

GEO 220 Geography of North America



Oglala Lakota
Watercolor on Antique Ledger Paper
Artist: Joe Pulliam

DETAILS

Spring 2024

Tuesdays & Thursdays | On-demand learning between 8:30 & 20:30

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Zoom Room (ZR)

A Zoom Room is a customizable zoom meeting. Individual students or groups of students need only contact me to arrange one. I am generally available seven days a week between 10:00am and 6:00pm California time.

The best way to contact me is to email me.
Title your email GEO 220

DESCRIPTION

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 influence of indigenous peoples on the cultural and economic development of North America is profound, longstanding, yet paradoxically invisible. Crossing the Bering Land Bridge in waves between 15,000 and 10,000 years ago paleoindians and their domesticated

dogs migrated to North America. As these groups arrived the great ice sheets of the Pleistocene glacial period were retreating. Paleoindians encountered a series of landscapes not experienced by humans for tens of thousands of years: megafauna, such as mastodons and mammoths as well as cataclysmic floods caused by melting ice sheets. Climate change, drought, natural disasters and the disappearance of megafauna, splintered this migratory stream into countless cultural and lingual tributaries. Each paleoindian cultural complex encountered a world bereft of easily domesticated animal species. Horses, cattle, domestic sheep and domestic goats, all evolved on and remained on the Eurasia and African continents. Although lacking beasts of burden, these emergent cultures domesticated corn, potatoes, cotton, tobacco. They planned and built vast cities. They engaged in complex networks of trade and cultural exchange. European “discovery” of North America introduced pathogens such as measles and smallpox, iron tools, livestock, horses, and guns. This course unpacks the geographies of violence, conquest, and resistance that followed.

I rely on two pedagogical tools: the lecture and the webinar. Using perspectives offered by cultural, economic, and historical geography, lectures help students construct a theoretical and historical vocabulary. Webinars emerge directly from readings and give students the opportunity analyze the diffusion of indigenous cultural and economic practices throughout various North American spaces.

This class is only accessible through time-independent modules on AIMS. Each module will require approximately one hour and fifteen minutes of student engagement through recorded lectures, quizzes, and lecture forums. This course is uncoupled from the space of a classroom, and it is uncoupled from the time of a class period. Quizzes and exams must be taken during a 12 hour window (8:30am to 8:30pm) of each class day. However lecture slides and recorded lectures will be made available to students one week before the day of each class. Lecture forum posts and homework assignments may be completed in advance; however they must be submitted before the due date/time. Because they are propelled by prime mover executive summaries, webinars must be engaged with and posted to between 8:30am and 8:30pm the day of the webinar.

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 cultural, economic, and historical geographies of North America.
5. Have learned to recognize relationships between the historical and contemporary geographies of North America.
6. Have gained insight into how North American nations are products of the complex and often violent meshing of Native American, African, and European cultural complexes.

AILA ELEMENTS

Like applied international liberal arts, the academic field of geography pivots on interconnectivity. Geography foregrounds spatial specificity within a wider understanding of physical, biological, cultural, and economic connectivity. My geography courses emerge from my anthropological research methods, my sociological reasoning, the pragmatism I gained in

studying urban planning, in operating an award winning restaurant, and in real estate development.

This course roots in the geographical term teleconnection. In physical geography teleconnection refers to the complex relationships between oceanic and atmospheric anomalies over great distances. In human geography teleconnection is about complex relationships between time, space, people, and events.

Finally, I foreground a pedagogy called *writing to learn*. This is a reading and writing rich course. Therefore, it will aid and abet students in developing the core communication skills necessary to prepare for and produce their capstone research project.

AILA ACTIVITIES & PROJECTS

This is an intellectually challenging course. Unlike in-person classes that occur in lecture halls and during class periods, this course places multiple time-management and self-motivational demands on students. The high levels of self-reliance and self-efficacy required to succeed in this course will stand students in good stead as their academic and professional careers unfold and consequently the guiding hands of mentors and peers lose their reassuring presence.

The project upon which this course turns is the amalgamation of an academic book (in its entirety) with the sophisticated geographical theory presented my lectures. The linchpin to this coalescence is effective communication. My underpinning pedagogy is writing-to-learn, a pedagogy that generates skills in effective communication. Writing-to-learn develops and nurtures critical reading skills and effective writing skills.

READING

Required Book

Pekka Hämäläinen (2019) *Indigenous Continent: The Epic Contest for North America*

Required Documentary

Rumble! The Indians that Rocked the World

ASSESSMENT

Reading/Multimedia Quizzes	25
Executive Summary	15
Webinar Participation	15
Lecture Participation	15
<u>Final Exam (oral)</u>	<u>30</u>
Total Points Possible	100

Reading/Multimedia Quizzes

For each webinar I administer a quiz that will assess student comprehension of reading/multimedia assignments. Quizzes also allow students to critically engage with this material. Reading/multimedia quizzes comprise 25 percent of a student's final grade; therefore

keeping current with reading/multimedia assignments is essential to earning high marks in this class.

