

GGG 689 Seminar in Geographic Thought and Methodology

Fall 2017, Wednesdays, 4:30-7:10 Nguyen Engineering Building 1108

Professor David Wong

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Office Hours: Weds 3-4pm, or by appointment

Course Description: This is a graduate seminar focusing on research in Geography. The primary objective is to provide an overview of current geographic thoughts and research methodologies. The secondary objective is to assist students to develop a research proposal. Primary modes of learning include reading, preparing presentations and leading discussions, in-class discussions and writing assignments-exercises. Materials cover major approaches in contemporary Geography and some common research methodologies for geographical studies. Students should expect to expose to thoughts and methods beyond their comfort zones.

Required Texts:

Cresswell, T. 2013. *Geographic Thought: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell. (TC)

Davis, J. P. 2011. *The Rowman & Littlefield Guide to Writing with Sources*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 4th Edition.

Gomez, B. and J. P. Jones III. (eds.) 2010. *Research Methods in Geography*. Wiley-Blackwell. (GJ)

Additional references:

Gregory, D., R.J. Johnston, G. Pratt, M. Watts, and S. Whalmore. (eds.) 2009. *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Wiley-Blackwell. 5th Edition.

Grading:

- 1) 30% Presentation and Leading Discussion
- 2) 20% Participation
- 3) 25% 3 summaries (5% each) and 2 exercises (5% each)
- 4) 25% Research proposal (5-8 pages)

All submissions should be double-spaced, include page numbers, and use Times New Roman in 12 point font with 1 inch margin in all sides.

- 1) Each student will be randomly assigned to one chapter in the required texts, an article or a set of articles (identified as A# in the syllabus) on a related topic. In the assigned week for that chapter/article(s), the student should prepare a 20-25 minutes presentation. The presentation should summarize pertinent ideas of that chapter/article(s), critically evaluate the ideas and raise substantive issues in geographical and social research. After the presentation, the student should also lead an open discussion session of approximately 20 minutes (prepare questions and/or statements to guide the discussion). Presentation and discussion will be evaluated according to a set of rubrics to be provided later.
- 2) Non-presenting students are expected to (1) read the assigned chapter of the week; (2) read the additional material of the week, if available; and (3) participate in class discussion. Students will be evaluated by the instructor and their peers according to their levels of preparation, participation and constructive contributions to the discussion, based on their readings of course material.

- 3) Part II in GJ includes nine chapters covering issues on data gathering and analysis in nine areas or types of data in geographical research. Author of each chapter also provides exercises at the end of the chapter. Each student should select three chapters. For the first chapter, student should choose a chapter in an area that he/she is very familiar with. The second chapter should be on a topic that the student is somewhat familiar with or barely knows about. The third chapter should be on a topic completely unfamiliar with. (1) Provide a two-page summary for each chapter, including an assessment on and justification of the likelihood that the data or method discussed in the chapter will be or will not be useful in the student's own research. (2) Complete the exercises of any two of the three chosen chapters. Submit all these (3 summaries and 2 exercises) as one document on **November 15**.
- 4) Develop a research proposal on a topic of your interest. Present a 75-100 words summary of your research to your fellow classmates and the professor for comment and critique on **September 13** (5%). Develop the idea more fully over the semester. Submit the proposal on **November 29** (20%). Suggested structure of the proposal will be provided later.

Final Grading Scale: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), F (69 and Below)

Policies/Student Conduct: As a graduate course, attendance is expected. You are also expected to come to class prepared by critically reading and evaluating the material, and make connections to readings in other weeks. You should be prepared with comments, questions, and/or views of the material. You must use your Mason email account (@gmu.edu) for all course communications. All academic accommodations for documented disabilities must be arranged through the Office of Disability Services (<http://ods.gmu.edu/>).

All students are required to be familiar with and adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code and the Mason Values of Academic Integrity which can be found in the Office of Academic Integrity or online at (<http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>). Failure to abide by the code could result in failure of this course and dismissal from the University.

Course Outline and Readings (Subject to change):

August 30

Introduction to the course and semester, TC Ch. 1 Introduction

September 6

Library (Joy Suh -Library resources and how to find journal articles in geography)

TC Ch. 2 Early Geographies

TC Ch. 3 The Emergence of Modern Geography

Semple, E. 1911. "Influences of Geographic Environment." from *Influences of Geographic Environment on the Basis of Ratzel's System of Anthrogeographie*, New York: Henry Holt, p. 1-32.

