

GEO 270 Rural Geography

Rural Land Use in Global Perspective



DETAILS

Fall 2015
Tuesdays & Thursdays 14:00 - 15:15
Building B Room 205

Sig Langegger PhD
Office: Building C 1-8 (by appointment)
slangegger@aiu.ac.jp | slangegger.com

DESCRIPTION

The rural-urban divide, one of the oldest and most powerful ideas in geography, is deeply ingrained in contemporary culture. This class complements my urban geography course offered in the Spring semester. Taking a global perspective, we will survey the many meanings, representations, and regulations of the rural. A complex place, the countryside can be a source of food and energy, a celebrated or stigmatized bucolic realm, a primitive place in need of modernization, a playground to be enjoyed, and a pristine wilderness in need of protection. In learning how ideas of the rural have been historically produced and continue to be politically, economically, and culturally reproduced, we will explore how manifold ideas shape social and economic structures of rural localities and impact the everyday lives of people who live, work, or play in rural areas. In the dawning millennium, we seek to understand the roles that rural areas play in urban development, and in so doing, we learn to recognize aspects of the rural-

urban divide that prove vital for success. This course prepares you for the challenge.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course students will:

1. Have learned fundamental geographical concepts and theories.
2. Have improved their reading comprehension skills.
3. Be comfortable using geographical terminology in written and verbal discourse.
4. Be able to think, write, and argue critically about urban problems.
5. Have learned to recognize interdisciplinary relationships between geography, history, economics, and anthropology.
6. Have learned to recognize longstanding spatial impacts of planned and unplanned rural development.
7. Have gained insight into how rurality is coproduced by political systems, economic systems, and cultural complexes.

READING

Each week's required reading—listed the course schedule below—is available in PDF format on AIMS.

ASSESSMENT

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|-----------------------------|-----|
| Gazetteer Components | 25 |
| Gazetteer Research Proposal | 25 |
| - Manuscript | 15 |
| - Presentation | 10 |
| Midterm Exam | 20 |
| Final Exam | 20 |
| Participation | 10 |
| Total Points Possible | 100 |

Gazetteer Components

Something akin to the modern day professional geographer likely emerged often in human history, particularly when someone wanted to know what a certain place was like, who lived there, how they adapted to the environment, which gods they prayed to, and so forth. During the European Age of Discovery, a time when colonial powers were very interested in learning about the many scattered places they controlled, they would send learned men out into the colonial empire's hinterland to prepare gazetteers. This highly descriptive work is a geographical dictionary used in conjunction with an atlas and contains information about physical geography (land forms, geology, rivers, and weather patterns) and human geography (language, culture, religion, and politics) of a region. Gazetteers help answer the most basic geographical question: What is there?

Geographical inquiry orbits five themes: location, place, region, movement, and human-environment interaction. In the course of the semester—please refer to the course schedule below—students will prepare a gazetteer in those same five geographical parts. The region for which students prepare gazetteer will also be the subject of their term paper. Detailed instructions for preparing Gazetteers are posted on AIMS.

Gazetteer Research Proposal

Knowing “what is there” is important. It is however not the engine that drives geographical research. Geographers dig deeper asking explanatory questions: “Why is something (environmental degradation, sustainable agricultural practices, racism, economic vitality, social problems, political efficacy, etc.) there?” A capstone to the semester-long gazetteer project, the research proposal extends the descriptive work produced in the gazetteer components. In order to effectively write a research proposal, one must first ask a compelling question to ground it. Students have 11 weeks to mull over the “why is it there?” question about the region as they prepare the separate gazetteer components. A research question is the fundamental core of a research project, study, or review of literature. It focuses the study, determines the methodology, and guides all stages of inquiry, analysis, and reporting. A research question is nothing more than a carefully posed question. Research questions are normally followed by hypotheses, educated guesses of plausible answers. In the end, research questions need to be interesting enough to require research. The research question and an outline of a proposed research project are due the 12th week of class. The research proposal is due the last day of class. Detailed instructions for writing the research proposal are posted on AIMS.

Midterm Exam

The midterm will cover material presented in lectures and in the reading assignments. It will cover *terms, concepts and theories* as well as *regional specifics* presented during the first part of the semester. It will comprise multiple-choice, short answer, true/false and essay questions. Aside from an exceptional situation as outlined in the Student Handbook, There will be no chance to make up the midterm exam.

Final Exam

The final will cover material presented in lectures and in the reading assignments during the entire semester. It will cover *terms, concepts and theories* covered during the entire semester and *regional specifics* presented during the second part of the semester. It will comprise multiple-choice, short answer, true/false and essay questions. Aside from an exceptional situation as outlined in the Student Handbook, There will be no chance to make up the final exam.

ASSESSMENT POLICIES

Format Requirements

All written assignments must include the following in the upper left corner of the first page: Student’s name, student ID number, assignment name, and due date. All assignments must be formatted in the following manner: double

spaced, font size of 11 or 12 point, standard margins, and an indented first line for each paragraph.

