

**GEOG 6973**  
***Contemporary Geographic Thought***  
**Fall 2017, SEC 442**  
**Tuesday, 3:30-6:30**

Dr. Joseph Pierce

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**Course Description**

This course is intended to "make geographers" out of you. This means that at the end of the semester you should have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the discipline of geography to have preliminary answers to the following questions:

- 1) **Where do my interests, strengths, and weaknesses fit in the context of the discipline of geography?**
- 2) **How has the discipline evolved over the past 100+ years, and how does that history shape the approaches that geographers use/choose?**
- 3) **What are "valid" (supported, contextualized) approaches to the study and practice of geography today? What are the easy and hard roads of participation in the discipline?**
- 4) **How is geography situated within the academy, and how does that shape my future possibilities?**

These are big, hard questions. Geographers differ as to the answers. In addition to having your own answers to these questions, you will be expected to understand competing perspectives on the shape of the discipline, to defend them (at least provisionally), and to be able to argue for and against them. In other words—and this is perhaps the central point of the course—it is not enough for you to justify why what you already care about is geographic and/or important. You must substantively understand why and how other scholars/practitioners, with alternative approaches to the practice of geography, justify their own work as well.

In addition to being able to answer these sorts of questions, there are some important kinds of embodied knowledge that the course is designed to help you develop. The sorts of library work, reading, writing, presentation, and discussion in which you will engage this semester are sometimes designed to be usefully uncomfortable rather than maximally efficient. In addition to the substantive content of the course, we will spend some time discussing the practice of being a scholar in geography.

This course covers a large and difficult topic, and as a result, the reading load is unavoidably heavy. I have substantially trimmed the syllabus in comparison to prior years, but I know some students will still find it extensive. If you are a fast reader, that will be a boon. If you are a slower reader, that will be an extra burden, but one of the

rewards of the intense reading load will be to help you learn to read academic writing more quickly out of necessity.

### **Required Readings**

There are three required texts for this course:

- Peet, 1998. *Modern Geographical Thought*. Blackwell.
- Harvey, 1994. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Blackwell.
- Massey, 2005. *For Space*. Sage.

These books will be extensively supplemented by additional readings. Readings will generally *not* be made available via course website. **You are expected to act as scholars and find the appropriate cited texts via journal access and the library system.** (You may want to work together on collecting the readings for each week, but that is your business.) Note that some texts may be out of print and/or not in the local library; you would be well served to stay about a month ahead of the course schedule in case you need to request an Inter-Library Loan.

### **Assignments and Grading**

Reading Response Papers: Reading Response Papers (“RRPs”) are due each week *before* class begins—in other words, you should write the paper about the current week’s readings *before we discuss them in class*. **You owe me six papers over the course of the semester, three before October 20.** My advice to you is not to use all your breaks too early—the reading generally gets more challenging, not less, as the semester progresses. All written assignments should use the following format: 12 point Times New Roman, double spaced, no extra space between paragraphs, indent for new paragraphs, 1 inch margins, ragged right. Include a single-spaced heading that includes the assignment name, date turned in, and your name on the first line, with the title of the piece on the second, both lines aligned left. Papers should be roughly 1200 words, or about 5 full pages, *plus* references.

**RRP Grade: 60% (10% per paper)**

Ongoing Class Participation: Student participation in class discussions is critical to the function and success of this course. Being in class, on-time, prepared and in an appropriate head space to actively engage with your classmates is an important element of your evaluation. I expect you to have read all of the assigned readings each week; to have *opinions* about those readings beyond whether or not you liked them; regularly participate in discussion. **You cannot do well in this course if you do not participate productively and regularly in discussion. Simply showing up is not enough.** Most weeks, a subgroup of students will be assigned to digest and present the readings for that session. I cannot stress enough that this does not change each student’s obligation to come to class prepared to discuss each and every reading.

**Participation Grade: 40%**

**A word about grading:** As is true for many of my colleagues, I try to guide students regarding what qualifies as good without setting an outer bound for what is excellent. We will discuss in further detail what I am seeking in each of these assignments as they approach, but what I value most is your creative engagement with reading materials and the various assignments as a vehicle for learning. I urge you to make assignments your own by *discussing with me* outside of class whether your proposed approach will satisfy the requirements of the assignment.