Sauer, C. 1925. "The Morphology of Landscape." University of California Publications in Geography 2(2): 19-54.

Pattison, W. 1990. "The Four Traditions of Geography." *Journal of Geography* Sept./Oct. 202-206.

Cutter, S., Golledge, R. and Graf, W. 2002. "The Big Questions in Geography." *The Professional Geographer* 54: 305-317.

Taaffe, E.J. 1974. "The Spatial View in Context." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 64(1): 1-16.

September 13

Present the 75-100 words research summary in class (submit to Blackboard before class). Be prepared to discuss area or field of your research. What are your academic interests? What is the focus of your study?

September 20

TC Ch. 4 Thinking About Regions

TC Ch. 5 Spatial Science and Quantitative Revolution

(A1) Hartshorne, R. 1939. "The Character of Regional Geography." in *The Nature of Geography*, Association of American Geographers, Washington DC: 436-444.

(A2) Schaefer, F.K. 1953. "Exceptionalism in Geography: A Methodological Examination." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 43: 226-249.

(A3) Hartshorne, R. 1954. "Comment on Exceptionalism in Geography." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 44: 108-109.

(A4) Hartshorne, R. 1958. "The Concept of Geography as a Science of Space, from Kant to Humboldt to Hettner." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 48(2): 97-108.

September 27

GJ Ch. 2 Theorizing Our World

GJ Ch. 3 Observing Our World

- (A5) Burton, I. 1963. "The Quantitative Revolution and Theoretical Geography." *The Canadian Geographer* 7(4): 151-162
- (A6) Wilson, A.G. 1972. "Theoretical Geography: Some Speculations." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 57: 31-44.
- (A7) Isard, W. 1956. "Regional Science, the Concept of Region, and Regional Structure." *Papers and Proceedings, The Regional Science Association* 2: 13-26

October 4

- GJ Ch. 4 Measurement and Interpretation
GJ Ch. 5 Operational Decisions

October 11

- GJ Ch. 6 Sampling Our World
GJ Ch. 23 Analyzing Meaning

- (A8) Wright, D., Goodchild, M. and Proctor, J. 1997. "GIS: Tool or Science? Demystifying the Persistent Ambiguity of GIS as Tool versus Science." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87(2): 346-362.
- (A9) Pickles, J. 1997. "Tool or Science: GIS, Technoscience and the Theoretical Turn." *Annals Of the Association of American Geographers* 87(2): 363-372.

October 18

- TC Ch. 6 Humanistic Geographies
TC Ch. 7 Marxist Geographies

- (A10) Harvey, D. 1985. "The Geography of Capitalist Accumulation." in *The Urbanization of Capital*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell pp. 32-61.
- (A11) Massey, D. 1979. "In What Sense a Regional Problem?" *Regional Studies* 13: 233-243.

October 25

- TC Ch. 8 Feminist Geographies
TC Ch. 9 Postmodernism and Beyond

- (A12) Harvey, D. 1987. "Flexible Accumulation Through Urbanization: Reflections on Post-Modernism" in the American City, *Antipode*, 19: 260-286.

November 1

- TC Ch. 10 Toward Poststructuralist Geographies
TC Ch. 11 Relational Geographies

- (A13) Cassetti, E. 1999. "The Evolution of Scientific Disciplines, Mathematical Modeling and Human Geography." *Geographical Analysis* 31: 332-339.
- (A14) Markusen, A. 1999. "Fuzzy Concepts, Scanty Evidence, Policy Distance: The Case for Rigor and Policy Relevance in Critical Regional Studies." *Regional Studies* 33: 869-884
- (A15) Wheeler, J.O. 2000. "Have We Lost a Generation of Urban Geographers?" *Urban Geography* 21: 377-379.

(A16) Sheppard, E. 2001. "Quantitative Geography: Representations, Practices and Possibilities." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19: 535-554.

November 8 – No Class (conference)

November 15

TC Ch. 12 More-than-Human Geographies

TC Ch. 13 Geography's Exclusions

(A17) Openshaw, S. 1991. "A View on the GIS Crisis in Geography." *Environment and Planning A*, 23: 621-628

November 22 – No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

November 29 ? GJ 16-22

December 6

GJ Ch. 24 The Politics and Ethics of Research