

Syllabus
Geography 3620 – Geography of North America
Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. Tim Collins, Professor, Department of Geography

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:30 – 11:35 AM & 1:30 – 3 PM, or by appointment

Lecture: Mondays & Wednesdays 11:50 AM – 1:10 PM, BEH S, Room 101

Prerequisite: None

Course Fulfills: Diversity (DV) requirement, and addresses the following Essential Learning Outcomes: Inquiry and Analysis, Critical thinking, and Intercultural Knowledge and Competence

Department: Geography

Credit Hours: GEOG 3620 is a three credit hour course. At the University of Utah, it is assumed that there is at least one hour in class and two hours outside of class per week or the equivalent combination connected to every credit hour.

Course Catalog Description: With attention primarily to the United States and secondarily to Canada and Mexico, North America is examined from three different points of view: its physical character, the human societies occupying it, and the distinctive sub-regions of which it is comprised. The physical geography emphasizes geomorphology, biogeography, and climatology whereas the human geography stresses social, political and economic characteristics. The study of sub-regions identifies locally distinctive attitudes, values, and cultural practices.

Expected Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Distinguish regions of the United States based on their social, cultural, and economic features
- Explain the physical landscape and settlement patterns that have led to region-specific features
- Have an understanding of how their worldview and status of privilege in American society shape their perceptions of, and interactions with, people who hold different worldviews and statuses of privilege
- Appreciate the diversity that characterizes particular places based on people's different worldviews and cultural practices

Required Text and Materials:

There is no textbook required for this course. Readings and videos will be assigned by the instructor and posted on Canvas. You are expected to read/watch the respective materials before each class meeting.

Important dates:

Last day to add, drop (delete), elect CR/NC, or audit classes

Friday, 30 August

Last day to withdraw from classes

Friday, 18 October

Course Grading and Assessments

Table of Grades

Percentage Points:

Quiz 1	9%
Quiz 2	10%
Quiz 3	10%
Quiz 4	10%
Place Name Quiz	9%
Exercise 1	6%
Exercise 2	6%
Exercise 3	9%
Implicit Association Tests	10%
Reflection on Privilege	10%
Class Participation	12%
Total	101%

Grade Scale:

A	94-100%
A-	90-94%
B+	87-90%
B	83-87%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-80%
C	73-77%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-70%
D	63-67%
D-	60-63%
E	<60%

Grades	Points	Explanation
A	(4.0 points)	Excellent performance, superior achievement
A-	(3.7 points)	
B+	(3.3 points)	Good performance, substantial achievement
B	(3.0 points)	
B-	(2.7 points)	
C+	(2.3 points)	Standard performance and achievement
C	(2.0 points)	
C-	(1.7 points)	
D+	(1.3 points)	Substandard performance, marginal achievement
D	(1.0 points)	
D-	(0.7 points)	
E	(0.0 points)	Unsatisfactory performance and achievement

Assessments:

Course assessments are briefly described below. A detailed document for each assignment will be posted to Canvas.

Lecture Quizzes:

There are four (4) quizzes covering material presented in the course lectures. Quizzes are comprised of multiple choice questions and will be administered through Canvas. Dates of the quizzes are posted on Canvas and are listed in the course schedule below. Quizzes close at the time and date specified on Canvas and cannot be made-up if missed.

Place Name Quiz:

The Place Name Quiz will consist of multiple-choice questions. Each question will ask about the location of a place by putting it into a context relative to other locations. For example: “Which of the following cities is closest to Canada?” (Possible answers: San Francisco, Detroit, Philadelphia, or Denver.) Another example would be: “If you fly from Houston to Chicago, which of the following rivers will your plane most likely pass over?” (Possible answers: Mississippi, Rio Grande, Ohio, or St. Lawrence.)

Exercises:

Three exercises will be conducted during the semester. These exercises provide an opportunity to more deeply explore diversity topics discussed in the course. Below are brief descriptions of each of the three exercises. Detailed directions for each exercise will be provided on Canvas.

Exercise 1 – Poverty and the Capacity to Adapt to Climate Change

This exercise asks students to analyze socioeconomic data to determine the capacity of different communities to respond to impacts of climate change in coastal regions, specifically

increased flooding and sea-level rise. People who live in poverty have fewer means to react to climate change impacts (e.g., they are less likely to have personal transportation to evacuate during flooding and mobility to move from an area experiencing increased coastal erosion). Students will use census data to identify coastal communities that will be least able to adapt to impacts of climate change.

Exercise 2 – Demographic Data and Racial/Ethnic Inequality

The second exercise focuses on demographic measures. Through lecture and research, students will become familiar with the sources of data and methods to compute the *infant mortality rate* (often is used as an indicator of health conditions within a population); *per capita annual income* (a common indicator of individual wealth within a population); and *crude birth rate* (commonly used to measure fertility within a population). Once these methods are thoroughly understood, students will tabulate data on how Hispanic/Latino people, African Americans, and American Indians/Native Americans in the US compare to the national average for each of those measures. Based on their tabulated data, students will then answer questions regarding what the data tell us about national-level inequality among those different racial/ethnic groups.

