

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY
GEOG 2251 - GEOGRAPHICAL INQUIRY AND INTERPRETATION – 2016
COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor

Dr. W. Wilson, Department of Geography, RC 2006C, 343-8274

Office Hours: as needed.

Tel: (807) 343-8274

e-mail: I usually only respond to student emails during office hours so seeing me then or in class with your questions is faster. I will be very occasionally sending you logistical emails about class times, etc. My email for emergencies is wrwilson@spencroft.ca

Introduction

Welcome to GEOG 2251 – Geographical Inquiry and Interpretation. This class will provide you with an exploration of the many and varied traditions of geography. In addition, you will be instructed in some basic methods of geographical investigation, analysis, and communication. The focus of this class will be on how geographical traditions undertake geographical inquiry, how they understand the interpretive task of geography, how each of these traditions can contribute to our current practice as geographers, and on how each tradition understands the importance and form of geographical communication. Workload and expectations of excellence in this class will reflect the fact that it is a specialized step towards an Honours Geography degree. My job is to facilitate your movement to this new stage in your geographical career, i.e., to facilitate your growth as a critical, professional geographer.

Aim

By the end of this course, successful students should understand:

- 1) The history of geographical thought and practice;
- 2) The necessary link between clear thinking and clear communication;
- 3) The full wealth of geographical methods and philosophies;
- 4) The practice of geographical inquiry;
- 5) The practice of geographical interpretation.

Successful students will also gain technical skills in:

- 1) Writing;
- 2) Research;
- 3) Cartography;
- 4) Various software packages.

Successful students will emerge from this class with the ability to participate in conversations about geography at an advanced academic and professional level. This means that they will be familiar with the language, terminology, and theories used by academics and professionals in the various fields of geography. Some advanced students should emerge from this class with concrete ideas for further, advanced research at the senior undergraduate level, i.e., ideas for undergraduate theses or projects.

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Learning Methods

- Lectures BB 1054 – Mondays and Wednesdays 10:00 – 11:30
- Labs BB 1054 – Friday 12:30 – 2:30 or Tuesday 2:30 – 4:30 (weekly)

Readings and materials

The required textbooks and readings are:

Required

1. A university level atlas of whatever age. A good new one is Philip's (2008). *Oxford New Concise World Atlas Second Edition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press;
2. Dalrymple, William (1988) *In Xanadu*. Penguin.
3. Woodward, Colin (2011) *American Nations*. Penguin.
4. Marshall, Tim (2016). *Prisoners of Geography*. Scribner.
5. Articles you will be able to acquire through the library (see Bibliography);
6. Either the *Chicago Manual of Style* or *APA Publishing Manual* and a copy of the Department of Geography *Thesis Manual*.

Recommended

7. It is expected that at various times during the term you will find readings on your own which will contain information that you can contribute to class discussions and assignments. You may want to become particularly familiar with the academic geographical journals.

These are all books that you will use throughout your career as a geographer, i.e., at the undergraduate, professional, and graduate levels. **In addition, you will be required to purchase some equipment and notebooks for the lab and projects. More information on this will be available in the labs and tutorials.**

Workload and Expectations of Excellence

Details of the following assignments are provided on the document that accompanies this class outline. We will also be working on your professional CV and application letter. There is NO final examination in this class.

Lab Assignments (4 of 5 write-ups)	– 50% of final grade	Due throughout.
First Paper	– 25% of final grade	See Schedule.
Second Paper	– 25% of final grade	See Schedule.

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Workload: You should anticipate doing at least 4-5 hours of reading and class preparation per week (Note: This is 4-5 hours of good quality work). Time needed to complete assignments is not included in this estimate, nor is time for lab work. Not all topics covered in the readings will be covered in lecture, tutorial, and lab-work. Conversely, not all topics covered in the lab and in lecture are covered in the readings. You are responsible to be familiar with all the information covered in the readings, in lectures, and in labs. My advice to you is to plan your term carefully and conservatively: **Expect the unexpected.** Remember that you have probably never done this type of work before, that learning new skills is often challenging and difficult, and that you will need time to practice and perfect your own geographical style to bring it in-line with professional standards. Above all, identify any problems you might encounter early on and then talk to me or other professionals about solutions: Don't wait until the last minute!

Marking: I will undertake the marking for this class assisted by your lab instructor. This is a core class that is preparing you for advanced work, possibly in the very demanding field of professional geography. Thus, there will be no late submissions of assignments. This rule will only be waived on presentation of a medical certificate of sickness.

The marking scheme used in this class is in-line with expectations at Canada's top undergraduate universities and with professional employment standards, both of which allow a very narrow window of appropriate performance. Again, my goal is to provide you with the same level and quality of instruction that you would receive at Mount Allison or Trent. In addition to grammar and style, which are discussed below, assignments will be graded on demonstrated critical thought, internal logic, clarity of data presentation and the number of considered academic sources. "Considered academic sources" are articles, books, and other forms of information that you find, analyse, and critique in an academic fashion.

Grammar and Style: It is expected that written submissions in Geography courses will conform to high standards of grammar and style. This applies to lab assignments, as well. As professional geographers and/or teachers, it is your responsibility to be able to communicate simply and directly. Although the penalty may vary from course to course, and from one kind of written work to another, poor grammar and style will be penalized in all grading of written work submitted in Geography courses. Sub-standard assignments will be returned un-marked. A required text for this course is either the *APA Manual* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*. You **must** bring your manual(s), along with proof of use, to any meeting with me that deals with issues of grammar and/or style. Of course, appropriate allowances will be made for students whose first language is not English.

The required Department of Geography *Thesis Manual* provides you with the guidelines that are used for citations for honours theses in the Geography Department. No other citation system will be accepted in this course. Note that this system is adopted from the *Canadian Geographer*, and that it is very similar to the APA style.