

GEOG 2640: Geography of Culture and Inequality

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WELCOME!

This course provides you with opportunities to learn about what is perhaps the most vibrant and exciting subdiscipline of geography—cultural geography. The material covered in this course primarily reflects approaches and concepts that have risen to prominence since about 1970, and that continue to develop, change, and possibly mature. With these approaches and concepts as context, the course addresses a wide range of factual material, including many issues and problems that are debated in contemporary societies.

For example, a recurring concern in this course is with human identity. Who are we? More importantly, perhaps, who do we think we are? Do we see ourselves as individuals or as members of groups? If we see ourselves as members of groups, then do we belong to one group or to many? You may have encountered these types of questions in other social science courses, but in this course you will discover that they have direct geographic implications. This is because human identity is played out in the places that we occupy and the landscapes that we create.

As you proceed through this course you will be constantly surprised at the ways in which cultural geographic perspectives open doors to understanding important and often sensitive current issues. Further, the course content regularly invites you to think critically about these issues and provides opportunities for you to express your views.

Work hard on this course and become involved in what you are doing. The harder you work and the more involved you become, the greater the rewards both in terms of your intellectual growth and, more practically perhaps, in terms of the grade that you earn at the end of the course.

Enjoy!

CONTACTING YOUR INSTRUCTOR

For information on contacting your instructor as well as other important information from your instructor see the Instructor Letter link in this course website.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar describes this course as follows:

An introduction to the cultural geographic study of human and place inequalities, focusing on behaviour in landscape, group differences, and human identities. May not be held with the former 053.261. Prerequisite: GEOG 1200 or GEOG 1201 (or 053.120) (C) or GEOG 1280 or

GEOG 1281 (or 053.128) (C), or written consent of department head.

As you work through the three units of this course, you will:

- explore a wide range of ideas about how best to understand humans and the human behaviour that contributes to the formation of relatively distinct groups of people and related landscapes;
- learn about some of the links between identity, inequality, and landscape as these play out at national and global scales;
- read about the often very unfortunate ways in which people have treated other people and about the cultural geographic implications of these circumstances at relatively local scales; and
- discover some of the many ways that people relate to the places that they occupy.

This three credit-hour course is one of two Geography courses that address aspects of the subdiscipline of cultural geography. The other course is GEOG 2630; it is also available through Distance and Online Education.

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COURSE GOALS

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- analyze and discuss topics within the area of cultural geography, with special reference to ethnicity and power, the construction of identities, and the ways in which people live in places;
- employ your knowledge from this course in more advanced courses in human geography;
- read critically and to be prepared to question and evaluate geographic and other writings; and
- think and write logically and effectively.

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COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED

The following required textbook is available for purchase from the [University of Manitoba Bookstore](#). Please order this textbook immediately, if you have not already done so. See your [Distance and Online Education Student Handbook](#) for instructions on how to order the textbook.

Norton, William, and Margaret Walton-Roberts. 2013. *Cultural Geography: Environments, Landscapes, Identities, Inequalities*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

This textbook provides you with a comprehensive overview of the subdiscipline of cultural geography. The subtitle, *Environments, Landscapes, Identities, Inequalities*, highlights the emphasis placed on cultural geography as a practical, environmentally and socially relevant, area of study. Although you are only responsible for some, not all, of the chapters in this book it is helpful to have a sense of the book as a whole.

Following chapter 1, which is an introduction to the book, chapter 2 discusses traditional approaches to cultural geography; especially those concerned with human and land relationships, ecology, and the landscape school. Chapter 3 then addresses newer approaches, notably Marxisms, feminisms, and various strategies associated with the cultural turn. Together, these two chapters inform accounts of the practice of cultural geography contained in chapters 4 through 9.

