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:


• 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 be 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
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:
Workshop: Identifying research gaps, developing a literature review
2/5 – Connecting the natural and the social
Assignment(s) due:
#6. Augmented annotated bibliography
Reading:
• 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:
Workshop: Qualitative methods in geographic research, part I

2/19 – Legal geography and the environment
Assignment(s) due:
#10. Literature review
Reading:
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
    Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins), 149-168.
    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:
    Cartography and Geographic Information Science 27(3):195-204.
    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
  • Lippitt, Christopher D. and Douglas A. Stow (2013) On the utility of models for time-
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:
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:
Workshop: From proposal to graduation

CONCLUSION

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