

## GEOG 9518 – Advanced Cultural Geography Section 001 – Winter 2019

### 1. Course Information

#### 1.1. Classroom Location:

Seminar: Time 10:00-12:00, SSC 2322E SSC

#### 1.2. Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Hopkins

Office: SSC 2423

Office Hours: Mondays from 1-3pm or by appointment

Phone: 661-2111 x85027

Email: [jhopkins@uwo.ca](mailto:jhopkins@uwo.ca)

### 2. Calendar Description

A critical examination of contemporary literature on the social-political and spatial processes and practices underlying the social construction of 'culture' in Western societies. Numerous issues, theories and concepts employed in geography and cognate disciplines will be reviewed.

2 seminar hours, 0.5 course (mandatory)

### 3. Introduction

The primary goal of this course is to encourage the graduate student to develop, question, critique and apply conceptions of *culture*, *cultural identities* and *practices* to his or her research interests. 'Cultural geography' is "one of the most rapidly growing and energetic sub-fields of Anglophone geography over the past 25 years."<sup>1</sup> In fact, there has been what is termed 'the cultural turn' within many branches of human geography and the larger social sciences. The topics of 'culture' and the methods used to examine them are thus wide ranging and interdisciplinary employing a critical and political approach grounded in contemporary social theory and 'cultural studies.'

Within contemporary cultural geography specifically, 'culture' is approached as a site of contested identities and practices, and is thus intrinsically '*spatial*' and '*political*.' The student will learn how and why culture and space are intrinsic to understanding and explaining a society's plurality of conflicting interests, ideologies and relations, and, ideally, the role(s) space may play in resolving differences in a spirit of equity and social justice. Central to our enquiry is the question of

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<sup>1</sup>.Amin, A. (2009). 'Cultural Geography,' in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. D. Gregory, R.J. Johnston, G. Pratt, M.J. Watts and S. Whatmore (eds), 129. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

how major markers of cultural identity—*e.g.* *ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, the body*—are distributed and practiced spatially? How and why people are spatially included or excluded because of identity? Moreover, how do the spatial or non-spatial processes of economy, politics and power give rise to these cultural landscapes?

#### 4. Course Objectives

In keeping with the *Graduate Degree Level Expectations* of our programs, this course promotes several objectives:

- *'Depth and breadth of knowledge'*  
by introducing and interrogating various geographic concepts and literature about 'culture', 'space', 'place', 'identities' and 'power' within the discipline of cultural geography
- *'Research & scholarship'*  
by encouraging independent learning and critical thinking, and assisting Master's level students in particular with a well-ordered transition from the constraints of undergraduate education to the less structured oriented world of graduate school
- *'Application of knowledge'*  
by evaluating the strengths, weaknesses and theoretical underpinnings of a given approach to themes and topics within the selected sub-fields of cultural geography
- *'Professional capacity/autonomy'*  
by cultivating a professional and collegial spirit of scholarly engagement with the literature
- *'Communication skills'*  
through practicing and developing skills in academic reading, writing and dialogue
- *'Awareness of the limits of knowledge'*  
by respecting and recognizing the inherent strengths, weaknesses and complexities of different approaches within cultural geography toward constructing arguments, interpretations and creating geographical knowledge.

#### 5. Learning Outcomes

Fulfilling these objectives will provide numerous '*learning outcomes*' that will enable you to:

- Approach the discipline of Cultural Geography and the work of academic geographers with a more open and informed perspective on the plurality and commonality of ways geographers think, question, analyse and interpret.
- Critique and theoretically situate the ideas and research of geographers, including your own work and those of your peers, in a balanced, reasoned and constructive fashion.
- Demonstrate an understanding and awareness of the complexities and limitations of constructing geographical arguments and interpretations contributing toward knowledge.
- Exercise and improve your verbal and writing skills, through individual work.

## 6. Evaluation

**Evaluation is based on two individual written assignments.** If attendance and/or preparation is less than acceptable, marks will be deducted. The topics, format requirements and evaluation criteria of the papers will be provided at a later date.

Assignment	Value	Due Date
First paper	40%	Thursday, Feb. 28
Second paper	50%	Thursday, April 11
Participation/preparation	10%	During term

## 7. Late Assignments

Papers are due on the dates indicated above. *A late assignment will lose 5% per day.* An assignment submitted five or more days beyond the deadline will be graded for your educational benefit but will NOT count toward your final course grade.

I am *sympathetic to extensions of a few days*, but they must be made at least seven days before the initial due date.

