

GEOG 6961: Seminar in Geographic Thought and Inquiry

Fall 2023

Gardner Commons 1790

M 11:50am-2:50pm

Instructor

Richard Medina

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801-585-6245

Office Hours

Office Hours: M 9:30am-11:30am, W 9:30-11:30am, or by appointment

Textbook

Cresswell, T. (2013) Geographical Thought: A Critical Introduction. Wiley-Blackwell. Other readings will be assigned throughout the semester.

Course Overview

The purpose of this class is two-fold. First, it will prepare you for your graduate program. This will include topics of: what to expect, how to do research, research funding, jobs, mental health, university and department resources, etc. Second, it provides foundational knowledge for our discipline. As geographers, we are all bound by spatial thinking, regardless of sub-discipline. We will discuss the history of geography in-depth and look at the discipline's evolution to get to the point we are at today.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the foundations of spatial thinking
- Have a common understanding of the evolution of the field of geography
- Learn about Department of Geography faculty and their areas of research
- Initiate the identification of a geographic research sub-field and thesis topic
- Develop tools to be a successful graduate student that will last into your career

Course Webtools

This course has an online component using the CANVAS e-learning environment. It is available through the Campus Information System at www.utah.edu. You are responsible for all announcements, additional reading assignments and other material posted on the GEOG 6961 site, so be sure to check it frequently. I will also be posting PDFs of the slides I use in the lectures, as well as links to helpful and interesting websites.

Assignments

For each week, discussions on the listed topic will be student led. Groups of 2-3 students will be assigned specific topics throughout the semester. Each student group will structure the discussion based on the assigned book chapter and readings provided by the instructor. The group should

find 2-3 more articles to discuss that they find relevant to the discussion topic. Along with the histories and philosophies introduced in the readings, students should also discuss the relevance of the topics in today's understanding of geography. For each week, students should also discuss the most innovative contributors and their contributions to the discipline. The groups can use handouts and presentation tools if it helps guide the discussion.

Other assignments may be given throughout the semester.

Participation

The instructor will be evaluating student contributions to class discussions. Preparation for discussions as indicated on the syllabus is strongly recommended. The following scale will be used to evaluate participation in each class:

- 3 Active participation, contributed insightful comments or questions to discussion, came to class prepared to participate
- 2 Moderate participation, made some contributions to discussion, may have come to class underprepared
- 1 Poor participation, made very minor contributions to discussion and/or came to class unprepared
- 0 No participation, did not contribute to discussion

Midterm Paper and Presentation

The midterm presentation is a project intended to help us learn about the research being conducted in the department and to learn more about the faculty. This process should help students identify faculty members to build their research committees. Each student is to identify faculty members that they may consider for their committees. This should be at least 3 for MS students and 5 (1 outside the department) for Ph.D. students, but can include more. We will discuss each potential committee member and why you think they would be a good fit. Please consider their history and research contributions to geography.

Final Paper and Presentation

Your final paper and presentation will be on your research subdiscipline and some specific research questions you may ask. This will include a literature review of the study area and potential research topics. Who are the main researchers in the field? Where does the research stand today? What journals might you publish your research in? Which conferences might you go to present your research?

Evaluation

The following weights will be assigned to labs and exams to determine grades for the course:

- Assignments: 25%
- Participation: 25%
- Midterm Paper and Presentation: 25%
- Final Paper and Presentation: 25%

Tentative Class Schedule

Wk	Date	Book Chapter / Primary Topic	Secondary Topic	Assignment for Following Week
1	Aug 21	Introduction, transitions	None	Read first and second chapter of book
2	Aug 28	Defining your field Introduction to Geography	What is Geography?	Do handout on campus library resources Read papers on mental illness
	Sep 4	<i>Labor Day – No Class</i>		
3	Sep 11	Mental Illness in Academia	Campus library resources and reference searches	Read Graduate Handbook Read Chapter 3 – The Emergence of Modern Geography
4	Sep 18	Guest speaker	Graduate Handbook	Read Chapter 4 – Thinking About Regions Read papers on publication
5	Sep 25	Modern Geography	Publishing	Read Chapter 5 – Spatial Science and the Quantitative Revolution Read papers on quantitative revolution
6	Oct 2	Quantitative Revolution	Quantitative Revolution (Rejection of?)	Read Chapter 6 – Humanistic Geographies Do work on committee construction
	Oct 9	<i>Fall Break – No Class</i>		
7	Oct 16	Humanistic Geographies	Midterm Papers Due / Midterm Presentations	Read Chapter 7 – Marxist Geographies Read papers on science
8	Oct 23	Marxist Geography	What is science? (Tentative)	Read Chapter 8 – Feminist Geographies Read papers on race and racism in geography
9	Oct 30	Feminist Geography	Diversity, Race, and Racism in Geography	Do work on geographer and contributions Read Postmodernism and Beyond

10	Nov 6	Postmodernism and Beyond	Geographer Report	Read Chapter 10 – Toward Poststructuralist Geographies Read papers on grant writing
11	Nov 13	Poststructuralist Geographies	Grant Writing	Read Chapter 11 – Relational Geographies Search for jobs; readings on applications/CVs
12	Nov 20	Relational Geographies	Jobs (applications...) and CVs	Read Chapter 12 – More than Human Geographies Read papers on proposals
13	Nov 27	More than Human Geographies	How to write your thesis/dissertation proposal	Finish final papers and presentations
14	Dec 4	TBD	Final Papers Due / Final Presentations	

Important Dates

Labor Day – September 4

Fall Break – October 8-15

Thanksgiving Break – November 23-26

Classes End – December 7

Final Exam Period – December 11-15

Plagiarism Policy

Students are expected to do individual work except where group collaboration is specifically encouraged by the instructor. Work by others included in assignments should be cited.

Coursework that is partially or wholly plagiarized will be assigned a zero grade. Plagiarism is defined in the section below.

Academic Misconduct Statement and Definitions

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Penalties may include failure of an assignment, the entire course, and/or the filing of formal charges with appropriate university authorities.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, and plagiarism:

- Cheating involves the unauthorized possession or use of information in an academic exercise, including unauthorized communication with another person during an exercise such as an examination.

- 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 all instructors.
- Plagiarism means the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person's work in one's own work offered for academic consideration or public presentation.

Disabilities Statement

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 the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Safety & Wellness

Your safety is our top priority. In an emergency, dial 911 or seek a nearby emergency phone (throughout campus). Report any crimes or suspicious people to 801-585-COPS; this number will get you to a dispatch officer at the University of Utah Department of Public Safety (DPS; dps.utah.edu). If at any time, you would like to be escorted by a security officer to or from areas on campus, DPS will help — just give a call.

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.

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.

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](tel:8012133697) or visit dream.utah.edu.**

- ***Frequently Asked Questions:***

As the Dream Center has become more established, we are receiving recurring questions. We have answered these questions and included them on a new page on our website: [Frequently Asked Questions](#). Please visit our page and if you have additional questions, updates, or recommendations you would like to propose, let us know. We welcome feedback and suggestions.

- ***Outreach and Information Materials:***

With the support from the Office for Equity & Diversity, we have developed and included new resources materials on our page: [UndocuAllies](#). These new outreach and information materials include a new brochure available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), and the Utah State Court Self-Help Center: Detention Emergency Resources. *We will be regularly revising these resources, so please make sure to visit our website for updates.*