Numeric grades on assignments will translate to letter grades on the following scale:

93 to 100.0% = A	77 to 79 = C+
90 to 92 = A-	73 to 76 = C
87 to 89 = B+	70 to 72 = C-
83 to 86 = B	60 to 69 = D
80 to 82 = B-	0 to 59 = F

### **Class Policies**

**Classroom Ground Rules:** Every student deserves an academic environment in which they are free to intellectually explore and participate in discussion safely and comfortably. All students are expected to abide by basic ground rules and avoid disparaging or inflammatory comments to their classmates.

**Classroom Technology:** Mobile phones, texting, email, messaging, facebook, insta, etc.—any personal communication or use of technology for non-classroom purposes—is not permitted. I reserve the right to prohibit the use of laptops, tablets, etc. in the classroom if I have concerns regarding focus and attention to class activities. Classroom technology is a privilege! Don't ruin it for your classmates.

**Attendance Policy:** Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not *arbitrarily* penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness. That noted, keep in mind that the decision to evaluate and accept or decline documentation of illness or crisis ultimately remains the right of the instructor.

**Assignment Submission:** All assignments should be submitted electronically *as PDF files*. **Assignments will not be accepted late**, where late means after the scheduled beginning of class for that week. Please do not test me on this. The point of the papers is for you to organize your thoughts without the prior benefit of class discussion; I simply will not accept them after the discussion begins.

**Late Work:** Timely submission of assignments is key to the smooth functioning of the class. If a catastrophic injury (falling pianos, aftermath of being tied to railroad tracks, etc.) forces your absence from class, I may consider your late assignment with substantial penalty *at my discretion*. Grade disputes must be addressed to the instructor *within two weeks* of the grade being posted online; you are responsible for keeping up with your grades as they are posted to the course website.

**Academic Integrity Policy:** The University of Oklahoma Academic Integrity Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Integrity Policy, found at <https://integrity.ou.edu/students.html>.

**Americans With Disabilities Act:** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) contact the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done no later than the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

**Syllabus Change Policy:** Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

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*Syllabus continues with course schedule on the following page.*

## Course Schedule for Geographic Thought

Each week we meet once except as interrupted by holidays. You are expected to have read all of the assigned material before that class session; any written assignments are due *before* the beginning of the session unless otherwise noted. In other words, if you turn in a/n RRP for week three, you must submit it online before I begin addressing the class on the Tuesday of that week.

Each session, some students will be assigned responsibility to present specific readings or groups of readings. *Everyone* must still *complete and be prepared to discuss* all assigned readings.

### ***SEGMENT ONE: From Germany to American Geography***

#### **Week One: Introduction**

*Key Questions:* What is on the syllabus? What is geography? What is the big picture here?

#### **Week Two: European Antecedents**

*Key Questions:* What does Kant think about geography? Why do we care what Kant thinks about geography? How is geography positioned within the academy at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

*Readings:*

- **Mackinder, H.** 1887. On the scope and methods of geography. *Royal Geographical Society Proceedings* 9: 141-174.
- **Davis, W. M.** 1894. Physical geography as a university study. *Journal of Geology* 2: 66-100. [Also in D. W. Johnson, ed. 1954. *Geographical Essays by William Morris Davis*. New York: Dover Press.]
- **Hartshorne, R.** 1939. *The Nature of Geography. A Critical Survey of Current Thought in the Light of the Past.* *Annals AAG* 29 [3-4] or Lancaster, PA: AAG.
- **Hartshorne, R.** 1958. The concept of geography as a science of space from Kant and Humboldt to Hettner. *Annals AAG* 48: 97-108.
- **Elden, S.** 2011. Reintroducing Kant's Geography [Chap 1]. In Elden, S., and Mendieta, S., eds., *Reading Kant's Geography*. SUNY Press.

#### **Week Three: Environmental Determinism and Promotion of the Discipline**

*Key Questions:* How do the mountains make us who we are? What does that have to do with Nazis?