## 8. Grading

**How do I grade?** A mark of 'B+' (78%) is expected as a minimum level of performance: an acceptable and general understanding of the course material has been demonstrated through the formal assignments and seminar participation. An 'A' level performance (80%+) exceeds this minimal standard by demonstrating a thorough grasp of course material, and the ability to engage key concepts in an effective, informed and insightful fashion. Diligence and demonstrable effort are necessary but not, by themselves, sufficient to warrant an 'A.' An 'A+' (90%+) reflects an outstanding performance in the seminars and written work, an exceptional command of written and oral communication skills, and a critical mind capable of synthesizing complex ideas and generating astute conclusions.

## 9. Course Content

Course content is largely student driven by student interests and his/her needs as perceived by, and in consultation with, the instructor. In keeping with the course title and intent, works will necessarily address key concepts and issues in contemporary geographical works on culture and power, but will also be drawn from the larger, interdisciplinary body of work from relevant fields within the larger social sciences and humanities. Students are encouraged to suggest topics and specific readings as the term progresses. The first three seminar topics are as follows:

Seminar #1: Critical Geographies and Culture

Seminar #2: Space, Place and Cultural Landscapes

Seminar #3: Ideology & Power

I will provide access to the required readings in advance of these seminars. The remaining nine seminars we may explore topics, authors and readings tailored to your own interests or I can continue to provide you with specific topics—class, racism, gender, others—should you prefer me to do so. I would prefer to follow your research interests and follow the former path but if you prefer a more rigid and prescribed structure I am happy to accommodate you as such.

## 10. Additional Course Resources

Both during the course and afterwards, you are encouraged to do further reading on different approaches and ideas in Geography. Explore journals such as the following: *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*; *Canadian Geographer*; *Antipode*; *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*; and *Progress in Human Geography*; *Gender, Place & Cultures*.

## 11. University Policy Regarding Illness

Please visit the link for more information.

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_12](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12)

If you feel that you have a medical or personal concern that is interfering with your work, you should contact your Instructor, Graduate Program Administrator, Supervisor, or SGPS.

It is expected that students will attend all classes.

## 12. Attendance

**Your attendance at all classes is a requirement; it is crucial to the delivery and success of this course and to your own success in it.** Ten percent of the final course grade is allocated for attendance and preparation: failure to attend promptly, participate fully, and demonstrated preparedness in the seminars will result in deduction of up to 10% in the final course grade. Unanticipated absence for medical or personal reasons will be sympathetically dealt with according to University and departmental procedures, which may require submission of supporting documentary evidence such as a doctor's letter.

You may seek permission to be absent from class for academic-related activities such as conference attendance and research activity that requires you to be away from London. **Those planning on being absent at any stage during the term should, as soon as possible, request written permission to be absent, informing the instructors of the dates of the absence, and the reason for the absence.** Written confirmation and justification for your academic-related absence by your supervisor is required. **Steps taken to fulfil the material and exercises missed**

due to an absence are at the discretion of the course instructors and may include, but are not limited to, additional written assignments.

### **13. Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students**

For the complete policy and regulations see:

[http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/13.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/13.html)

### **14. Procedures for Appealing Academic Evaluations**

Students may appeal an academic decision or ruling in accordance with the appeal procedures set out below. Students have a right to appeal to their graduate programs and, if unsuccessful, to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). Some decisions may be appealed further to the Senate Review Board Academic. The Vice-Provost's rulings in academic matters are final unless overturned or modified on appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA).

For the complete policy and regulations see:

[http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/13.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/13.html)

Requests to have an assignment or examination re-evaluated must be submitted to the course instructors in writing within one week of receiving the graded assignment. In this written request for re-appraisal, the specifics of what you would like re-visited and the justification for doing so will be clearly and concisely stated. Should you feel that your final grade in the course is biased, inaccurate or unfair; you do have the right to appeal your mark. Please refer to the *Western Calendar* prior to doing so (see web site above). In an attempt to avoid such time-consuming and stressful procedures for us both, be assured that each and every piece of work is graded carefully and thoroughly. *Be aware that marks may be raised--as well as lowered--through an appeal process.*

### **15.Support Services**

#### **15.1 Support Services**

Student Support Services can be reached at: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health/](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

#### **15.2 Short Absences**

If you miss a class due to minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or exam. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow the missed lecture notes from a classmate.

#### **15.3 Extended Absences**

If you expect to be away from campus for an extended amount of time, please make prior arrangements with your course instructors and/or supervisor.

For the complete policy on registration, see:  
[http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/4.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/4.html)

#### **15.4 Academic Concerns**

If you are in academic difficulty, it is strongly recommended that you see your Graduate Program Administrator, Supervisor, or SGPS.

