

GEOG 3751: Geography of Ohio May Term 2015 (May 18-27)

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Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

The Geography of Appalachian Ohio

Overview

Southeastern Ohio, or ‘Appalachian Ohio’ is a dynamic and surprising region. Long characterized by extractive industries (especially for hydrocarbons, timber, clays and gravels), the region is now known best to Columbusites as an accessible, forest-covered getaway. In fact, the region has experienced remarkable ecological recovery. Yet logging and mining persist, and the poverty that characterizes Appalachian communities has in some areas deepened.

How can we understand the fates of Appalachian Ohio’s forests *and* its residents as part of the same *socioecological* processes? How can we overcome pervasive stereotypes of Appalachia to better understand the ways in which Appalachia was ‘produced’ as much outside the region as inside it? How can we understand how past land, labor, and environmental struggles in the region continue to shape possibilities for the region today?

This course is designed to engage these questions through the lens of **political ecology**. Political ecology is a subfield of geography that insists on the inherent inseparability of ‘nature’ from ‘society’, troubles standard narratives about nature resource restoration and conservation, and always attends to the power dynamics that define how space, place, and nature are used, by whom, and for what.

Course description

The class examines the political ecology of Appalachian Ohio by focusing on four broad topics: forest recovery, mining, food systems, and amenity-led development. In the field, we will visit sites across the region that exemplify the issue at hand. Each site will also offer multiple opportunities to use a range of research tools (map reading, ethnographic methods, landscape interpretation, cartography, remote sensing, ground-truthing, and more) to engage these issues on the ground. All field-based inquiry will be complemented by course-related readings.

Course learning objectives

In this course students will: (1) demonstrate the ability to recognize and interpret both social and physical aspects of the landscape, and conceptualize their integration; (2) learn about economic, social and political processes connecting southeast Ohio to the wider world; (3) understand the importance of using history to understand the present; and (4) design a research methodology and communicate research findings.

Course Evaluation

Class participation & readings	50%	Active engagement, evening group facilitation, punctuality, readings
Daily Field Notebook/Journal	25%	Daily field observations (approx. 300-500 words each day)
Final project	25%	Research proposal (2-3 pages, single spaced)

Class participation: Students are expected to show active engagement with course objectives and exercises. To this end, students will attend all field exercises and talks, and will participate in class discussions. Student groups are responsible for leading nightly group discussion regarding field observations as part of their participation grade.

Readings: A variety of readings, maps, and data on the days' topics are available in the coursepack. Students are expected to keep up with these readings by referring to them often and by taking moments—especially at the end of the day—to read in preparation for the next day.

Daily Field Journals: All students will keep a field notebook/journal, in which they will write their field observations and interpretation of the landscape, tying them to course themes. Students are expected to write 300-500 words daily, while supplementing their text with sketches, tables and graphics. Journals will be due on the last day of the course (May 27) when we meet for the final course wrap-up.

Final project: The final project will consist of the formulation of a 2-3 page (single-spaced) research proposal, which will propose a research project in the study region that is in some way related to **hunting/fishing** and is closely tied to course goals. During our time in the field, you will have multiple opportunities to do the preliminary research to build the proposal, and you will have a full day back in Columbus (Tues, 5/26) to find and integrate supporting literature. The research proposal should include (1) a concise research question; (2) a basic literature review; (3) a description of the methods to be used; (4) brief initial data analysis (primary data: quantitative or qualitative); and (5) explanation of societal relevance of the proposed research. A hard copy of the proposal is due at the start (9 am) of the last day of class, on May 27. Students will then present their proposals to the class on May 27.

Research topics and methods: Potential topics are restricted to those that have something to do with **hunting/fishing**—its social, ecological, political, economic, or other dimensions. Students will develop their ideas during the course through informal consultation with the instructors, lecturer, and each other. Appropriate methods include all those we will practice during the course and any others with which the student is already familiar.

