GEOGRAPHY 200B: GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT, RESEARCH, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Winter 2012
Class: TUESDAY 5:00PM-7:50PM; 4824 ELLISON HALL

Instructor
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Office Number: Ellison 4836
Office hours: Monday 2:00PM - 3:00PM and Tuesday 3:00PM - 4:00PM

NATURE OF THE COURSE

This course will focus on two intimately related themes. The first is your professional development as a geographer with special, though not exclusive, emphasis on research ethics, mentoring, and time management, including a graduation timeline. Critical to the latter is the identification of a research problem and the development of an appropriate literature review, written proposal, and oral presentation. To facilitate your proposal development and broader professional development, our second theme will be the historical arc of geographical thought with the formation of Geography as a discipline and its contemporary practice at UCSB and internationally.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

(IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE YOU WILL...)

THEME 1
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Recognize and abide by codes of research ethics.

2. Determine the most effective time management skills for your graduate career and apply these skills towards your graduation timeline.

3. Articulate expectations for yourself and for your advisor towards the successful development of your graduate degree.
4. Improve oral presentation skills specifically as they relate to presenting your own research.

5. Identify a compelling research problem with corresponding: research questions, which are articulate, feasible, and sufficiently novel; literature review; and research methods, all eventual components of a written proposal.

**THEME 2**
**GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT**

1. Describe the significance and limitations of seminal Geographic theories and their influences on current geographical research.

2. Understand the contours of the broader geographical tradition with its four prominent domains: geography as place, geography as space, geography as changes on the face of the earth, and geography as human-environment dynamics. You will become especially fluent in how your own research relates to these.

Some steps you will take to achieve the above objectives:

- Understand key arguments (conceptual models) in some of the seminal theories of geography.
- Recognize the significance, assumptions, and limitations of these arguments and their applicability over time and across space.
- Choose theoretical models that best support your research project.
- Understand how these theories build on the geographical canon.
- Demonstrate the comparative advantage of these theories over others for developing your project.
- Identify limitations to these theories.
- Show how your project supports and/or challenges these theories.
- Select and defend effective methodologies for your proposed research.
- Persuasively argue for the symmetry between your chosen theory and your research question(s) and methods.

**HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES?**

- **Class discussions (20%)**. Students will take turns leading class discussions on one of four geographical areas: space, place, earth surface processes, and human-environment dynamics. Discussion leaders will direct our examination of the readings based on the course objectives.

Student leaders will develop a bibliography, and present a synthesis of the research of several geographers within each of 4 geographical domains. Select papers (4-7 per week approximately) will be distributed along with the bibliography to all classmates by Thursday.
in preparation of the following Tuesday’s class. The bibliography and papers will be
developed in consultation with me and with your advisors. Since they will be distributed to
classmates several days in advance of the presentation, student discussion leaders should
meet with me at least 10 days before their class presentation. Discussion leaders will present
a brief (approximately 3-5 minutes) academic lineage and discussion of each geographer’s
research. Discussion leaders will then lead a discussion of papers selected from these
geographers. Successful discussions of academic papers will be guided by the following
questions.

- How does the author conceptualize the topic?
- What model of "science" is used (what is the goal of the enterprise, what sorts of
  things can be known, what constitutes data, how is data analyzed, what conclusions
  are drawn?, etc.)
- How does this relate to what we think of as contemporary "science"?
- How does it build upon (or not) previous ideas?
- Does it contradict or exist alongside earlier or other ideas in geography and in other
disciplines?
- If a research paper: Is the significance of the research problem compelling? Are the
  research hypotheses and questions novel and answerable? Is the literature review
  complete and appropriate for the topic? Are research methods symmetrical with the
  research questions and hypotheses? Are research results significant, novel, and
  adequately explicated? Does the discussion/conclusion suggest avenues for future
  research and potential implications of the research to science and policy?