This exercise will require critical thinking by students to (1) clarify the precise way in which each demographic measure is calculated, (2) know the sources of data used to compute each measure, (3) understand the range of numeric values that typically occur for each measure, and (4) recognize the strengths and limitations of each indicator of health, wealth, or fertility.

Exercise 3 – Region Identification

This exercise presents images of physical and cultural landscapes of the United States and asks students to identify the geographic region associated with each image.

Implicit Association Tests:

Implicit Association Tests, part of [Project Implicit](#), are meant to disclose subconscious biases that we tend to have regarding various groups of people in society. Tests for this course will include “*race*,” “*Arab-Muslim*,” “*Native American*,” “*Asian American*,” and “*skin-tone*.” Students will reflect upon their scores for the tests in relation to their worldviews and write critically about actions they might take to reduce bias in their perceptions and decision making.

Reflection on Privilege:

Students will take an online privilege test to identify their level of privilege in American society and answer a series of questions about their score in relation to their perceptions of place (the physical and human elements that are characteristic to, and defining of, a location).

Class Participation:

Students are expected to participate in class discussions and exercises.

Extra Credit:

There is **NO** extra credit available for this course.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic
Week 1 - Introduction	
Mon 19 Aug	Syllabus & course introduction
Wed 21 Aug	The geographic perspective: Five themes of geography
Week 2 – Physical and Cultural Landscapes	
Mon 26 Aug	Physical regions: Setting the scene for human activity
Wed 28 Aug	Settlement patterns: Cultures across the landscape
Week 3 – Place Name Quiz	
Mon 2 Sep	<i>No Class – Labor Day</i>
Wed 4 Sep	Political economy: Production, distribution, and consumption / Practice for Place Name Quiz
Week 4 – The Atlantic Periphery	
Mon 9 Sep	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 11 Sep	Diversity related concepts and topics
Assignment	<i>Complete <u>Place Name Quiz</u> by 11:30 AM Monday, 9 September</i>
Week 5 – Megalopolis	
Mon 16 Sep	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 18 Sep	Gentrification
Assignment	<i>Submit <u>Implicit Association Tests</u> assignment to Canvas by 11:30 AM Wednesday, 18 September</i>
Week 6 – The Great Lakes and Corn Belt	
Mon 23 Sep	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 25 Sep	Opioid epidemic
Assignment	<i>Complete <u>Quiz 1</u> by 11:30 AM Monday, 23 September</i>
Week 7 – The Inland South	
Mon 30 Sep	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 2 Oct	Civil rights and the legacy of "Jim Crow" laws
Week 8 – Fall Break – No Class Meetings	
Mon 7 Oct	<i>No Class</i>
Wed 9 Oct	<i>No Class</i>
Week 9 – The Coastal South	
Mon 14 Oct	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 16 Oct	Poverty and the capacity to adapt to climate change
Week 10 – The Great Plains	
Mon 21 Oct	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 23 Oct	Pine Ridge Reservation: Multigenerational alcoholism
Assignment	<i>Complete <u>Quiz 2</u> by 11:30 AM Monday, 21 October</i>
Week 11 – The Rocky Mountains	
Mon 28 Oct	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 30 Oct	Women's suffrage in Wyoming
Assignment	<i>Submit <u>Exercise 1</u> to Canvas by 11:30 AM Wednesday, 30 October</i>

Date	Topic
Week 12 – The Intermountain West	
Mon 4 Nov	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 6 Nov	Internment of Japanese Americans: Racism and xenophobia in the American West
Week 13 – MexAmerica	
Mon 11 Nov	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 13 Nov	<i>Colonias</i> : Unregulated development and extreme poverty along the US/Mexican border
Assignment	Complete <u>Quiz 3</u> by 11:30 AM Monday, 11 November
Week 14 – California	
Mon 18 Nov	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 20 Nov	Migrant farm workers: An invisible population of the US
Assignment	Submit <u>Reflection on Privilege</u> to Canvas by 11:30 AM Monday, 18 November
Week 15 – The Pacific Northwest / Thanksgiving	
Mon 25 Nov	Discussion of elements characterizing the region
Wed 27 Nov	<i>No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday</i>
Assignment	Submit <u>Exercise 2</u> to Canvas by 11:30 AM Wednesday, 27 November
Week 16 – Conclusion	
Mon 2 Dec	Environmental consequences of resource extraction / Course conclusion
Wed 4 Dec	Practice for Region Identification Exercise
Assignments	Complete <u>Quiz 4</u> by 11:30 AM Monday, 2 December Complete <u>Exercise 3 (Region Identification)</u> on Canvas by 11:59 PM Friday, 6 December
Week 17 – NO CLASS MEETING / NO FINAL EXAM	

**Note that the above schedule is subject to change.*

Additional Information

Scheduling Conflicts: Please speak with the instructor within the first two weeks of class regarding any known conflicts you may have with the course schedule.

