

GEOGRAPHY 8100

Seminar in Geographic Thought

AU 2023 / #29137 / 3 credits

Instructor: Dr. Kendra McSweeney

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Office hours: Office hours: Thursday, 2-5pm or by appointment

Class: T 2:15-5:00, Derby Hall 1116

Disability Services

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's **request process**, managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Overview

There is much to be done to revise how we teach the history of geography in the United States.

-Kinkaid and Fritzsche, 2022:12¹

The content and approach of this course is based on the premise that knowledge production is social—it reflects and shapes the (messy, power-saturated) social worlds in which scientists are trained and in which they do their work. That means that this course will not review a disembodied, authoritative 'canon' of geographical scholarship. Instead, we will explore key geographic questions by engaging with the times and places in which those questions arose and with attention to the people asking them.

¹ Eden Kinkaid & Lauren Fritzsche (2022). "The stories we tell: Challenging exclusionary histories of geography in U.S. graduate curriculum." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, DOI: 10.1080/24694452.2022.2072805.

If the course is successful, by December you should have a good sense of how your research interests are related to those of your colleagues and faculty in the department, how the department's collective expertise has been shaped over time by trends within and beyond Ohio, how it compares with other programs in the U.S., and how the interdisciplinary field of geography as practiced in the U.S. is similar to or distinct from geography programs elsewhere.

Towards this end, the course will simultaneously pursue several inter-related goals:

- 1) Serve as an introduction to trends in geographic thought and practice in the U.S., and OSU Geography's contribution to those trends;
- 2) Get to know (some of) the department's faculty and their research expertise and career trajectories;
- 3) Contribute to your 'professionalization' in terms of deepening your understanding of common practices, networks, and opportunities associated with the pursuit of your degree (and beyond); in effect, the course aspires to reveal some of grad school's 'hidden curricula';
- 4) Build a supportive community within and beyond your graduate cohort;
- 5) Become more familiar with the spaces and places around us in Columbus, Ohio;
- 6) Familiarize you with the contexts in which undergraduates—who you may be involved in teaching—are learning Geography.

In the process, we will review the many strengths of a geographical perspective and the intellectual and applied possibilities that it can open up for us. However, we will not shy away from the gaps, exclusions, and even violences that can be found in the history of our discipline and which can endure in how it is practiced today. We will also review the many ongoing efforts to resist and remedy those legacies.

Course Format

In our weekly meetings, the focus will be on reviewing and understanding the week's readings and actively engaging in discussion and debate with our faculty guests. For the days in which you are not leading a seminar (more on that below), please ensure that you **post your comments on the readings by 9 am on the morning prior to the class meeting**. That gives me and your colleagues time to read and process your thoughts before we meet.

Readings

There is no textbook. All required readings and other materials can be found in Carmen. Required readings are indicated. You will also find optional readings and other materials that you may find interesting but that you are not required to read.

Policies

Code of conduct

This seminar-style format encourages debate and discussion. Here are some tips for how we can make our discussions as generative and inspiring as possible.

1. Polite interjection is welcome. If there's something you don't understand, or want to push back on, please feel free to jump in.

2. Debate is welcome; we all bring different perspectives. But we must debate respectfully. We can all develop our skills at negotiating different ideas, seeing multiple sides of an argument, and holding different ideas in productive tension.
3. If you are comfortable talking and contributing on-the-spot, be sure to leave time and space to those who may take longer to articulate their thoughts or may be less quick to speak out.
4. Active listening is expected. Phones/devices should be silent so you can be maximally present. Consider taking notes by hand rather than on a laptop.
5. Academic integrity is upheld in all course activities. I will be clear about the limits of my knowledge, and I expect you to do the same. The idea is to create an environment where we can all learn from each other and acknowledge and appreciate others' contributions to our learning.

Misconduct

Any academic misconduct, such as plagiarizing, will be immediately reported, as required, to the [Committee on Academic Misconduct](#).

Instructor availability

I have set aside Thursdays 3-5 pm for meetings with students (aka 'office hours'). Your ability to thrive in grad school will be enhanced by your willingness to visit with faculty regularly. Get used to going to faculty office hours—that's why they exist!

Please remember that teaching/mentoring is only one of my and my colleagues' job duties. If you would like to drop in outside of office hours, please email me to set up a time. Also, please give me at least 24 hours to respond to your emails, and longer on the weekends.

Due dates

Due dates for assigned work are noted in Canvas. Responses to readings are due by **9 am** on the morning of the class. Other assignments are due by midnight on the due date. **ALL COURSEWORK** must submitted by Dec. 12.

