COURSE OUTLINE

Geographies of Culture and Identity (GEOG 3021)

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University, Fall 2015
Schedule: Lectures/ Seminar-based Monday, 11:35am -2:25 pm
Course instructor: Dr. Paul B. Williams, A440 Loeb Building
Email: paul_williams@carleton.ca
Telephone: (613) 520-2600 x 6290
Office hours: Tuesdays 9:30-11:00 and by appointment
Teaching assistant:

Calendar description:

Examination of culture, identity and place over time. Colonial and other historical processes that have shaped societies from place to place; relationships between cultural groups and their natural surroundings; gender, ethnicity, nationality and other dimensions of identity; impacts of globalization.

Course description:

As globalization continues to shape aspects of our world, the concept of culture and cultural practices are constantly being redefined. The role of culture in defining identity, shaping the human and natural landscape, and creating places has been a central theme within human geography since the inception of the discipline. Cultural geographers look at, for example: how distinct peoples’ way of life relate to their natural surroundings; how cultural landscapes are formed; how cultural identity and a sense of belonging become reflected in places; and how colonial and other historical processes have shaped societies around the world and provide context needed to better understand contemporary issues. In an increasingly globalized world, cultural geographers will continue to make important contributions in how to interpret the complex cultural dimensions of economic, social, political, and environmental change.

The purpose of this seminar course is to examine a broad spectrum of concepts and approaches in cultural geography through a combination of lectures, videos, class discussion, readings, fieldtrips and assignments. Together we will explore topics like cultural landscapes, place and identity, nations and states, cultural representation, “identicide”, colonial legacies, globalization
and cultural diversity, and other related concepts and issues. The content will reflect an international approach, but with somewhat greater emphasis on Canada.

**Prerequisites:** GEOG 2300 and third-year standing or permission from the Department. Please contact the instructor as soon as possible if you do not have the prerequisites but wish to take this course. It will be assumed that students have sufficient background in human geography for the course, as well as the writing skills and critical thinking abilities expected of third year students. Students who do not have adequate experience will be at a significant disadvantage and should not register in this course.

**Course objectives:**

- To become familiar with the diverse nature of cultural geography;
- To become knowledgeable about some core issues in this field;
- To begin to see the issues which affect us on a daily basis in a different way
- To improve critical thinking and writing skills

**CULEarn and communications:**

Course content will be posted on CULEarn these include: the course outline, lecture slides, assignments and any announcements. As they become available, your grades will also be posted on CULEarn. Please notify either the teaching assistant or me of any omissions or inaccuracies. I may be reached during my office hours or by email. I will return email inquiries as soon as I can. Please place “GEOG 3021” in the subject heading.

**Required readings:**

There are no required textbooks for this course. Each themed section of the course will have a range of assigned readings. These may include journal articles, reports, literature, websites, etc. The readings for each section will also form the basis of discussion and the assignment for that section.

If you wish to review introductory material in cultural geography, the following texts are very useful. The book by Norton is on reserve for four-hour loans and the Atkinson book is available in the reference section of the library:


Norton, William (2000) *Cultural Geography: Environments, Landscapes, Identities, Inequalities*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press. (Call number GF41 N66) For additional library research on the topics addressed in class or in your assignments, the following library subject guide is a useful place to begin: [http://www.library.carleton.ca/subjects/geo/index.html](http://www.library.carleton.ca/subjects/geo/index.html)

**Writing Tutorial Service:**

Writing is a critical component of this course. Students who are having writing difficulties, or who simply want to improve their writing skills, should consider making use of the writing tutorials provided by Carleton University: [http://www.carleton.ca/wts/](http://www.carleton.ca/wts/).
Course evaluation:

Written “think” pieces (2 X 15% each) 30%
Photographic essay: project justification 5%; final paper 35% = 40% total
Take home examination 30%

Assignments will be graded on a scale from A+ to F. The evaluation will take into account the content in relation to the purpose of the assignment, as well as the quality of written expression and the overall presentation. Please include a title, your name and student number, the course number and instructor’s name, and the date on all of your written assignments at the top of the first page. Please also retain an additional hard copy for your records.

Think Pieces:

These “think” pieces will consist of TWO 4 - 5 page (1000-1500 words) discussion papers. Each of these is worth 15% of your final grade. You will have the five different main themes of the course to choose from. These pieces are intended to provide your own analysis of the topics being discussed. In your analysis, you will be required to use material from the readings, films, discussions and lectures. You are also encouraged to bring your own experiences, knowledge and ideas to the discussion. All papers must be properly referenced using APA style citations.

Photographic essay:

The photographic essay represents a significant, independent project that more or less replaces the "traditional" term paper. While less writing is required, the conceptual content and the room for original expression will provide an opportunity for a rich learning experience that links the main themes of the course with your own experiences. The photographic essay should consist of eight entries, each consisting of:

(i) a photograph that is somehow connected to one or more themes of the class,
(ii) a quote from one of the readings or some other academic source, and
(iii) an original caption averaging about 150-200 words.

The author, location, and approximate date taken should also be included directly below each photograph. The purpose of the caption is to describe what is in the photograph and what it shows about one of the main themes of the course. In some cases the connection between the academic quote and the rest of the entry will be obvious, but if not, the caption can be used to make the connection apparent. At least five of the photographs should be taken by you (preferably during this course), but other photographs may be used, provided that they can be adequately described and referenced. The photographic essay should also include a 500 - 750 word narrative that summarizes your approach and explains common ideas and connections among the photographs and discusses the story they tell. It can come in the form of an introduction, epilogue, or some combination. More explanation about the purpose and expectations of this assignment will be provided in class. If you do not have access to a camera, please see me as soon as possible. The photographic essay will be due April 8 2015.

Note: If you choose not to do a photographic paper, you will be required to submit a standard written research paper that explores issues from one or more of the five topics. This paper should be between 10 and 15 pages in length and is due on April 9.
As part of the photographic essay or written paper grade, you will be asked to provide a maximum two-page proposal and justification of your project. Your TA or I must approve the topic. The written justification and proposal will constitute 5% of the grade of this assignment and is due no later than February 5.

Final examination:

Finally, there will be a take-home exam to be distributed on the last day of classes. You will have until the last day of the exam period to submit your paper. There will be no extensions allowed without proper documentation. This exam will be worth 40 percent of the final grade. The nature of this exam will be discussed in class.

Late or deferred submissions:

A late submission of a written commentary or the photographic essay without prior permission will result in a penalty equivalent to 10 percent per day after the designated due date. Students who are unable to complete assignments on time because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may request an extension within five days after the deadline to negotiate a new deadline, either directly with their supervisor or the course instructor depending on who is evaluating the assignment. Permission will only be granted if the request is supported by a medical certificate or other supporting documentation. Conflicts arising due to religious obligations should be indicated in advance, but do not require verification. Late assignments can be submitted to me directly during office hours or put in or in the mail drop box of the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, near the main office, on the third floor of the Loeb building.

Academic accommodations:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to me 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. For more details visit the Equity Services website http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/.

**Religious obligation:** write to me 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. For more details visit the Equity Services website http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/.

**Students with disabilities** requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), 5
psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that I receive your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by the deadlines published on the PMC website: http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/.

**Academic dishonesty:**
Students are reminded of the seriousness with which Carleton University treats academic dishonesty of any form, including plagiarism. Students should be familiar with the University’s Academic Integrity Policy (see http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity). For more information on plagiarism, its consequences and how to avoid committing plagiarism, see the MacOdrum Library web site on the topic: http://www.library.carleton.ca/howdoI/plagiarism.html.

*Changes will be announced in advance on WebCT and during class.*