#### **16. Important Dates**

January 7: Classes resume  
January 15: Last day to add a second term half course  
February 18: Family Day – Department Office Closed  
February 18 to 22: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)  
March 7: Last day to drop a second term half course without penalty  
April 9: Classes end  
April 10: Study day  
April 11-30: Examination Period

#### **17. Other Information**

For a list of Graduate Regulations, please visit:  
[http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/index.html](http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/index.html)

For The University of Western Ontario Senate Regulations, please see the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policies at:  
[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html)

#### **17.2 Email Policy:**

Please use e-mail judiciously. Do not ask me questions about your assignments or course problems over e-mail that cannot be answered with one or two sentences. If you have long and complex questions—and I hope you do—I will be delighted to answer them face-to-face during my office hours or class. I want to help you succeed and email is rarely the vehicle through which to do so.

If you chose to contact me by phone or email, I will usually but not necessarily respond within 24 hours during weekdays: do not expect an instantaneous response. I rarely check or send emails on weekends. Please use proper English in your text mail. Communication, like politeness, is a two-way street, and I shall extend to you the same courtesies. Thank you.

#### **17.3 Safety:**

Safety is a shared responsibility. Ultimately, each individual must act in a reasonable manner in order to ensure his or her safety and the safety of others. (For more information, please see [http://www.geography.uwo.ca/resources/health\\_and\\_safety/docs/2014-Fieldwork%20Safety%20Policy.pdf](http://www.geography.uwo.ca/resources/health_and_safety/docs/2014-Fieldwork%20Safety%20Policy.pdf).)

#### **17.4 Use of Electronic Devices:**

Never record digitally or otherwise any part of the class without prior and specific permission from the course instructors. Handwritten or typed notetaking is encouraged.

### **17.5 Mutual Expectations:**

You can expect us to arrive punctually and prepared for all class sessions. We will strive to promote a collegial atmosphere of mutual respect conducive to the exchange of ideas and learning. We expect the same from you. This entails respecting the opinions and questions of others and behaving in a courteous manner. If you would like to come and talk to either of us about any aspect of the course, please make an appointment to do so. We are approachable, we welcome your comments and questions, and we very much want you to succeed in the course. Suggestions and constructive criticism to improve the course are particularly welcomed.

### **17.6 Code of Conduct for Students, Staff, and Faculty for The Department of Geography\*:**

Please familiarize yourself with this code:

Affiliation with the Department of Geography presumes mutual respect among students, staff, teaching assistants, and faculty. A positive atmosphere of professionalism and collegiality is essential for everyone to perform to the best of his or her abilities. This requires respect for the opinions and questions of others and behaviour that is, at all times, courteous, and conducive to creating a pleasant and productive environment for learning and working. As members of a Department of Geography, we are expected to show special respect for our environment, being individually responsible for promoting a clean and safe work environment within the facilities of the Department and the Social Science Centre, including classrooms, laboratories, offices, hallways, washrooms, exterior grounds, and the facilities and vehicles used in field courses and field trips. It is inevitable that misunderstandings will occur from time to time. However, it is in everyone's interest to try to resolve problems in a non-confrontational manner. Threatening, violent, or abusive behaviour, harassment (including sexual and racial harassment), rudeness (in person, in writing, or on the telephone), and abuse of authority, for whatever reasons, corrode good working and learning conditions. Incidents that cannot be resolved amicably may be reported to the Chair of the Department). The Chair will consider appropriate actions for resolving the problem, usually after consultation with the parties involved. If required, contact with university services (e.g., Police, Equity) or civil authorities will be invoked.

### **17.7 Student Use of University Facilities and Classroom Decorum\*:**

Please familiarize yourself with this code:

Students are expected to comply with the authority of University staff and faculty on all matters relating to access to facilities (offices, classrooms, laboratories, and Map Library) and to use of equipment and resources. Students are expected to attend all lectures and laboratory sessions regularly and punctually.

Instructors are responsible for maintaining an appropriate academic atmosphere in all class activities; students are expected to cooperate in this effort. Actions that impede instruction deter the ability of students to learn, or show disrespect for instructors and fellow students, will not be condoned in Geography classrooms and labs. Such actions include reading during lectures, disturbing consumption of food or drink, use of phones, recreation laptop use, and disruptive conversation. Serious disrespect for classroom decorum should be reported to the instructor.

Students are expected to adhere to University standards of academic honesty, as outlined under "Scholastic Offences" in the Western Calendar. Unacceptable practices include cheating, impersonation, plagiarism, misrepresentation of research, falsification of documents, obstructing the academic activities of another, aiding or abetting academic misconduct, and abuse of confidentiality. In addition to incurring penalties, as outlined in the Calendar, some academic offences may fall under the Criminal Code of Canada.

*\* Approved on behalf of Faculty, Staff, and Students by the Council of the Department of Geography on 4 March 1994.*

**Please Note: Course content and dates may vary due to unforeseen circumstances.**