

# GEO 270 Rural Geography

## Land, Labor & Culture



### DETAILS

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Fall 2020  
Tuesday & Thursday 14:00 - 15:15  
Room D 104

Sig Langegger PhD  
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The best way to contact me is to email me.  
Title your email GEO 270.

### DESCRIPTION

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Translated from Greek, geography means writing about the earth, or simply earth writing. In less poetic terms, geography is an academic field that includes the study of the spatial patterns of both human and physical phenomena. By bridging both social and environmental sciences, geographers are uniquely suited to provide insight into complex spatial interactions that manifest as disease pandemics, climate change, urban design, and cultural complexes.

The countryside is at once a source of food and energy, a celebrated realm of bucolic nostalgia that undergirds most national identities, a primitive locale marked by stubborn conservatism and intolerance, a quaint playground enjoyed by sophisticated urban tourists, even a pristine wilderness in need of protection. This course brings these complexities into focus using three theoretical lenses: land tenure, labor relations, and ethnomusicology. In rural areas land tenure and labor relations are closely related. Who owns farmland, the size of individual farms, the location of the markets for agricultural products grown on these farms, and the type of agricultural labor (slave labor, prison labor, sharecropping, tenant farming, wage labor, or family farms) profoundly impact cultural reproduction in rural areas. Adopting the perspective of ethnomusicologists, we will concentrate on the cultural reproduction of rural music. Ethnomusicologists approach music as a social process in order to understand not only *what* music is but *why* it is: what music means to its practitioners and audiences, and how those meanings are conveyed. We will come to understand how Afro-American music and musical instruments combined with Irish reels and jigs and Appalachian ideas about personal freedom to produce American Folk Music; how West African ring shouts were christianized on the Georgia Sea Islands and thus transformed into Gospel Music; and how North African musical ideas diffused to the Mississippi Delta and transformed into the Blues.

Depending upon various realities related to the coronavirus pandemic, this class will be either taught as a live class with lectures and seminars or online as an asynchronous class with recorded lectures and webinars.

## OBJECTIVES

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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 rural problems.
5. Have learned to recognize longstanding spatial impacts of agricultural systems and systems of land tenure.
6. Have gained insight into how class, ethnicity, race, and cultural complexes manifest spatially in rural areas.

## READING

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### Required Texts

JD Vance (2016) *Hillbilly Elegy*

Cynthia Duncan (2015) *Worlds Apart: Politics and Poverty in Rural America*

### Suggested Texts

Colin Woodard (2012) *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Cultures in North America*

E. Annie Proulx (1996) *Accordion Crimes: A Novel*

### Additional Readings

Periodically I will post on AIMS readings selected from my library

## ASSESSMENT

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Reading/Multimedia Quizzes	30.0
Webinar/Seminar Papers	20.0
Webinar/Seminar Participation	20.0
Lecture Participation	5.0
Midterm Exam	12.5
Final Exam	12.5

Total Points Possible	100.0
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### Reading/Multimedia Quizzes

In order to encourage a collective and deep engagement with reading/multimedia assignments throughout the semester and to facilitate well-informed discussions threads, I will post a study guide on AIMS each week. Each week I will administer a quiz that will assess student comprehension of assignments as well as allow students to critically analyze this material. Reading/multimedia quizzes comprise nearly one-third of a student's final grade; therefore keeping current with reading/multimedia assignments is essential to earning high marks in this class.

### Seminar/Webinar Papers

In order to demystify the paper writing process, I will send each student personalized a RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, Task). In other words, I will indicate what *role* I want you to assume as the author. I will indicate the *audience* to which I would like you to address your essay. I will remind you of the *format* I expect. And I will give you a *task* to accomplish with your paper.

### Seminars

On days their **seminar** papers are due, students will be responsible for presenting their paper in class. The presentation style is open and therefore may include a slide-ware based presentation, a reading of the paper, collaborative work among other means of communicating and wrestling with ideas. Two discussion questions are required at the end of each presentation.

Seminar discussions will flow organically from presentations through discussion questions through to open ended discussions.

### Webinars

In posting executive summaries and discussion questions, prime movers initiate, propel, and give cohesion to webinar forums. Webinar forums constitute sustained discussions revolving around specific tasks that I will have given each prime mover as part of their RAFT.

On GEO 220, GEO 240, GEO 260, GEO 270, and GEO 300 AIMS pages you will find a topic field titled Webinars. Under webinars you will find links to each webinar under the day it will be held. Under each webinar link you will find executive summaries and discussion questions posted by each webinar's prime movers.

All students are required to post multiple comments on each webinar forum. Prime movers are required to post their executive summaries and discussion questions. All other students are required to post an answer to at least one discussion question from each prime mover's

executive summary. Finally, each student is required to comment on at least one answer to a post from another student.

I will monitor each webinar forum thread, checking each student's posts for intellectual merit, tone and objectivity. Performance in webinar forums constitutes 100% of students' webinar participation grade.

