

Geography 470: History and Theory of Geography, Spring 2009

Lucy Stone Hall, Room B-269 (Tuesday and Thursday 1:40 – 3:00)

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Office Hours: Tuesday 3:00 - 4:00pm or by appointment.

General Information

History and Theory of Geography is a course intended for seniors or juniors whose major is Geography as well as other advanced students with a strong interest in the discipline of Geography. This course conducts an intellectual inquiry into the discipline of Geography, examining the practice and context of Geography in both historical and contemporary times. In particular, the course considers how the academic discipline of Geography originated, evolved, and currently stands. While the text focuses on European Geography, other readings and class discussion will examine other peoples and cultures and the experience of European encounter. The format of the class is a seminar, with emphasis on class discussion of reading assignments.

The primary texts for this course are available on [reserve](#) at Kilmer Library and from the [Livingston College Bookstore](#):

David N. Livingstone *The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise*. Blackwell: Oxford, UK & Cambridge, MA, 1992.

Castree, N., A. Rogers, and D. Sherman (eds). *Questioning Geography*. Blackwell, 2005.

Harley, J. B. *The new nature of maps : essays in the history of cartography* (edited by Paul Laxton). Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, MD, 2001.

Other readings for the course will be made accessible through the [Sakai](#) course website (site title: 01:450:470:01 Sp09). Look in the Course Schedule and Resources sections of the website.

Course Goals:

- To critically examine the history of Geography since the dawn of the European ‘Age of Exploration’ to the present.
- To place Geography within an historical and theoretical context. To go beyond the recounting of famous explorers, scientists, and theoreticians and to consider the social, economic, and cultural influences that have shaped Geography.
- To address alternative geographic events, histories, and theories that are not part typically part of the Anglo/American story of Geography.

Student Assessment

Mid-term exam	20
Final exam	25
Assignments and Participation	35
Final Research Paper (10 pages)	20
Total	100

Exams

There will be a mid-term (in class) and a final exam (Tuesday, May 12, 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM). Exams must be taken and assignments turned in on the scheduled dates. Exceptions may be made in the event of illness (which must be documented in writing by a medical professional) or religious observance.

Class Participation

All classes will depend upon all students reading the assigned materials and preparing to discuss the materials. Students will be called upon to summarize readings, suggest discussion/exam questions, and discuss the topics and issues from the readings. Attendance throughout the semester will be considered as part of your class participation.

Writing assignments:

Regular brief writing assignments (both in and out of class) will be given and considered part of your class participation. These will include reaction papers to readings (1 page), in-class essay assignments, and development of discussion/exam questions. All writing assignments (except in-class) must be written in standard English, be typewritten in 12 pt. font, and be on plain paper with 1 inch margins. Any references must be cited in some standard citation format. Reaction papers should be well written and should clearly demonstrate an engagement with the assigned readings. Simply summarizing the readings should be avoided. Reaction papers should either begin or end with a proposed discussion question.

Student Presentations

All students will be given the opportunity to present their reactions and discussion questions to the class in the form of a brief presentation (5 minutes) just prior to weekly class discussions. This activity will count toward the final participation grade for the course.

Class rapporteur (all students will do this at least twice):

Each week we will break into small groups that will develop discussion/exam questions and answers. These will then be presented to the class. The class rapporteurs will record, amend (with their own questions), and otherwise develop 4-6 questions and answers. These "fine tuned" questions will be posted to our web site. They will reflect the interests of the class and will act as potential exam questions. The first few minutes of the following class will be reserved for follow up discussion as needed.

Any students wishing to suggest another form of relevant participation (e.g. bringing maps into class, suggesting other readings, telling travel stories, presenting a movie review, etc.) are very welcome to do so. Please make your suggestions to the instructor before class.

Final Research Paper

One short research paper will be required. The paper will focus on some topic from the history of geography or a theoretical approach relevant to contemporary geography. Within this assignment there will be scope to explore your own interests in geography. The paper should be no more than 10 pages in length and should include an attached research bibliography. While brief, this paper will require considerable library-based research.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism or other academic misconduct will not be tolerated and is sufficient basis for a failing grade in this course. Students caught cheating in exams will receive an immediate "F" grade for the course regardless of class performance. Plagiarism or cheating will also be reported to the Geography Department Chairperson and Undergraduate Advisor, the student's college Dean, and the Rutgers Judiciary Affairs.