

GEOG 3021: Geographies of Culture and Identity (Winter 2021)

Course Outline*

*The instructor reserves the right to make changes in listed content and assessment, without taking away from the general 'feel' of the course.

Date Range: January 14 - April 8, 2021 (winter break: Feb. 13 – 21)

Delivery: online blended (synchronous virtual participation mixed with asynchronous participation)

When? Thursdays, 8:35am - 11:25am

[30min-1h synchronous lecture + 1h synchronous student presentations & discussions + 1h asynchronous activity]

Instructor: Mihaela Vieru (mihaela.vieru@carleton.ca)

Online Office Hours: by appointment

Prerequisite(s): GEOG 2300 and 3rd year standing, or permission of the Department of Geography

Course resources: all materials are available online — academic articles, mass media pieces, NGO reports, videos, films etc.

I. COURSE AT A GLANCE

Course description

This course focuses on identifying and examining the multilayered connections between culture, identity, and places. What is 'cultural' and how does it reflect in social relations and in the interaction between people and the material & physical world, and vice-versa? How do cultural shifts happen? While such interrogations are central to human well-being, they are also profoundly political. They carry historical processes (e.g. colonialism, globalization) of societal power relations and social identity formation (e.g. gender, ethnicity, nationality etc.) that embed cultural geographies in politics and situate our knowledges.

Students are invited to discuss the complex realities that shape cultural practices and their co-constitution and performance with the social, the physical, the material, and the political. The point of departure is common sites (e.g. the coffee shop, the body, the city, the land or the border etc.) and contemporary developments around the world (e.g. inequality, mobility, displacement, social media, crisis), to engage with critical perspectives on cultural processes like belonging, gendering, racialization, settler colonialism, territorialization & localization, AI & digital transformations, surveillance, or countermovements.

The goals are: i) to make sense of these processes and of their disruptions at different scales; ii) to re-conceptualize how we gain meaning of our and others' ordinary encounters (with people and places). Particular attention is given to impacts on political discourses, social identities, life styles, social conflicts, and the formation of new cultural & identity milieus.

Objectives for students

- To become familiar with the complexity and interdisciplinarity of cultural geographies
- To understand the connection between contemporary issues and their historical context
- To gain critical thinking skills in relation to everyday environments and developments
- To improve writing and visual / autoethnographic research skills

II. EVALUATION

1. Assignment 1 = 15% (asynchronous), 2 pages, due Feb. 11 midnight EST

Position blog on cultural shifts: Does erasure of public memory devices erase culture / identity?

- Draw on lectures and course materials to adopt a position on the dismantling of statues of controversial figures around the world or on the movement to rename sites and institutions.
- The purpose is for you: i) to explore the interplay between belonging, identity, and politics; ii) to reflect on cultural landscapes, contestations, and identities, including your own (i.e. how space is signified, how the material gains meaning, how people think through spaces collectively, how boundaries and conflict work).

2. Assignment 2 = 15% (asynchronous), 2 pages, due Mar. 18 midnight EST

Reflection on experiential video documentary: urban development / design as geography of exclusion

- A video documentary will be assigned for viewing. Extract three points of interest that speak to the concepts in lectures and course materials. What do you get out of them? Are there examples in your own community/neighbourhood/country or elsewhere that relate to these points?
- Address these questions from your own perspective, centering *your* voice as an urban resident / insider / outsider / another identity, who pays attention to how spaces are lived and filtered through situated knowledges and everyday experiences
- Include 1-2 pictures (of your own or not) that ground your reflection at the beginning of paper, and offer: i) a short quote from course materials, with proper referencing, that captures the 'essence' of the respective picture(s); ii) a short blurb (100-120 words) that summarizes the takeaways from your paper

3. Assignment 3 = 20% (synchronous), due throughout term for the respective week

PP presentation on course theme/case study

- You will be assigned a weekly course theme in 1st class, and asked to select an empirical case study of your choice that reflects that theme (can be from Course Outline or not)
- Put together a PP (10-15 slides / max. 20 min), focusing on points in the reading(s) and exemplifying them in the case study (info on PP structure on cuLearn)
- Present the PP in the Zoom class, engaging your colleagues and instructor in discussions
- Include one slide with 4 main takeaways and one slide with 4 relevant discussion questions, which will be tackled in the Zoom class and/or in discussion forums on cuLearn

4. Participation = 15% (blended), due midnight EST each Mon. of the week following lecture

Synchronous discussions on Zoom PP presentations (see above) & asynchronous on discussion forums on cuLearn

- Discussion questions will be posted on cuLearn each Thur. after class
- Students are required to comment on those questions & on colleagues' responses, ask supplementary questions, provide examples, on a rolling basis till Mon. midnight the week after
- You will be graded on depth of comments/questions, with particular attention to connections made between theory and practice, and between issues and themes in this course

5. Take-home exam = 35% (asynchronous), due date: any day during exam period (Apr. 16-27)

Documentary analysis paper (4-5 pages)

- A documentary will be assigned on Apr. 16 (via cuLearn)
- Students will have till Apr. 27 to submit an analysis paper through the lens of geographies of culture and identity (specific requirements will be relayed at the time).

III. WEEKLY TOPICS (readings TBD)

Jan. 14 (CLASS 1). Course Introduction: Structure & Expectations. Why Cultural Geography?