Classroom/field etiquette: Breakfasts are at 7 am every morning (8 am on Sunday)—we will be escorted to each meal so students must be ready on time. All dinners are at 6 pm. Evening discussion begins at 7 pm. Students should expect to put in 2-3 hours of work each night (~7-9 pm) for discussion/reading/films/field-note writing-up. We will leave the camp each morning by 8 am, and our field visits require we follow a tight schedule. It is your responsibility to be up and ready to go each morning. Punctuality is a requirement of the course. Respect for each other is also essential, as the course involves a high level of peer interaction. All students must also follow all rules set out by our host Camp Oty’Okwa.

Required readings

The required course pack is provided. Other materials (maps, books, supplemental readings) will be available during the course at the camp.

Course Themes/Structure (detailed daily schedules are in course pack):

<i>Day</i>	<i>CHALLENGE and secondary questions</i>	<i>Methods</i>
Monday 5/18	To use the tenets of political ecology to replace standard understandings of Appalachian Ohio with new understandings that recognize resilience, histories of struggle, and dynamic socioecologies.	Cartography & remote sensing, biogeography, hydrogeomorphology, ethnographic methods, historical analysis
Tues 5/19	“Back-to-nature”? Forests as emergent socioecological systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What belongs here?</i> The nature of invasives • Managing for wildlife 	Biogeographical tools (tree DBH, coring, plant/tree ID), map reading, landscape interpretation
Wed 5/20	Getting beyond “jobs vs. environment”: Social and environmental justice in an extractive periphery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we understand the present in light of the past? • Can energy economies fuel Appalachia’s future? • Dumping grounds: can trash hurt a ‘trashed’ landscape? 	Historical analysis, site visits, map reading, landscape analysis, interviews
Thurs 5/21	Foodie basket AND food desert? Building just food systems in rural Appalachia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role does agriculture, hunting and foraging play in local food systems? • How do we understand the present in light of the past? 	Historical analysis, participant observation, interviews
Friday 5/22 & Saturday 5/23	Landscapes of Consumption/Capitalizing on Nature? Environmental Restoration and Amenity Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of ‘outsiders’ • The challenge of local economic control in hot-tub cabin tourism & exurbanization • Building a future by selling the past: The challenge of ‘heritage tourism’ 	Water testing, gauging stream flow, topo map reading, participant observation, interviews
Sunday 5/24	How do we consolidate our insights into a compelling research question/proposal?	Rest, writing, some travel for research
Monday 5/25	Clean up @ Oty’Okwa Return to OSU by 12 noon	
Tues 5/26	Independent work & secondary research	Students on own
Wed 5/27	9:00-12:00, Derby 1186: Course re-cap and proposal presentations	

Practicalities

We will be staying at Camp Oty'Okwa in the Hocking Hills. The department will cover transportation costs. Your participant fees (\$250) contribute to our food and lodging there. Most meals will be eaten at Camp Oty'Okwa, with a bag lunch taken into the field, with the exception of one lunch (covered by us) and one dinner (paid for by you). Snacks can be purchased at many of the places we'll be visiting.

Transportation will consist of two 12-person rental vans. No guests or "drive-alongs" will be permitted.

The lodging is a shared accommodation with bunk beds. There is one large cabin for all students, with multiple separate rooms, a shared kitchen and living room, and a large deck. There are only two bathrooms/showers for all 17 students—schedule creatively! Students should bring all your necessary bedding—including pillow, sleeping bag and/or sheets & blankets. Students should bring comfortable sturdy shoes appropriate for hiking/walking, rain gear and multiple layers of clothing; the weather is likely to be variable. Each student should have a daypack as you will need to carry your journal, food etc. [See 'Packing List' for more details of what to bring]

Cell phone and internet connectivity is spotty throughout the study region. The course requires no computers or internet research while we are in the field. Laptops are not recommended.

The instructors reserve the right to ask any disruptive or repeatedly late/disengaged student to return to Columbus at any time. Any student sent home will receive a failing grade in the course.

Academic misconduct, including cheating or plagiarism, in any form will not be tolerated. "It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf."

Liability

Overall, the students involved in this field experience fall under Ohio State's general liability insurance because participation in this field trip is required as part of a course offered by our department.