Executive Summary

In the realms of public policy, governance, and corporate management, 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 a particular student, an *argument* (a thesis statement informed by the RAFT I sent do each prime mover, and a brief yet structured argument), and *discussion questions*.

All students are responsible for reading all the reading materials and engaging with other course media. Therefore, executive summaries should be written in such a way as to refresh colleagues' memories of the assigned text/media. In other words, prime movers should assume their audience is familiar with the reading/media. Executive summaries should comprise between 500 - 750 words. I expect them to be structurally sound, conceptually accurate, and logically coherent. I grade executive summaries against a rubric.

At the end of their executive summaries prime movers must pose two discussion questions. Discussion questions must relate to the executive summary's thesis, a central argument presented in the reading/media, or to larger issues related to the reading/media.

Webinar Participation

In posting executive summaries and discussion questions, prime movers initiate, propel, and give cohesion to webinar forums. Webinar forums constitute asynchronous discussions that revolve around specific tasks given to each prime mover as part of their RAFT. Prime movers are required to post their executive summaries and discussion questions, by 8:30 on the day (Japan time) of their webinar. All other students are required to post an answer to at least one prime movers' executive summary and comment on one at least one other students' answer by 20:30 (Japan time) on the day of the webinar. Discussion question answers should comprise between 150 and 300 words. Prime movers must comment on at least two answers to their discussion questions.

I am in California, which is approximately a day and a half behind Japan. On the day of the webinar (California time) I participate in the forum. I comment on each student's answer to their discussion question of choice. I maintain a log detailing each student's engagement in each webinar forum. Webinar participation grades are based exclusively on this log.

Lecture Participation

My recorded lectures close with a forum question, to which students are required to post an answer. Lecture forum posts should comprise between 75 and 150 words.

I am in California, which is approximately a day and a half behind Japan. On the day of the lecture (California time) I participate in the forum. I post a comment to each student's answer to my discussion question. I maintain a log detailing each student's engagement in each webinar forum. Lecture participation grades are based exclusively on this log.

Final Exam

The final will cover material presented in lectures and in the reading assignments during the entire semester. The final exam is an oral examination, which will be conducted via a 20 minute zoom meeting with each student during finals week.

ASSESSMENT POLICIES

Submission Requirements

Students are expected to submit all written assignments, including forum posts, webinar posts, and discussion questions on the AIMS platform.

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 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 other others. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

In accordance with AIU policies and good practices in higher education, acts of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism, cheating, forgery (on a paper, examination, test, or other assignment) may result in the failure of the course. An act of academic dishonesty during the final examination, or assignment in lieu of the final examination, may result in failure of all courses registered in the relevant academic term. Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Records for relevant action.

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 you and the administration to meet them.

Civility & Classroom Decorum

Learning is a participatory process; therefore student contribution to class is important. This course is based on forum discussions. Disagreement is part of all scholarly debate. Colleagues can disagree *and* maintain respect for each other and one another's views. I insist that we strive to learn from the differences that manifest while debating the merit of theoretical and empirical evidence by maintaining an atmosphere of civility during forums.

SCHEDULE

Foundations

April 9 Introductions
 April 11 First Nations (Inuit, Mississippian, Hohokam)
 April 16 Representational Spaces (Cartographic Dispossession)

Biochemical Geographies

April 18 The Kelp Highway
 April 23 Tall Grass & Short Grass Prairies

First Contacts

April 25 Great Basin & Mexico (Aztec, Ute)
 May 7 Southwest (Apache, Comanche)
 May 9 Southeast (Five Civilized Tribes)
 May 14 Great Plains (Sioux, Ioway, Ojibway)
 May 16 West Coast (California Tribes)

Geographies of Violence

May 21 The Right to Bear Arms
 May 23 Slave Trades
 May 28 Treaties, Removals & Reservations
 May 30 Manifest Destiny & The Homestead Act
 June 4 The Dawes Act & Ghost Dancers
 June 6 The Troy Chavez Memorial Peace Garden

The Epic Conquest for North America

June 11 Webinar - *Rumble!*
 June 13 Webinar - *Rumble!*
 June 18 Webinar - *Indigenous Continent*
 June 20 Webinar - *Indigenous Continent*
 June 25 Webinar - *Indigenous Continent*
 June 27 Webinar - *Indigenous Continent*
 July 2 Webinar - *Indigenous Continent*
 July 4 Webinar - *Indigenous Continent*
 July 9 Webinar - *Indigenous Continent*
 July 11 Webinar - *Indigenous Continent*
 July 16 Webinar - *Indigenous Continent*

 July 18 Course Epilogue
 July 22-25 **Oral Final Examination**