2) public lectures held within the Geography Department, (3) examples of student work, and (4) papers contributed by members of the Geography Department faculty.

On some of the weeks that we use faculty work as a basis for our workshop discussion, the relevant faculty members will join our class and participate in the workshop. This is an excellent opportunity for you to learn more about research in the department, faculty members who may potentially end up on your committee, and the specific ways in which geographic research "gets done." Please do not be shy about interacting with workshop guests and asking questions about how they do their research. This is meant to be a learning opportunity for you, the students, rather than a lecture opportunity for the faculty members.

## **GRADING**

Grades will be determined through a holistic evaluation of the quality, effort, and consistency of (1) required written assignments and (2) seminar/workshop participation over the course of the entire semester. You will receive feedback throughout the semester to help you modify the level of your performance according to your own expectations for the course. This feedback will be given in the form of comments on assignments. Students are encouraged to meet with me throughout the semester to discuss goals, progress, and performance.

## CLASS COMMUNICATIONS

Class materials are posted on WebCT and will NOT be available in paper copies. To log in, go to <http://vista.unm.edu>, enter your UNM NetID/password, then click GEOG 502.

WebCT contains PDFs of required articles, assignment guides, and grading rubrics. You will submit all assignments through WebCT, using electronic forms that allow me to provide feedback visible only to you. I will also use WebCT to make periodic class announcements via email. Please make sure that you check your WebCT mail regularly, or change the settings to forward messages to the email address that you check most often.

## WRITING

This course requires a significant amount of writing, and I expect every student to develop improved writing skills over the course of the semester. If this is a skill area in which you need assistance, consider using the CAPS Graduate Resource Center. In individual appointments, graduate students can receive feedback and guidance on any aspect of the writing process. Register for CAPS on the third floor of Zimmerman Library. Individual Appointments can be made by calling CAPS at 277-7205. Please visit <http://caps.unm.edu/writing> for the most current info on hours and locations, as well as information on current workshops.

## COURSE OUTLINE

(see detailed schedule on following pages)

### Introduction

**Week 1** (1/15) – Welcome and overview

### Part 1: Human-Environment Interaction

**Week 2** (1/22) – Rethinking the human-environment relationship

**Week 3** (1/29) – Environmental history and historical geography

**Week 4** (2/5) – Connecting the social and the natural

**Week 5** (2/12) – Knowledge, politics, and environmental policy

**Week 6** (2/19) – Legal geography and environment management

### Part 2: Society, Culture & Space

**Week 7** (2/26) – Foundations of spatial knowledge

**Week 8** (3/5) – The power of cartography

**Week 9** (3/12) – NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

**Week 10** (3/19) – Understanding cultural landscapes

**Week 11** (3/26) – Urban productions of space and place

**Week 12** (4/2) – Grappling with difference and place

### Conclusion

**Week 13** (4/9) – NO CLASS – INDEPENDENT PROPOSAL WORK

**Week 14** (4/16) – Geography Research Symposium

**Week 15** (4/23) – NO CLASS: PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS TO COMMITTEE

**Week 16** (4/30) – NO CLASS: PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS TO COMMITTEE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1/15 – Welcome and overview

Reading: syllabus

Workshop: Survival guide to proposal writing

## PART I: HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

### 1/22 – Rethinking the human-environment relationship

Assignment(s) due:

#1. Annotated bibliography, as submitted at end of GEOG 501

#2. Confirmation of committee chair

#3. Statement of research interests

Reading: Robbins, Paul (2007) *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. [Read entire book.]

Workshop: Identifying relevant literature; advanced search strategies

### 1/29 – Environmental history and historical geography

Assignment(s) due:

#4. List of potential committee members

#5. List of relevant literatures for your thesis

Reading:

- Barton, G.A. (2001) Empire forestry and the origins of environmentalism. *Journal of Historical Geography* 27(4): 529-552.
- Davis, Diana K. (2005) Indigenous knowledge and the desertification debate: problematising expert knowledge in North Africa. *Geoforum* 36(4): 509-524.
- Harris, Cole (2004) How did colonialism dispossess? Comments from an edge of empire. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94(1): 165-182.
- Keeling, Arn and John Sandlos (2009) Environmental justice goes underground? Historical notes from Canada's northern mining frontier. *Environmental Justice* 2(3): 117-125.
- Walters, Bradley B. and Andrew P. Vayda (2009) Event ecology, causal historical analysis, and human-environment research. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99(3): 534-553.
- Harris, Cole (2012) A life between geography and history. *Canadian Historical Review* 93(3): 436-462.

Workshop: Identifying research gaps, developing a literature review

## 2/5 – Connecting the natural and the social

Assignment(s) due:

#6. Augmented annotated bibliography

Reading:

- Rhoads, B.L., D. Wilson, M. Urban, and E. E. Herricks (1999) Interaction between scientists and nonscientists in community-based watershed management: emergence of the concept of stream naturalization. *Environmental Management* 24(3): 297-308.
- Phillips, J.D. (2010) The job of the river. *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms* 35: 305-313.
- Lane, S.N., N. Odoni, C. Landstroem, S. J. Whatmore, N. Ward and S. Bradley (2011) Doing flood risk science differently: An experiment in radical scientific method. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36(1): 15-36.
- Carey, M. A. French, and E. O'Brien (2012) Unintended effects of technology on climate change adaptation: An historical analysis of water conflicts below Andean glaciers. *Journal of Historical Geography* 38(2): 181-191.
- Duvall, Chris (under review) Book chapter: (Re)mapping *Cannabis* in Africa and the Atlantic World, c. 1500 to c. 1900, for *Remapping Africa*, S. Blier and J. Finkelstein, eds.