Focus on Assignment 3 due throughout term

Jan. 21 (CLASS 2). The Stuff of Cultural Geography: Culture & Identity + Assignment 1 introduced

Jan. 28 (CLASS 3). Signifying Space and Civic Imagination: Who and What Belongs? (no PP presentations)
Feb. 4 (CLASS 4). Minority Cultures & Politics of Difference and Recognition
Feb. 11 (CLASS 5). About Placement and Displacement: Impact on Identity + Assignment 1 due
Feb. 18 (NO CLASS). Winter break
Feb. 25 (CLASS 6). Geographies of Racialization & Urban Development (no PP presentations)
Assignment 2 introduced
Mar. 4 (CLASS 7). Turning Land into Capital. Colonialism and Financial Cultures
Mar. 11 (CLASS 8). Globalization of Taste and the Selling of Identity
Mar. 18 (CLASS 9). Digital Cultures and Future Identities + Assignment 2 due
Mar. 25 (CLASS 10). Surveillance Culture & Social Control: Borders, Boundaries, and Beyond
Apr. 1 (CLASS 11). Clash of Civilizations? Place, Culture, and Identity in Geopolitics
Apr. 8 (CLASS 12). Wrapping-up & Exam Review

IV. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

1. cuLearn platform

Students are asked to use **cuLearn** on a regular basis for course information and activities (e.g. Course Outline, PP for lectures, discussion forums, assignment submissions, announcements, grade viewing). See [browser requirements](#) for cuLearn, as well as how to access different [conferencing tools](#).

2. Zoom platform

Lectures and chats during lectures will be delivered synchronously, using Zoom. Occasionally, your TAs may opt to use Zoom for particular purposes, with advance notice. System requirements for Zoom:

- **OS:** Windows 10, 8, 7, macOS X 10.9, Ubuntu 12.04, iOS, Android, BlackBerry
- **Memory:** 2 GB RAM
- **Processor:** Single Core 1 GHz+
- **Bandwidth:** 1.5 Mbps upstream and 1.5 Mbps downstream for group calling (720p HD video)
 - Use a [speed test](#) to check bandwidth use
- **Connection:** Broadband wired (Ethernet — preferred) or wireless (3G or 4G/LTE)
- **Hardware:** Computer or mobile device (ideally with headset or earbuds, webcam)

Need more details? See full list of system requirements for using Zoom on your [desktop](#) & [mobile](#) device.

Student-specific Zoom resources (including how to set up an account) can be found on the [Carleton Online website](#). For Zoom and other technical support (including account and educational technology application support), please contact [ITS service desk](#) and see [FAQ](#). For any other concerns, please contact instructor.

V. RULES AND REGULATIONS

Submission of assignments

All assignments are to be submitted electronically via cuLearn. You must also keep a copy of all work submitted throughout the term. You must have an e-copy on hand to resubmit, should a problem arise.

Extensions

Extensions will be granted for legitimate reasons by the instructor — please contact your instructor to discuss *in advance* of the issue encountered.

Late policy

Late assignments will be penalized 2% for each calendar day past the due date, unless an extension has been arranged with the instructor.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the passing off of anyone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism occurs when a student either a) directly copies more than one or two sentences of another's written work without acknowledgement; or b) closely paraphrases the equivalent of a short paragraph or more without acknowledgement; or c) borrows, without acknowledgement, any ideas in a clear and recognizable form in such a way as to present them as the student's own thought, where such ideas, if they were the student's own would contribute to the merit of his or her work. The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include: reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source; submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else; using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment; using another’s data or research findings; failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks; handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs." Instructors who notice plagiarism have to refer the case to the Office of the Dean. Students are reminded that plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offence, and can result in a range of penalties including failure in the course. It is in students’ best interest to keep all of their drafts and research notes after submitting work. Prior approval of the instructor must be obtained if you intend to submit work which has previously or concurrently been submitted, in whole or in part, for credit in this or any other course.

VI. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Long-term medical issue. Please secure a doctor's note for any long-term medical issue that might prevent you from completing course work in a substantial manner (e.g. missing *considerable* course content, impossibility to complete multiple assignments and exams etc.) and present it to the instructor.

Short-term medical issue. For accommodation requests related to COVID-19 (e.g. cold, fever, self-isolation etc.), please complete [this self-declaration form](#) in lieu of securing a doctor's note or medical certificate, and relay it to the instructor or Registrar's Office, depending on the kind of work the deferral is requested for (details in the form).

Family/pregnancy or religious obligation. Please send an email to the instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Students with disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please consult the protocols [here](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, please contact instructor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

Survivors of sexual violence. As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are

supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. More information about the services available at the university & about sexual violence / support [here](#).

Student activities. Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Contact the instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Please consult [Equity Services and Inclusive Communities](#) for additional support information (e.g. crisis support, Indigenous-specific support, discrimination and harassment etc.).

VII. ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE (WRITING / RESEARCH)

Writing standards for this course include paper organization standards, correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, correct [citation](#). Please consult the [Writing Services](#) and support available to you at Carleton.

For assistance with **research**, please consult the [Geography Subject Guide](#) (it includes many research and writing starting points for students). Also, see the online [Omni Search Tips Guide](#). For any library research assistance inquiries, you can also contact Geography research specialist [Susan Tudin](#).

For general **research essay structure** help, please consult different online sources, such as the [Harvard Writing Center](#) or other sources recommended by the librarian.