*Readings:*

- **Semple, E. C.** 1901. The Anglo-Saxons of the Kentucky mountains. *Geographical Journal* 17: 588-623.
- **Huntington, E.** 1915. *Civilization and Climate*. New Haven: Yale U. P.
- **Taylor, G.** 1921. The evolution and distribution of race, culture and language. *Geographical Review* 11:55-119.
- **Lewthwaite, G.** 1966. Environmentalism and determinism: a search for clarification. *Annals AAG* 56: 1-23.
- **Peet, J. R.** 1985. The social origins of environmental determinism. *Annals AAG* 75: 309-333 [also responses to: AAAG 76: 281-283.]
- **Diamond, J.** 2005. “The Maya Collapses” in *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. Viking. 157-177.

### **SEGMENT TWO: Mid-Century Geography**

#### **Week Four: Landscape Geography (“The Berkeley School”) and Cultural Ecology**

*Key Questions:* What is landscape for “The Berkeley School?” What kind of geography is Sauer engaged in?

*Readings:*

- **Sauer, C. O.** 1925. The morphology of the Landscape. *University of California Publications in Geography* 2 (2): 19-54.
- **Sauer, C. O.** 1941. Forward to historical geography. *Annals, AAG* 31: 11-24.
- **Duncan, J. S.** 1980. The superorganic in American cultural geography. *Annals AAG* 70: 181-198.
- **Entrikin, J. N.** 1984. Carl O. Sauer: philosopher in spite of himself. *Geographical Review* 74: 387-408.
- **Cosgrove, D.** 1985. Prospect, perspective, and the evolution of the landscape idea. *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 10: 45-62.

#### **Week Five: Regional Geography and the Agricultural School Tradition**

*Key Questions:* Geography. What is it good for? (Absolutely nothing?)

*Readings:*

- **Thorntwaite, C. W.** 1948. An approach toward a rational classification of climate. *Geographical Review* 38: 55-94.
- **Schaefer, F. K.** 1953. Exceptionalism in geography: a methodological examination. *Annals AAG* 43: 226-249.
- **Ullman, E. L.** 1953. Human Geography and Area Research. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 43: 54-66.
- **Weaver, J. C.** 1954. Crop-combination regions in the middle west. *The Geographical Review* 44 (2): 175-200.
- **Platt, R. S.** 1957. A Review of Regional Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 47: 187-190.

- **Smith, N.** 1987. "Academic war over the field of geography": the elimination of geography at Harvard, 1947-51. *Annals AAG* 77: 155-172.

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### **Week Six: The Risk/Hazards Tradition**

*Key Questions:* How is risk a geographical concept? What is risk/hazards responding to?

*Readings:*

- **White, G. F.** 1972. Geography and public policy. *Professional Geographer* 24: 101-104.
- **Kates, R. W.** 1987. The human environment: the road not taken, the road still beckoning. *Annals AAG* 77: 525-534.
- **Ratick, S. J.** and **A. White.** 1988. A Risk Sharing Model of Locating Noxious Facilities. *Environment and Planning* 15: 165-179.
- **Cutter, S.** 1996. Vulnerability to Environmental Hazards. *Progress in Human Geography*. 20: 529-239.

## ***SEGMENT THREE: Disciplinary Epistemological Strands***

### **Week Seven: Positivism**

*Key Questions:* Is knowing knowing when we can see what we see?

*Readings:*

- **Hemple, C.** 1966. *Philosophy of Natural Science*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall. Chap 4.
- **Golledge, R.** and **D. Amadeo.** 1968. On laws in geography. *Annals AAG* 58: 760-774.
- **Gould, P. R.** 1969. Methodological developments since the fifties. *Progress in Geography* 1: 1-49.
- **Gould, P. R.** 1979. Geography 1957-1977: the Augean period. *Annals AAG* 69: 139-151.
- **Kuhn, T. S.** 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chaps 2-4
- **Taaffe, E. J.** 1974. The spatial view in context. *Annals AAG* 64: 1-16.
- **Couclesis, H.,** and **R. Golledge.** 1983. Analytical Research, Positivism and Behavioral Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 73: 331-339.
- **Peet, R.** 1998. Modern Geographical Thought. Chap 1.