The conceptual material in chapter 2 especially informs chapters 4, 5, and 6. There is an account of ecology and environmental ethics in chapter 4, while chapters 5 and 6 are discussions of, respectively, the historical cultural geography tradition and the regional cultural geography tradition. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 are especially informed by concepts presented in chapter 3. Discussions of racist, ethnic, and national landscapes and inequalities in chapter 7 relate particularly to Marxist concepts; accounts of discourse, power, and identity in chapter 8, especially gendered and

sexual identities, relate to feminist concepts; accounts of landscape, place, and identity in chapter 9 relate to postmodern ideas. Chapter 10 is a conclusion.

You will find the inclusion of multiple perspectives on critical issues provides you with many opportunities to question and debate rather than simply learn.

OPTIONAL

The only materials that you are required to use are the online course material and the textbook. However, because much of the content of this course involves an appreciation of basic geography and of links between that geography and current issues, there are six other categories of source material that you will find helpful.

First, as is the case with any geography course, it is appropriate to have a good atlas at hand. This will help you locate and put into context places mentioned in the textbook and will also help you complete one component of each assignment (described below).

Second, other geography books, such as introductory physical, human, and regional texts, will often serve to complement the required text. There are many of these available in university and other libraries.

Third, if used with caution and common sense, the Internet is a source of much useful information and is often able to replace texts as a source of basic factual material.

Fourth, the annotated list of readings at the end of each text chapter provides you with a wealth of options if you choose to follow up on some specific text content.

Fifth, there is often much useful material in good quality newspapers and magazines. However, unlike academic writings, many of these are aimed at a mass popular readership and may sensationalize material. Further, many of these outlets have a specific political agenda and may not attempt to provide the balanced perspective that is the hallmark of good academic work.

Sixth, the use of a dictionary and thesaurus will help you both with text reading and essay writing.

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is structured into three units, each of which is organized along similar lines. The aim here is to identify some of the features that all three units share. More precise details on how to work through a unit are included at the beginning of that unit under the heading "How to proceed."

First, each unit focuses on a particular theme, involves online and text reading, includes some learning activities, and requires submission of an assignment.

Second, each unit requires that you study one complete text chapter.

- Unit 1 ties in with text chapter 7.
- Unit 2 ties in with text chapter 8.
- Unit 3 ties in with text chapter 9.

Third, all three units also require that you study parts of other chapters. Details of this reading are provided at the beginning of the unit.

Fourth, a number of learning objectives are listed at the beginning of each unit. These encourage you to identify essential content and focus on key themes as you work through the unit.

Fifth, towards the end of each unit there is a list of study questions that are designed to assist your Final Examination preparation.

Sixth, the substantive online content for each unit comprises:

- two case studies that are intended to complement the text chapter material;
- a brief activity related to the need to be media literate; and
- a brief activity focusing on a country or region.

Please note that these three categories of content relate to at least one of the learning objectives and/or to at least one of the study questions.

Working carefully through and being actively involved in this content helps you prepare for the Final Examination.

Seventh, this online material does not include many references and there is no glossary of terms. This is because the textbook has a lengthy and annotated list of references at the end of each chapter and also an extensive glossary. Indeed, this online material was written explicitly with the textbook in mind so there is a close integration between the two. This should be of great value to you as you work through the course.

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EVALUATION AND GRADING

DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS

Assignment 1	20%
Assignment 2	20%
Assignment 3	20%
Final examination	40%
Total	100%

ASSIGNMENTS

There are three assignments, one for each of the three units. The three assignments are similarly structured. In each assignment you are to complete three activities, namely:

- write an essay (about 1,200 to 1,500 words) that is worth 15 of the 20 marks available for the assignment;
- write an opinion piece (about 300 words) that is worth 3 marks; and
- provide an about one-page factual statement that is worth 2 marks.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

Assignment	Sept.-Dec.	Jan.-Apr.	May-Aug.
1	September 30	January 31	May 24
2	October 21	February 21	June 14
3	November 10	March 10	July 5

Note: If the assignment due date falls during the Mid-term Break in February, it will be due on the Monday following the Mid-term Break. If you are unable to submit an assignment on time, contact your instructor well in advance of the due date, for we cannot guarantee that the instructor will accept late assignments.