**Papers/presentations**

- **(20%) Research proposal: 4 page single-space max. and 5 minute presentation
  (10%).** Presentations will occur during the last class meeting.
- **(40%):** The 4 page research proposal will combine 5 earlier assignments, each worth
  8% of your grade:
  1. A ½-page written and 5-minute oral description of your area of interest. Consider
     these questions: Which topics are you interested in pursuing? What sub-field of
     Geography do they fall under? Who is your advisor and how does he/she fit within
     the sub-field? Does your area link to other sub-fields or disciplines?
  2. A 1 page problem statement describing your thesis topic, including research
     questions and hypotheses (if hypothesis testing).
  3. A 1 page reading list appropriate to your topic (in consultation with your advisor).
     You will continue to develop this reading list over the semester.
  4. A 1 page review of a National Science Foundation (NSF) Doctoral
  5. A 1 page methods statement describing potential data collection and analysis
     methods for your research problem.

- **(10%) A Graduation Timeline** using a template which will be introduced in Week 4.
Guidelines for Class Discussions

Course readings will come from a substantial number of selected case studies, overviews, criticisms, etc. You must allow adequate time to read the large volume of assigned reading carefully and critically. Photocopies or digital copies of the readings (except for Livingston, which you should purchase) will be distributed AT LEAST 5 DAYS IN ADVANCE by me or student discussion leaders. (see accompanying schedule/reading list).

During each of the four classes on “Geography Today”, designated students (on a revolving basis) will be responsible for leading the discussion of the readings for that week — this will include a “Brief Topic Overview and Key Questions” write-up to be posted to the course Listserv (or distributed by email). Also, students will take turns providing class refreshments each week.

There are very few "wholly right" answers. I value diversity, debate, and a critical attitude and may advocate a position solely for the sake of argument. No one knows everything there is to know about this subject and I expect you all to contribute to my knowledge as I do to yours. Below are several ways we can all contribute to successfully achieving our goals:

- Be prepared for class.
- Share and explain your opinions.
- Don’t dominate; be fair about the amount of time you take to speak.
- Back up your arguments with evidence.
- Disagree politely.
- Listen carefully to other opinions.
- Change your mind when another argument is more cogent than yours.
- Do not hesitate to ask for clarification.
- Make your points succinctly, avoiding repetition, and providing a choice example of your main point.

Criteria for Written Assignments

Successful written work:

Fulfills task requirements.
- Basic instructions are followed.

Uses concepts appropriately and creatively.
- Geography is central to your argument, and appropriate literature is cited to reach new insight on the subject.

Synthesizes, interprets, and evaluates.
- You explore unusual interrelations or links that may not be obvious. Description is used only as a necessary base for synthesis, analysis, and evaluation.

Is organized with logic and clarity.
• Your work follows a clear-cut and logical trajectory. The introduction and conclusion are well developed and correspond to the body of the assignment. Topic sentences introduce corresponding paragraphs and form the backbone of the work. Superfluous points and non-sequiturs are avoided.

**Displays accuracy and conceptual discipline.**
• No conceptual, logical, or organizational errors are apparent. All factual information or opinions not produced independently by you are cited using MLA style.

**Is flawless (or nearly so).**
• Your work is polished, an evident product of several drafts. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct; word choice is judicious.

**POLICIES REGARDING LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**
• **Late assignments:** Grades on assignments turned in late will be reduced by 5 percentage points each day beyond the assigned deadline except under extraordinary circumstances authorized by the instructor.

• **Final Grade:** The instructor reserves the right to alter exam and assignment grades but only when necessary and in consideration of the student's best interests.

**REQUIRED BOOKS**


**READING LIST (UPDATED WEEKLY!)**

**Weeks 1-2. Introduction to the Course**


Skole, D. L. 2004. Geography as a great intellectual melting pot and the preeminent


**Recommended (available in the Human-Environment Dynamics Lab):**

- Selected chapters of interests to you of Gaile and Wilmott, *Geography in America.* I have 2 copies of the 1989 version and one of the 2006 version.