Webinar forums comprise an asynchronous element of this class. Nevertheless, time matters for prime movers, who must post their executive summaries and their discussion questions before the official beginning of the webinar to which they contribute. Because, I expect circumspect, well-considered responses, students will have five (5) hours after the end of the official class period to post their answers to prime movers' discussion questions as well as to post at least one comment to at least one other student's answer to a prime mover's question.

### **Executive Summaries**

Executive summaries are used to quickly acquaint readers with the main points of a larger paper, proposal or project. For the purposes of this course, executive summaries consist of a *summary* of the section of the reading assigned to the student, a *summary* of the student's paper (including thesis statement and argument), and two *discussion questions*.

All students in this class are responsible for reading all the reading materials. Therefore, prime movers' summaries of readings should be written in such a way as to refresh classmates' memories of the assigned text. Prime mover summaries of readings are very different from summaries of their webinar papers. A webinar paper is an argument hinging on a very specific task that I assigned. The best way to summarize a webinar paper is to reword the introduction and conclusion. Doing so will give webinar participants the bare bones of each prime mover's argument.

At the end of their executive summaries prime movers must pose two discussion questions. One question must relate to the thesis of your paper. The other question must contextualize the paper's thesis in another context: if the reading pivoted on a historical context, then *another* context could be a modern context, if the context reading pivoted on a foreign context, then *another* context could be a domestic context, if the reading pivoted on the lives of others, *another* context could be the lives of your webinar colleagues.

In total executive summaries should comprise between 350 - 550 words. They must be double spaced. A first page header must include all relevant identifying information (name, date, course, professor's name, and a paper title).

Seminar/Webinar papers and presentations will be graded in accordance with the grading rubric posted on AIMS.

### **Seminar/Webinar Participation**

The consistent attendance and engaged participation of each student is essential to the success of webinars.

I will maintain a log detailing each student's engagement in each webinar/seminar.

### **Lecture Participation**

Whether real time or recorded, my lectures will be interspersed with discussion questions. Because this course pivots on a *writing to learn* pedagogy, students will write out their answers to these questions. With recorded lectures students will be directed to appropriate lecture forums

on AIMS. With live lectures, students will be given time to write out their answers. I will then facilitate a class wide discussion of these answers and collect answers for further review.

### **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**

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### **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 PDF (.pdf) documents. 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**

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### **Academic Dishonesty**

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.

In accord with AIU policies and good practices in higher education, acts of academic dishonesty will result in the failure of the course at a minimum. An act of academic dishonesty during the final examination or assignment in lieu of the final examination will result in failure

of all courses registered in the relevant academic term. All cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

### **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 exceptional 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.

Collaboratively and critically engaging with ideas is a powerful pedagogical tool that may lead to disagreement. Colleagues must learn to disagree *and* maintain respect for each other. 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 lectures and discussions.

## **SCHEDULE**

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### **Foundations**

Sept 8                      Lecture - What is Geography  
Sept 10                    Lecture - The Social Production of Space

### **Foundations**

Sept 15                    Lecture - First Effective Settlement  
Sept 17                    Lecture - Cultural Complexes & Labor Conditions

### **Cultural Geographies of the African Diaspora**

Sept 22                    Lecture - The Banjo—Roots and Routes  
Sept 24                    Lecture - Land Reform

### **Cultural Geographies of the African Diaspora**

Sept 29                    Lecture - Slave Songs  
Oct 1                        Webinar

### **Cultural Geographies of the African Diaspora**

Oct 6                        Lecture - The Black Church  
Oct 8                        Webinar

### **Cultural Geographies of the African Diaspora**

Oct 13                    Lecture - The Banjo—America's Instrument?  
Oct 15                    Webinar

### **Cultural Geographies of the European Diaspora**

Oct 20                    Lecture - The Colonization of North America  
Oct 22                    **MIDTERM**

**First Effective Settlement**

Oct 27           Lecture - Appalachia  
Oct 29           Webinar

**First Effective Settlement**

Nov 3           **NO CLASS**  
Nov 5           Webinar

**First Effective Settlement**

Nov 10           Lecture - Deep South (Georgia Piedmont)  
Nov 12           Webinar

**First Effective Settlement**

Nov 17           Lecture - Deep South (Carolina Low Country and Sea Islands)  
Nov 19           Lecture - Deep South (Carolina Low Country and Sea Islands)

**First Effective Settlement**

Nov 24           Lecture - Deep South (Mississippi Delta)  
Nov 26           Webinar

**First Effective Settlement**

Dec 1           Lecture - Puritan Utopias (Yankeedom)  
Dec 3           Webinar

**First Effective Settlement**

Dec 8           Lecture - Quaker Utopias (Midlands)  
Dec 10           Webinar

**Exam Week**

Dec 15           **FINAL EXAM**