EXAMINATION

This course has a two-hour Final Examination that is worth 40% of your final marks. The examination requires you to answer two essay questions from a choice of five. The questions included in the examination are based on the study questions that are listed near the end of each unit. A good way to prepare for this examination is to examine and review these study questions carefully.

Answers to examination questions are expected to be between about 800 – 1,000 words. References and footnotes are not expected.

There is a sample final examination included under the Assignments section in the course site that provides you with the basic examination format.

The final exam will be conducted at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry campus or at an alternate location off-campus. **All students must declare an exam location.** The Registrar's Office is responsible for scheduling the final exam. Once finalized, the exam date and time information will be posted on the University of Manitoba Exam site.

GRADING SCALE

Letter Grade	Percentage range	Description
A+	90–100	Exceptional
A	80–89	Excellent
B+	75–79	Very good
B	70–74	Good
C+	65–69	Satisfactory
C	60–64	Adequate
D	50–59	Marginal
F	0–49	Failure

Please note: All final grades are subject to departmental review.

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HOW IS STUDYING VIA DISTANCE DIFFERENT?

This is a Distance and Online Education course, and if this is your first course taken through this format, you will soon discover that there are some possible advantages and disadvantages compared to on-campus courses. It might be helpful to consider these advantages and disadvantages as you commence this course.

While we are all different in the way that we study, many students find that Distance and Online Education courses provide opportunities that on-campus courses rarely do.

- Most notably, you can see the entire course at the outset, not simply a course outline. You have a real opportunity from the beginning to understand the structure of the course, the direction being taken, and the sequence and flow of the content. You are able to note key ideas that appear later in the course and that might help you in your study of earlier content. Of course, this is not to suggest that you read all of the course material at the outset, which would probably be most difficult. It does mean however, that you can dip into later material if you find it helpful to do so.
- Another advantage of this format is that you are able to dictate the pace of the course (within assignment deadline and examination date constraints). This can be most beneficial if your lifestyle means that you are sometimes able to allot substantial time to the course and at other times have limited opportunities to study. Overall, you are able to impose your choice of organization on how and when you study. Of course, it is recommended that you study on a regular basis, but this is not always possible.

However, many students do find that the Distance and Online Education format has two possible disadvantages.

- You lack the prompt of regular class meetings that serve to keep you on track.

- Although you are welcome to email, you have less formal contact with your instructor.

Taking advantage of the opportunities to correspond with other students and the professor, however, can offset these disadvantages. Information concerning corresponding with other students is included in each of the three units.

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ORGANIZE YOURSELF AND YOUR TIME

With these possible advantages and disadvantages in mind, what is the best way to study, complete the assignments, and prepare for the final examination?

As far as is possible, set regular time aside for this course and stick to your schedule. You may find it helpful to read and study the text material in five relatively discrete stages (known as the SQRRR strategy):

- **Survey:** acquire an overview of the text chapter by focusing on any introductory and concluding comments and by using headings and subheadings as reference points.
- **Question:** look over the reading a second time, thinking about what you are reading in greater detail; as you read, question the content by taking notes or marking the text as you choose.
- **Read:** read in detail; you may be tempted to do this first, but it is usually a good idea to delay this stage as you acquire a more detailed understanding once you have the larger context that is provided by working through the first two stages.
- **Recite:** read the key ideas aloud, again asking questions.
- **Review:** accomplish a final reading to make sure that you have grasped both the key ideas and the needed factual content.

Note that there is a "How to proceed" section near the beginning of each unit that incorporates this SQRRR approach. Of course, the important thing as you work through this course is that you adopt studying and learning strategies that work for you.

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WRITING ESSAYS

Most of the assignment marks, and all of the final examination marks are based on essays, therefore, it is important that you write these essays in an effective and relevant way. Essays provide you with an opportunity to sharpen your thinking skills and to express your thoughts by writing in a carefully reasoned manner. Recognize that essays are an opportunity to express your reasoned and well-justified opinions on the issue raised in the essay question. As such, essays include both factual content and interpretations of those facts.