### **Week Eight: Humanistic Geographies and Phenomenology**

*Key Questions:* What can we possibly know but what we know?

*Readings:*

- **Tuan, Y.** 1974. Space and place: Humanistic perspective. *Progress in Human Geography* 6: 233-246.
- **Buttimer, A.** 1976. Grasping the dynamism of the lifeworld. *Annals of the AAG* 66: 277-292.
- **Ley, D.** 1977. Social geography and the taken-for-granted world. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 2, 498-512.
- **Relph, E. C.** 1977. Humanism, phenomenology, and geography. *Annals AAG* 67: 177-183 [+ comments]
- **Peet, R.** 1998. *Modern Geographical Thought*. Chap 2.
- **Casey, E.S.** 2001. Between geography and philosophy: what does it mean to be in the place-world? *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91 (4) pp. 683-693
- **Schatzki, T.** 2001. Subject, body, place. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91 (4) pp. 698-702
- **Entrikin, J.** 2001. Hiding places. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91 (4) pp. 694-697
- **Casey, E.S.** 2001. On habitus and place: responding to my critics. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91 (4) pp. 716-723

**Week Nine: The “Critical,” Nay, Marxian Tradition**

*Key Questions:* How can we know anything with this ideology hanging before our eyes?

*Readings:*

- **Smith, N.** 1979. Toward a theory of gentrification a back to the city movement by capital, not people. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 45 (4) 538-48.
- **Harvey, D.** 1984. On the history and present conditions of geography: An historical materialist manifesto. *Professional Geographer* 3: 1-11.
- **Peet, R.** 1998. *Modern Geographical Thought*. Chaps 3-4.
- **Blomley, N.** 2006. Uncritical critical geography? *Progress in Human Geography* 30: 87-94.
- **Swyngedouw, E.** 2010. The Communist Hypothesis and Revolutionary Capitalisms: Exploring the Idea of Communist Geographies for the Twenty-first Century. *Antipode* 41: 298-319.
- **Harvey, D.** 2011. Roepke Lecture in Economic Geography—Crises, Geographic Disruptions and the Uneven Development of Political Responses. *Economic Geography* 87 (1) 1-22.

### Week Ten: Feminist Geographies and the Poststructural “Turn”

*Key Questions:* What is feminist geography? What is its role in geography? How do scholars react to it?

*Readings:*

- **Young, I.M.** 1980. Throwing like a girl: A phenomenology of feminine body comportment motility and spatiality. *Human Studies* 3: 137-156.
- **Young, I.M.** 1986. The ideal of community and the politics of difference. *Social Theory and Practice* 12: 1-26.
- **Hanson, S. and Pratt, G.** 1986. Reconceptualizing the Links between Home and Work in Urban Geography. *Economic Geography* 64: 299-321.
- **Peet, R.** 1998. *Modern Geographical Thought*. Chap 6.
- **Dixon D.P. and Jones J. P.** 2005. Derridean Geographies. *Antipode* 37, 242-45.

### Week Ten B: Feminist Geographies and the Poststructural “Turn”

*Key Questions:* What is poststructuralism? What is its role in geography? How do scholars react to it?

- **Harvey, D.** 1991. *The Condition of Postmodernity* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed).
- **Peet, R.** 1998. *Modern Geographical Thought*. Chap 7.

### Week Eleven: Post-positivist Empiricism: We Are All “Posties” Now [?]

*Key Questions:* Okay, okay, but even if we don’t know what we see, can we still see what we know?

*Readings:*

- **Rocheleau, D.** 1995. Maps, numbers, text, and context: Mixing methods in feminist political ecology. *The Professional Geographer* 47: 458-66.
- **Sheppard, E.** 2001. Quantitative geography: representations, practices, and possibilities. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19 (5) 535-554.
- **Horner, M.** 2002. Extensions to the concept of excess commuting. *Environment and Planning A* 34 (3) 543-566.
- **Polsky, C.,** 2004. Putting space and time in Ricardian climate change impact studies: the case of agriculture in the U.S. Great Plains. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94(3): 549-564.
- **Sui, D. Z.** 2004. GIS, Cartography, and the “Third Culture:” Geographic Imaginations in the Computer Age. *Professional Geographer* 56: 62-72.
- **Knigge, L. and Cope, M.** 2006. Grounded visualization: integrating the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data through grounded theory and visualization. *Environment and Planning A* 38: 2021-2037.