Workshop: From literature review to research question (**Special guest: Chris Duvall**)

## 2/12 – Knowledge, politics, and environmental policy

Assignment(s) due:

#7. Progress report on literature review

#8. Meet with a potential committee member

#9. Four potential research questions

Reading:

- McCarthy, J. (2005) Scale, sovereignty, and strategy in environmental governance. *Antipode* 37 (4):731–753.
- Birkenholtz, Trevor (2009) Irrigated landscapes, produced scarcity, and adaptive social institutions in Rajasthan, India. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99(1): 118-137.
- Lave, R., M. Doyle, M., and M. Robertson (2010) Privatizing stream restoration in the US. *Social Studies of Science* 40 (5), 677-703.
- Pacheco, Pablo and Rene Pocard-Chapuls (2012) The complex evolution of cattle ranching development amid market integration and policy shifts in the Brazilian Amazon. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102(6): 1366-1390.
- Wainwright, Joel and Geoff Mann (2013) Climate Leviathan. *Antipode* 45(1): 1-22.

Workshop: Qualitative methods in geographic research, part I

## 2/19 – Legal geography and the environment

Assignment(s) due:

#10. Literature review

Reading:

- Huber, M. T. and J. Emel (2009) Fixed minerals, scalar politics: the weight of scale in conflicts over the '1872 mining law' in the United States. *Environment and Planning A* 41(2): 371-388.
- Lane, K. M. D (2011) Water, technology, and the courtroom: Negotiating reclamation policy in territorial New Mexico. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 37: 300-311.
- Perramond, Eric (in press) Water governance in New Mexico: Adjudication, law, and geography. *Geoforum*.

Workshop: Qualitative methods in geographic research, part II

## PART II: SOCIETY, CULTURE & SPACE

### 2/26 – Foundations of spatial knowledge

Assignment(s) due:

#11. Two draft research questions

#12. Outline three potential methods for answering each question

Reading: want new readings related to Chris Lippitt's work

- Harley, J.B. (2001) Deconstructing the map. In Paul Laxton (ed.) *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins), 149-168.
- Pickles, John (2004) Maps and worlds. In *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping, and the Geo-coded World* (London: Routledge), 3-23.
- Kitchin, R. and Dodge, M. (2007) Rethinking maps. *Progress in Human Geography* 31, 331-44.
- Goodchild, Michael, May Yuan, and Thomas J. Cova (2007) Towards a general theory of geographic representation in GIS. *International Journal of Geographic Information Science* 21(3): 239-260.

Workshop: Open forum on proposal development issues

### 3/5 – The power of spatial representation

Assignment(s) due:

#13. Select and refine final research question

#14. Detailed methodological outline

Reading:

- Clarke, Keith C. and John G. Cloud (2000) On the origins of analytical cartography. *Cartography and Geographic Information Science* 27(3):195-204.
- Harley, J.B. (2001) Can there be a cartographic ethics? In Paul Laxton (ed.) *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins), 197-207.
- Harris, Leila and Helen Hazen (2009) Rethinking maps from a more-than-human perspective: nature-society, mapping and conservation territories. In Martin Dodge, Rob Kitchin, and Chris Perkins (eds.) *Rethinking maps: new frontier in cartographic theory* (London: Routledge), 50-67.
- Lippitt, Christopher D. and Douglas A. Stow (2013) On the utility of models for time-sensitive remote sensing. Submission to *Remote Sensing of Environment*, January 2013.

Workshop: Applied versus theoretical geography (**possible visit from Chris Lippitt**)

### 3/12 – NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

### 3/19 – Understanding cultural landscapes

Assignment(s) due:

#15. Review of *Streets of Memory*

Reading:

- Mills, Amy (2010) *Streets of Memory: Landscape, Tolerance and National Identity in Istanbul*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. [Read entire book.]

Workshop: Putting the proposal together

### **3/26 – Urban productions of space and place**

Assignment(s) due:

#16. Research design section for proposal

Reading:

- Quastel, Noah, Markus Moos, Nicholas Lynch (2012) Sustainability-as-density and the return of the social: the case of Vancouver, British Columbia. *Urban Geography* 33(7): 1055-1084.
- Schein, Richard H. (2012) Urban form and racial order. *Urban Geography* 33(7): 942-960.

Workshop: Evaluating a proposal (or a piece of finished research)

### **4/2 – Grappling with difference and place**

Assignment(s) due:

#17. Full proposal due to peer reviewers

Reading:

- McDowell, Linda (2004) Workers, migrants, aliens, or citizens? State constructions and discourses among post-war European labour migrants in Britain. *Political Geography* 22: 863-86.
- Tucker, Andrew (2009) Framing exclusion in Cape Town's gay village: the discursive and material perpetration of inequitable queer subjects. *Area* 41(2):186–197.
- Scott, Heidi V. (2012) The contested spaces of the subterranean: colonial governmentality, mining, and the mita in early Spanish Peru. *Journal of Latin American Geography* 11: 7-33.

Workshop: From proposal to graduation

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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### **4/9 – NO CLASS: INDEPENDENT PROPOSAL WORK**

Assignment(s) due:

#18. Peer critique of assigned research proposals

#19. Full list of committee members

Reading: none

Workshop: none

### **4/16 – Geography Research Symposium**

Assignment(s) due:

#20. Full research proposal

#21. Paperwork for program of study

Reading: none

Workshop: In-class proposal presentations – 15 minutes each

### **4/23 – NO CLASS: PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS TO COMMITTEE**

Assignment(s) due: meet with your committee for a formal presentation of your proposed research and an informal review of your program of study

### **4/30 – NO CLASS: PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS TO COMMITTEE**

Assignment(s) due: meet with your committee for a formal presentation of your proposed research and an informal review of your program of study