Submission Requirements

Unless otherwise instructed, students are expected to submit written assignments on the AIMS platform. I will only accept Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF (.pdf) formats. All files submitted must be saved in the following manner: Student Name_Assignment Name.docx. I expect assignments to be submitted on time. Assignments due in class must be turned in at the beginning of class. I reserve the right to deduct points for late submissions and I reserve the right to determine the percentage to be deducted.

Makeup work

Aside from exceptional situations, there will be no chance to make up missed exams or quizzes or turn assignments in past their due day/time. Proof of an exceptional situation must be submitted to me in writing and signed by the appropriate authority within 24 hours of the beginning of the missed exam. I reserve the right to define an exceptional situation and furthermore to make all final decisions relating to amending, redoing, or making up late or incomplete work.

GENERAL POLICIES

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty consists of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submission of the same work, misuse of academic materials, and complicity in the academic dishonesty of others. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated; the consequences of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to failing an assignment, failing the class, and possibly dismissal from the university. Students are responsible for being observant of and attentive to Akita International University's policies about academic honesty.

Attendance

Learning is an ongoing process; one that builds upon previously acquired insights and skills. Consistent and engaged attendance is vital for success in this course. I reserve the right to deal with or exception or extended absences, on a case-by-case basis.

Special Needs

If you require accommodations, please alert me of your needs on the first day of class so that I can work with the administration to meet them.

Civility & Classroom Decorum

Silence all cell phones, beepers, etc. during class. Speaking on cell phones, texting, or using electronic equipment in any way that is not directly related to class is strictly prohibited.

Participation

Because this course is based in large measure on discussion, the consistent attendance and engaged participation of each registered student is essential. Collaboratively and critically engaging with ideas may lead to disagreement. Colleagues can disagree *and* maintain respect for each other and one another's views. I insist that students strive to learn from the differences that manifest while debating the merit of theoretical and empirical evidence by maintaining an atmosphere of civility during discussion.

SCHEDULE

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| Week 1 | Thinking Spatially |
| Sept 3 | Lecture |
| Week 2 | The Five Themes of Geography |
| Sept 8 | Lecture |
| Sept 10 | Lecture/Due - Gazetteer (Area of Interest) |
| Reading: | Environmental Transformations – Introduction |
| Week 3 | The Urban-Rural Divide |
| Sept 15 | Lecture |
| Sept 17 | Lecture/Due – Gazetteer (Location) |
| Reading | The Urban Revolution – Forward & Chapter 1 |
| Week 4 | The Meanings of Land |
| Sept 22 | NO CLASS |
| Sept 24 | Lecture |
| Reading | Land Use and Society – Introduction & Chapter 1 |
| Week 5 | Land Use & Property Rights |
| Sept 29 | Lecture |
| Oct 1 | Lecture/Due – Gazetteer (Place) |
| Reading | Land Use and Society – Chapter 2 |
| Week 6 | Imagining the Rural |
| Oct 6 | Lecture |
| Oct 8 | Lecture/Due – Gazetteer (Movement) |
| Reading | Rural – Chapter 2 |
| Week 7 | Developing the Rural |
| Oct 13 | NO CLASS |
| Oct 15 | Lecture/Due – Gazetteer (Region) |
| Reading | Latin American Development – Chapter 5 |
| Week 8 | Governing the Environment |
| Oct 20 | Lecture |
| Oct 22 | Lecture/Due – Gazetteer (Human-Environment Interaction) |
| Reading | Environmental Transformations – Chapter 7 |

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| Week 9 | Exploiting the Rural |
| Oct 27 | MIDTERM |
| Oct 29 | Lecture |
| Reading | Rural – Chapter 3 |
| Week 10 | Consuming the Rural |
| Nov 3 | Lecture |
| Nov 5 | Lecture/Due – Gazetteer (Research Question & Outline) |
| Reading | Rural – Chapter 4 |
| Week 11 | Oil, Gas & Water |
| Nov 10 | Lecture |
| Nov 12 | Lecture |
| Reading | Environmental Transformations – Chapter 2 |
| Week 12 | AAA Conference in Denver, CO USA |
| Nov 17 | NO CLASS – Distance Learning TBA |
| Nov 19 | NO CLASS – Distance Learning TBA |
| Week 13 | Soil & Forests |
| Nov 24 | Lecture |
| Nov 26 | Lecture |
| Reading | Environmental Transformations – Chapters 4 & 5 |
| Week 14 | Rural Poverty |
| Dec 1 | Lecture |
| Dec 3 | Lecture/Due – Gazetteer (Research Proposal) |
| Reading | Rural Homelessness – Chapter 4 |
| Week 15 | Gazetteer Presentations |
| Dec 8 | Student Presentations |
| Dec 10 | Student Presentations |
| Week 16 | Exam Week |
| Dec 15 | FINAL EXAM (14:00 – 15:15, room B 205) |