- **Mesev, V., Shirlow, P., and Downs, J.** 2009. The Geography of Conflict and Death in Belfast, Northern Ireland. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, 893-903.
- **Wyly, E.** 2009. Strategic Positivism. *The Professional Geographer* 61 (3) 310-322.

#### **SEGMENT FOUR: Contemporary Disciplinary Debates**

##### **Week Twelve: Systematic vs Synthesis Science?**

*Key Questions:* What is the Turnerian thesis of disciplinary prestige for geography?

What are the dissents, retorts, and objections?

*Readings:*

- **Hanson, S.** 1999. Isms and schisms: Healing the rift between the nature-society and space-society traditions in human geography. *Annals AAG* 89: 133-143.
- **Martin, R.** 2001. Geography and public policy: the case of the missing agenda. *Progress in Human Geography* 25: 189-210.
- **Thrift, N.** 2002. The future of geography. *Geoforum* 33: 291-298.
- **Turner II, B. L.** 2002a. Contested Identities: Human-Environment Geography and Disciplinary Implications in a Restructuring Academy. *Annals AAG*: 52-74 [plus commentary]
- **Turner II, B. L.** 2002b. Response to Thrift's "The future of geography". *Geoforum* 33: 427-429.
- **Viles, H.** 2005. A Divided Discipline? In Castree, N., Rogers, A., and Sherman, D., eds., *Questioning Geography: Fundamental Debates*. Blackwell. Chap 2.

##### **Week Thirteen: The Contemporary Geographic Object: Human-Environment from Hard to Soft**

*Key Questions:* What is the human-environment object?

*Readings:*

- **Kasperson, R. E., and J. X. Kasperson.** 1996. The social amplification of risk. *Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science* 545: 95-105.
- **Braun, B.** 1997. Buried Epistemologies: The Politics of Nature in (Post)colonial British Columbia. *Annals AAG* 87: 3-31.
- **Turner, B.L., Kasperson, R.E., Matson, P., McCarthy, J., et al.** 2003. A framework for vulnerability analysis in sustainability science. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 100: 8074-79.
- **An, L. et al.** 2005. Exploring complexity in a human–environment system: an agent-based spatial model for multidisciplinary and multiscale integration. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95 (1) 54-79.
- **Heynen, N., Perkins, H., and Roy, P.** 2006. The political ecology of uneven urban green space. *Urban Affairs Review* 42 (1) 3-25.

- **Roy Chowdhury, R., and Turner, B.L.** 2006. Reconciling Agency and Structure in Empirical Analysis: Smallholder Land Use in the Southern Yucatan, Mexico. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96 (2) 302-322.
- **Rocheleau, D., and Roth, R.** 2007. Rooted networks, relational webs and powers of connection: Rethinking human and political ecologies. *Geoforum* 38 (3) 433-437.

#### **Week Fourteen: The Geographic Tools: Place, Space, Scale, Territory**

*Key Questions:* What are the tools of a synthesis spatial scientist?

*Readings:*

- **Massey, D.** 2005. *For Space*. Sage.

#### **Week Fourteen B: The Geographic Tools: Place, Space, Scale, Territory**

*Key Questions:* What are the tools of a synthesis spatial scientist?

- **Jessop, B., Brenner, N., and Jones, M.** 2008. Theorizing sociospatial relations. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26: 389-401.
- **Leitner, H., Sheppard, E., and Sziarto, K. M.** 2008. The spatialities of contentious politics. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 33: 157-72.
- **Paasi, A.** 2008. Is the world more complex than our theories of it? TPSN and the perpetual challenge of conceptualization. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26 (2) 405-410.
- **Pierce, J., Martin, D. G., and Murphy, J. T.** 2011. Relational place-making: the networked politics of place. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36: 54-70.
- **Pierce, J., and Martin, D. G.** 2015. Placing Lefebvre. *Antipode*.