

Geography of the US and Canada GEOG 2302: 001

Class Meetings: Lawrence Hall 201, T/Th 2:00pm-3:15pm

Instructor: Dr. Jen McCormack

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Instructor Office Phone: (432) 837-8161

Instructor Office Hours and Location: LH 302; 3:30pm-4:30pm T/Th or by appointment



Welcome to the Geography of the US and Canada!

Geography is the study of how the environment influences human society and how humans adapt to and change the physical environment. In this course, we survey the diverse regions of the U.S. and Canada, and consider how forces like the economy, politics and culture develop these difference geographies. We will highlight major themes that contributed to regional formations in the U.S. and Canada: Indigenous nations

of North America; colonial settlement; immigration; and environmental/economic justice. In addition to the geographic content, you will employ critical analysis skills including research with primary documents (archival maps) and fieldwork.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

The graduating student will demonstrate:

- Acquisition of a geographical perspective on the U.S. and Canada's diverse environments, cultures and economic systems
- Development of a geographical imagination and critical analysis of data, theory and texts
- Acquisition of research skills:
 - Primary research sources (archival maps, field observations)
 - Application of social theory
 - Written and verbal presentation of original research
- Analyze meta queries: What are the human forces that create regions? How is identity derived from geography? What are the relationships between power and place?

The Americans with Disabilities Act

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartz in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832, Telephone Number 432-837-8203.

Class Policy

We won't always agree and that is what makes a stimulating discussion! However, we owe each other respect to listen and articulate diverse viewpoints. A dynamic classroom depends on you.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated at any level.

Textbook

The text is available for purchase at the Sul Ross State University Bookstore or online:

The Geography of North America: Environment, Culture and Economy by Hardwick, Shelley, and Holtgrieve, Pearson Publications, 2nd Ed., 2013.

Additional Readings

In addition to the textbook, this course will survey scholarly contributions in human geography. These readings will allow us to dig deeper in the theories, methods and/or relevant discussions in North American geography. All readings are fair game for exams and quizzes, and the content should be utilized in student essays and group projects. The readings are listed on the schedule and uploaded to the class site on Blackboard.

Assignments

Three Response Essays (25 points each) *R1, R2, R3 Due Dates Listed on Schedule* You will have three response essays of 3-5 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced text answering a prompt given by the instructor. You should employ relevant concepts/terms from the textbook and readings, examples from class materials (readings, films, discussions) and your own experiences. Two of these essays are based on our field visits—your first hand qualitative research. We will discuss in class how you utilize your original research and cite that data source. Every essay should include a works cited page.

Two Map Projects (25 points each) *MP 1 and MP2 Due Dates Listed on Schedule*

We will create two maps, including a mapping workshop and theoretical discussion on map-making in class. Detailed instructions for both maps will be distributed in class.



Mid-Term and Final (100 points each)

There are two exams, each covering text book, lecture, film, field and class discussion materials up to the exam date. Materials shared by colleagues in their presentations can be included! The final is **NOT** comprehensive, i.e., it will be only the material post mid-term.

Geographic Imaginary of the Region (25 points)

Each student will create a ten-minute presentation on one region in the U.S. and Canada. You will meet with the instructor to go over ideas and format at office hours, or by appointment. **Email me before your schedule presentation to arrange a time.** This project will include a ten minute in-class presentation and a 1-2 write-up discussing the following:

- A. Cultural Expression in Region- music, film, art, cuisine, fashion, language, religion/spirituality
- B. Environmental Asset and/or Challenge in Region- water, landscape, rural-urban, borders, resources
- C. Answer these questions with the two components:
 1. What is unique about this region’s culture?
 2. What are the influences that created this cultural expression? (e.g., movement of peoples, raw materials, urban/rural, economy, history, politics, etc.)
 3. What are the specific environmental characteristics of this region?
 4. How has the environment changed over time with human society/culture?
 5. How do these two components influence each other?

Reading and Participation (50 points) Reading the assigned chapters and supplemental readings is critical to passing this course. Being present and participating in discussion of these materials is a major component of the course, as well as the content for the midterm and final.

Grading Scale

400-350	A
349-300	B
299-250	C
249-200	D
199-0	F

Schedule

*subject to change at discretion of instructor

Aug 23/Week 1 Introduction and North American Environment

Tues: Syllabus and Course Introduction

Thurs: Hardwick et al., Ch 1 & 2

Aug 30/Week 2 Geographical Imagination

Tues: “Geographical Imagination” (Gilley), “The Trouble with Wilderness” (Cronon)

Thurs: Site Visit Hancock Hill (meet in class---wear hiking shoes & bring water)

Sept 6/Week 3 Indigenous North America

Tues: “A Context for Understanding Native American Issues” (Echohawk), “Indian Agency: Forming First Nations Law in Canada” (Borrows)

***R1 on Geographical Imagination and Hancock Hill Due**

Thurs: “Introduction” and “Technology” (Deloria)

Film: *Reel Injun*

Sept 13/Week 4 Political Economy and Map Making

Tues: Hardwick et al., Ch 4; Supplemental (optional): “Political Economy” (Robbins et al.)

Thurs: “Maps, Knowledge, and Power” (Harley)

Mapping Workshop

Sept 20/Week 5 The Atlantic Periphery and Quebec

Tues: Hardwick et al., Ch 5

Thurs: Hardwick et al., Ch 6

***MP 1 Due**

Sept 27/Week 6 Megalopolis and the Great Lakes and Corn Belt

Tues: Hardwick et al., Ch 7

Thurs: Hardwick et al., Ch 8

Oct 4/Week 7 The Inland South and the Coastal South

Tues: Hardwick et al., Ch 9

Thurs: Hardwick et al., Ch 10

Oct 11/Week 8 The Great Plains and The Rocky Mountains

Tues: Hardwick et al., Ch 11

Thurs: Hardwick et al., Ch 12

***R2 Due**

Oct 18/Week 9 MidTerm

Tues: MidTerm Review

Thurs: MidTerm

Oct 25/Week 10 Intermontane West and Water

Tues: Hardwick et al., Ch 13

Thurs: “Significance of Deserts” (Limerick), “Claiming Space, Claiming Water” (Jepson)

Nov 1/Week 11 MexAmerica and Big Bend

Tues: Hardwick et al., Ch 14

Thurs: Reading from Matt Walter, Museum of the Big Bend (TBA)

Thurs: Site Visit to Museum of the Big Bend (MBB)

Nov 8/Week 12 Wolves and California

Tues: “Removing Protections for Wolves” (Bruskotter et al), “Retrofitting Frontier Masculinity” (Anahita and Mix)

***R3: Site Visit of MBB Analysis Due**

Thurs: Hardwick et al., Ch 15

Nov 15/Week 13 Pacific Northwest and Hawai’i and Pacific Islands

Tues: Hardwick et al., Ch 16

Thurs: Hardwick et al., Ch 17, “Native Hawaiians Vote For Sovereignty” (Al Jazeera)

***MP2 Due**

Nov 22/Week 14 The Far North

Tues: Hardwick et al., Ch 18, “Gwich’in Place Names Atlas” (Interactive Map, Gwich’in Social and Cultural Institute: <http://atlas.gwichin.ca/index.html>)

Thurs: No Class-Thanksgiving Break

Nov 29/Week 15 Final Review

Tues: Final Review

Thurs: No Class-Dead Day

Dec 6/Week 16 Final Exam

Final TBA