Academic Integrity: The University of Utah is committed to nurturing academic excellence, truth, honesty, and personal integrity. The faculty expects all students to maintain high ethical standards. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. As stated in the Student Code (<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>); “Academic misconduct’ includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one’s work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information, as defined further below. It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct.”

- “‘Cheating’ involves the unauthorized possession or use of information, materials, notes, study aids, or other devices in any academic exercise, or the unauthorized communication with another person during such an exercise.”
- “‘Misrepresenting one’s work’ includes, but is not limited to, representing material prepared by another as one's own work, or submitting the same work in more than one course without prior permission of both faculty members.”

- “‘Plagiarism’ means the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person’s work in, or as a basis for, one’s own work offered for academic consideration or credit or for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one’s own, without attribution, any other individual’s words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression.”
- “‘Fabrication’ or ‘falsification’ includes reporting experiments or measurements or statistical analyses never performed; manipulating or altering data or other manifestations of research to achieve a desired result; falsifying or misrepresenting background information, credentials or other academically relevant information; or selective reporting, including the deliberate suppression of conflicting or unwanted data. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data and/or results.”

This course has a zero-tolerance policy for academic misconduct. For any coursework in which it is demonstrated that a student engaged in academic misconduct the resulting academic sanction will be a score of zero for the coursework. Additionally, the student will be required to meet with the academic advisor from the Department of Geography and/or their respective major department, the instance of academic misconduct will be entered into a university database, and the student may be subject to further academic sanctions. See the Student Code for additional information on academic sanctions.

Student and Faculty Responsibilities: In this course, I as a faculty person emphasize maintaining a classroom environment where the utmost respect for diversity and all participants’ perspectives is upheld. Therefore, students are expected to conduct themselves in a considerate manner. All participants in the course must respect the classroom environment by being on time, turning off cellphones, earphones, and headphones, avoiding extraneous talking, and refraining from reading non-class material during class time.

The class will follow accepted University of Utah policies and procedures as discussed in the Student Code. Specifically: All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content (<http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>).

According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty person’s responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

Students in Need of Accommodations and Support Services: In accordance with *The Americans with Disabilities Act*, the University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this course, you should give reasonable prior notice to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements

for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Sexual Misconduct: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status, or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Help with Writing and English as an Additional/Second Language: Please be aware of resources on campus that will support you with your writing development; these resources are relevant to all students, but may be especially important for learners of English as an additional/second language. These resources include the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu/>) and the English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli/>). If you are a learner of English as an additional/second language, please let me know so we can discuss the possibilities for additional support in this course.

Commitment to Undergraduate Students: As the only institution in the state classified in the highest research category (R1), at the University of Utah you will have access to state-of-the-art research facilities and be able to be part of the knowledge creation process. You will have the opportunity to do research of your own with faculty who are leading experts in their field, engaging in [programs](#) that match your research interests. Further, you will interact with and often take classes with graduate students that provide an advanced understanding of the knowledge in your field.

Safety & Wellness: The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677) this number will get you to a dispatch officer at the University of Utah Department of Public Safety (DPS; dps.utah.edu). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

The University of Utah seeks to provide a safe and healthy experience for students, employees, and others who make use of campus facilities. In support of this goal, the University has established confidential resources and support services to assist students who may have been affected by harassment, abusive relationships, or sexual misconduct. A detailed listing of University Resources for campus safety can be found at <https://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/campussafety.php>

Your well-being is key to your personal safety. If you are in crisis, call 801-587-3000; help is close.

The university has additional excellent resources to promote emotional and physical wellness, including the Counseling Center (<https://counselingcenter.utah.edu>), the Wellness Center (<https://wellness.utah.edu>), and the Women’s Resource Center (<https://womenscenter.utah.edu>). Counselors and advocates in these centers can help guide you to other resources to address a range of issues, including substance abuse and addiction.

Undocumented Student Support: Immigration is a complex phenomenon with broad impact—those who are directly affected by it, as well as those who are indirectly affected by their relationships with family members, friends, and loved ones. If your immigration status presents obstacles to engaging in specific activities or fulfilling specific course criteria, confidential arrangements may be requested from the Dream Center. Arrangements with the Dream Center will not jeopardize your student status, your financial aid, or any other part of your residence. The Dream Center offers a wide range of resources to support undocumented students (with and without DACA) as well as students from mixed-status families. To learn more, please contact the Dream Center at 801.213.3697 or visit dream.utah.edu.

Non-Contract Note: The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the course schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Note that modifications are most often made to rectify an error that would confuse and/or disadvantage students. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas under Announcements.