GEOG 4100: Geographic Approaches to the Human-Environment Relationship
Spring 2015 Syllabus

Instructor: Lisa Green, PhD Student, Dept. of Environment & Society
E-mail: lisa.green@aggiemail.usu.edu
Office hours: Wed. 2–4 p.m. or by appointment
Meeting time: Tues. & Thurs., 3–4:15 p.m.
Office: Natural Resources (NR) 213A

Course description
GEOG 4100 introduces students to the study of human-environment interactions from a geographic perspective, with special emphasis on social and political dynamics. This course is essentially an upper-level introduction to human-environment geography and its conceptual perspectives and methodological strategies.

Course learning objectives
By the end of the course, you will have worked toward the following objectives related to human-environment geography:

1. Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.
2. Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
3. Develop skills in expressing oneself orally or in writing.

Course expectations
This is a reading-intensive course. Students will improve critical thinking skills and understanding of concepts in human-environment geography through readings, in-class discussions and activities, writing assignments, and presentations. The workload is fairly consistent throughout the course, rather than focused on one or two large assignments. Generally, a day’s reading includes textbook material and an article from an academic journal or online source.

Each class will begin with a brief lecture related to the assigned readings. There may also be a short, related video or activity. Then small discussion groups will form and discuss questions from the text and the instructor.

The readings listed for each class meeting are to be completed before class. Students are expected to be an active, thoughtful participant in class discussions and to be respectful of classmates and their opinions.

Late assignments will not be accepted more than 2 weeks after the due date, and grades will be reduced by 10 percent for each day late.
Assignments

1. In-class participation
   This portion of your grade is dependent on attendance, consists primarily of participation in discussion groups, and may also include in-class activities. The instructor will take notes on discussion participation and assign a grade based on the amount and quality of the contribution. You will be in groups of approximately four people to discuss the day’s readings. Groups will be rearranged every 3 to 4 weeks. Students will take turns fulfilling the roles of facilitator, recorder, timekeeper, and spokesperson (with adjustments for group size). The discussions should focus on the main themes or questions found in the readings, in addition to discussion questions provided by the instructor. After the small group discussion, the spokesperson will summarize the group’s discussion for the rest of the class.

2. Weekly reflection papers
   - Points earned on these papers make up the largest percentage of your grade. Writing is an important skill used in analyzing and critically evaluating ideas.
   - You may include summary material (briefly restate the content), but please also include your own reflections, and, throughout the semester, work toward writing a synthesis (a combination of themes or ideas) rather than a summary. Refer to the webpage listed at the end of this document for a useful resource on writing syntheses.
   - Most weeks the class meets on both Tuesday and Thursday. Reflection papers are due (hard copy, approximately 2 double-spaced pages) at the end of each Thursday class period, unless noted otherwise on the schedule. This means you may focus on readings from either day, or from both. You may also want to reflect on how the perspectives relate to prior class material.

3. Other writing assignments
   There will be three other writing assignments. The first is a 3-5 page environmental history, the second is a 2-3 page article review, and the third is a 3-5 page final perspective paper. Instructions will be provided.

4. Presentations
   There will be two brief presentations: one on the environmental history paper, and the other on the article review paper. Each will last about 3 minutes, with the presentations limited to a few of the more interesting or important points made in the written work. There may be an option for students who share the same location for their environmental history assignment to present with a partner (although written assignments will be completed individually).

Assessment

Students are assessed for a final grade in the course as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly reflection papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other writing assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A−</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B−</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C−</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course materials

This course has one required textbook:


There are several options for obtaining the text at the USU Campus Store. It may also be found online at a similar price. Other required readings or videos will be made available on Canvas (usu.instructure.com). It is your responsibility to refer to the syllabus (and/or Canvas) and complete the readings for each class meeting.

Use of electronics

The use of laptops and tablets in class is limited to note-taking and class activities. Mobile phones are not to be used in class. (Notify the instructor if you may have an exceptional circumstance.) If a device appears to be a distraction, the student will be asked to discontinue its use.

Academic integrity

Students are expected to produce original work. Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported and the student(s) involved will be subject to disciplinary action and grade adjustment. Violations include but are not limited to: cheating, falsification, and plagiarism. For definitions and a more complete understanding of academic integrity, please review the USU Student Code of Conduct at usu.edu/studentservices/studentcode/article6.cfm. Direct any questions to your instructor or advisor.

On-campus resources

USU has a variety of resources available to promote the academic success of its students. As needed, consider the following services:

Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, 797-2444 voice, 797-0740 TTY, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print or digital) are available with advance notice.

The USU Writing Center (writing.usu.edu) offers face-to-face and online tutoring for the improvement of writing skills.

In addition to the option to book a librarian (library.usu.edu/forms/bookalibrarian.php), the USU Merrill-Cazier Library has an online tutorial for help with research projects (library.usu.edu/instruct/restut/).

Online resources

On writing syntheses: https://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/135/Synthesis.html
On avoiding plagiarism: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/2/
Chicago-Style Citation Guide: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html