Health & Safety Requirements

All students, faculty and staff are required to comply with and stay up to date on all university safety and health guidance (<https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu>).

Evaluation

	POINTS/100	DUE DATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance/Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Includes BINGO 	20	ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to readings 	20	ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar leadership 	25	variable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note to an author 	5	variable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV 	5	5 Dec
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final paper 	25	12 Dec

Attendance/Participation / 20

This is a seminar: participation in class discussion is required. If you are unable to attend a class in person for any reason, please email me prior to class. Your participation grade will also reflect your involvement and completion of 8100-BINGO. (While this is not a part of your grade, you are strongly

encouraged to attend all departmental colloquia, and—as your schedule permits—other talks that are happening around OSU).

Meaningful participation means being present, actively listening to and responding to others, not being distracted by a screen, and participating in class-related activities. If for any reason you do not expect to be able to participate fully in these ways, please let me know and I'd be happy to find ways to accommodate you.

Response to Readings / 20

Most readings come with prompts to stimulate discussion. PLEASE RESPOND TO THE READINGS AT LEAST AN HOUR BEFORE CLASS (i.e., **by 9 am**). This gives me and your colleagues leading the class the time to read them and be able to tailor the class content in response.

“Responses” do not mean summaries. Instead, please offer your thoughts about the readings—what information was new to you, what questions it inspired, and how it related to other things you have read or experiences you have had. Your response should be a ‘first cut’ of your thinking on the reading, and you should expect that class discussion will help you to revise, reinforce, or reject your first impressions.

There are usually about 6 academic papers per week, of various lengths. For tips on how to best cover this amount of readings (without reading every word), please see Ch. 3-4 in a *Field Guide to Grad School* (in Carmen).

Seminar Leadership / 25

Each of you will have an opportunity to be the ‘host’ for one of our faculty visitors. This will involve considerable prior preparation. We will develop the protocol for doing this, and leading the associated discussion, in our first two meetings.

Note to an author /5 points

Science is a social enterprise. We will be reading a lot of material this semester, much of it written by living people. When you come across a piece that you particularly enjoy, please write a thoughtful email to the author. It will likely make their day.

CV /5 points, due in class Dec. 5 (last day)

Throughout the course, you will be reviewing others’ CVs. I expect that they will inspire you to tweak the format, style, or content of your own CV. To encourage you to do so, please bring copies of your revised CV to our last class meeting for a CV workshop.

Final paper (25 points) due Dec. 12

You will submit a final paper (approx. 15-20 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt font) that will be based on your reading and synthetic analysis of at least 5 research papers/chapters in geography or cognate field (not including ones we read in the course). Those papers may be: a) written by a scholar whose work you’d like to know better; b) about an area of science you’d like to know more about—be it a method, a topic, or a concept. Discuss your plans with me so together we can ensure that this paper is as useful to you as possible.

Grading Scale

At the graduate level, grades should matter less than during your undergraduate days. The ‘currency’ of grad school is more about whether you convey an intrinsic motivation and willingness to put energy and enthusiasm into your learning and research. This is what faculty will write about in their letters of recommendation—which are extremely important for whatever you have planned beyond your graduate work. Nevertheless, grades can still function as an indicator of: a) how much time you should

allot to a particular part of the course; b) an opportunity to receive feedback on your work as it relates to your own progress/performance or your progress/performance relative to others.

I will use the following grading scale when turning points into letters: Over 90 (A); Over 80 but < 90 (B+); Over 70 but < 80 (B); Over 60 but < 70 (C+); Over 50 but < 60 (C).

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

This fall, we will meet 15 times.

Date	Topic/Faculty Visitor
22 August	Introductions: to each other, to course
29 August	Mapping Geography in U.S. universities
5 September	Geography's capacious tent: commonalities within a diverse field Faculty: McSweeney
12 September	Defining debates within Geography's sub-fields
19 September	M Dutta
26 September	H Miller (3:15-5 only) [9/29: Colloquium with J. Tierney]
3 October	T Hice-Fromille (to be confirmed)
10 October	N Xiao (2:15-4:30)
17 October	H Le (2:30-3:45 only)
24 October	J Hauser [10/27: Colloquium with X. Zhu]
31 October	Hallowe'en: Scary geographies [11/3 Colloquium with A. Praino]
7 November	M Coleman
14 November	B Mark (to be confirmed) [ELDAAG: Nov. 16-17, Maumee Bay]
21 November	Thanksgiving Week
28 November	Lingering questions or silences?
5 December	Course review and synthesis; CV workshop
12 December	Final paper due. [AGU: 11-15 Dec.]