**Week 3. How do I succeed as a UCSB graduate student and as a professional geographer?**

- **On Succeeding as a Professional Geographer:** Montello and Sutton Chapter 1
- **On Succeeding at UCSB Geography.** Review in detail: geog.ucsb.edu/graduates/student-handbook/
- **On Ethics in the Academy**
- **On Time Management:**
- **On our Professional Organization:**
  www.aag.org/
- **On the Mentoring Relationship:**
  www.ashe.ws/images/Rosser%20Article.pdf
- **On Publishing in Geography:**
  www.nuim.ie/nirsa/geo-pub/geo-pub.html
- **On Successful Geography NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Proposals:**
  www.nsf.gov/sbe/bcs/grs/propsamples.jsp
• On Review Criteria for NSF Proposals

• On Academic Presentations:
  www.cgd.ucar.edu/cms/agu/scientific_talk.html
  www.eas.slu.edu/People/DJCrossley/scomm/mdchapt13.html
  www.geog.ucsb.edu/~kclarke/G234/Guidelines.html

• On Writing Papers and Theses:
  http://www.ecocomposite.org/es_usiu/resources/writingwell.htm
  http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/~kclarke/dissertation.html

Further references:
On Writing:

On Preparing CVs:
http://jobsearch.about.com/od/curriculumvitae/a/curriculumvitae.htm
http://jobsearch.about.com/od/cvsamples/a/blsamplecv.htm
http://www.quintcareers.com/curriculum_vitae.html
http://www.cvtips.com/

Week 4. IIa. What is Science? How do we know if it is "good science"?
• Montello Chapters 3-12.
• The Scientific Revolution:
  A synopsis of "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions by Thomas S. Kuhn:
  www.des.emory.edu/mfp/kuhnsyn.html.
  See also: http://philosophy.wisc.edu/Forster/220/kuhn.htm
  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Popper

Week 5. IIb. What is Geography? (and how to excel at it)


- Be familiar with some of these spatial geography classics: http://www.csiss.org/classics/
- Be familiar with UCSB’s geography timeline:  http://archive.geog.ucsb.edu/more/history_articles/history_timeline.htm
- For further readings on the development of geographical thought see:  http://people.cas.sc.edu/carre/Homepage/Teaching/GEOG%20701%20Syllabus.pdf
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Guest Discussants</th>
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<td><strong>Week 1</strong> Introduction to the Course</td>
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<td><strong>Week 1</strong> Who are we? What are we doing here?</td>
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<td>10-Jan</td>
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<td><strong>10-Jan</strong> Who are we? What are we doing here?</td>
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<td>What is Geography?</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment 1 Completed! A+ to everyone!</strong></td>
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<td>17-Jan History of Geography and of UCSB Geography</td>
<td>Prof. Keith Clarke</td>
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<td>Ancient contributions: Greeks and others</td>
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<td>Renaissance: Copernican Revolution</td>
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<td>Early Global Explorers</td>
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<td>The Quantitative Revolution</td>
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<td>Assignments 2&amp;3 due: Prepare a 1 page problem statement and a 1 page reading list</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment 4 due: Review an NSF proposal</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong> I. How do I succeed as a professional geographer?</td>
<td>Dr. Meredith Mars</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong> What is Science? How do we know if it is “good science”?</td>
<td>Prof. Peter Alagona</td>
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<td>What is Ontology?</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong> I: Introduction to Literature Reviews and Library Resources</td>
<td>Geography Librarian Jon Jablonksi</td>
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<td>Assignment 5 due: Timeline</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong> IIb. Geography Today</td>
<td>Prof. Joel Michelson</td>
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<td>14-Feb Geography as Earth Surface (or near surface) Change</td>
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<td>Assignment 6 due: Prepare a 1 page statement of research questions and methods</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7</strong> Geography as Space</td>
<td>Prof. Mike Goodchild</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8</strong> Geography as Place</td>
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<td><strong>Week 9</strong> Geography as Human-Environment Dynamics</td>
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<td>Geography as Human-Environment Dynamics</td>
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<td>Assignment 7 due: Prepare a 4 page complete research proposal</td>
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<td><strong>Week 10</strong> Student Research Presentations</td>
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<td>13-Mar Student Research Presentations</td>
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