The following comments refer specifically to assignment essays, which provide opportunities to write and rewrite (examination essays are necessarily less polished). Many style manuals suggest that essays are best structured as follows.

- There is an **introductory** paragraph of about 100-150 words. The introduction serves one purpose - to introduce the essay. As such, the introduction **may** include any necessary definitions of terms, a statement of the structure of the essay, and reference to key content. The introduction **must** include a thesis sentence. Overall, it is often good practice to begin the introduction with general statements and to conclude it with the thesis sentence. The thesis sentence informs the reader as to the basic theme of the essay.
- The **body** of the essay comprises a series of paragraphs, probably 6 to 8, each about 150 words in length. Each of these paragraphs presents a specific argument that relates directly back to the thesis sentence. It is helpful to begin each of these paragraphs with a topic sentence and conclude each with a linking sentence to the next paragraph. The body of the essay will probably include both facts to support the argument being presented and also generalizations designed to accommodate especially complex ideas.
- There is a **concluding** paragraph that is closely linked to the introduction. Indeed, it is often helpful to reiterate your thesis sentence (the final sentence of the introduction) as the first sentence of the conclusion. The conclusion should be one paragraph of about 100-150 words. The conclusion **may** include an acknowledgment of ideas/facts that present a different view of the topic and suggestions for additional essay content. The conclusion **must** include your clearly stated decision on the topic being discussed.

Of course, a good essay is always on topic, includes a logical flow of ideas, and provides an answer to the issue raised. There needs to be evidence that you are using and understanding the textbook and online content. This does not mean repeating that content, but rather using the

content in the context of the particular essay question. Good essays succeed in integrating and synthesizing content from text and other sources as appropriate. The essay also needs to reflect your views, and interpretations. These more individualistic comments must be reasoned, not simply asserted, and must relate to the other essay content.

Note: The essays you are to write, both for the three assignments and for the final examination are fairly general in character. This means that they do not require one correct answer; rather there are usually several different approaches that can be taken in responding to these essay questions. The essay questions are invitations, providing you with the opportunity to think critically and creatively about the topic raised in each question.

HOW YOUR ESSAYS ARE GRADED

- A** "A" papers "present a thorough exploration of the topic. They show depth and complexity of thought, focused and coherent organization and a superior control of vocabulary and sentence structure." Demonstrates thorough knowledge of content. (An **A+** paper is synonymous with "scholarship" level.)
- B+** "B+" papers present a logical flow of information, but at times, transitions between paragraphs are lacking. They show good use of creative expression and the body of the paper contains most of the expected elements of the topic.
- B** "B" papers "present a substantial treatment of the topic, although not as thoroughly or as effectively organized [as an A paper]. They show some depth of thought, coherent organization and control of vocabulary and sentence structures."
- C+** "C+" papers "present only a moderate treatment of the topics. Similar to [B papers] they show clarity of thought, but they may lack complexity. These essays demonstrate coherent organization, although some digressions may be evident. The writing shows an overall control of vocabulary and sentence structure."
- C** "C" papers "may neglect or distort one or more of the writing tasks. They demonstrate problems with organization and analysis of the topic. They may contain recurrent mechanical errors, resulting in language that occasionally is difficult to follow."
- D** "D" essays "seriously distort one or more of the writing tasks. They demonstrate problems with organization and analysis of the topic. They may contain recurrent mechanical errors, resulting in language that occasionally is difficult to follow."
- F** An "F" paper is not a pass.

(Adapted from Bresnick, S., 1996, p. 712-13.)

A WORD OF CAUTION ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENTS AND THE FINAL EXAMINATION

Some students find that they do very well on the assignments, but they do not do nearly as well on the final examination. While your grades on the assignments will give you some idea of how well you are mastering the material they may not indicate how well you will do on the examination because the examination is written under very different circumstances. Because the assignments are open book, they do not require the amount of memorization that a closed-book examination requires nor are they limited to a specific time period. Some students have told us that, based on the high marks they received on the assignments, they were overconfident and underestimated the time and effort needed to prepare for the final examination.

Please keep all this in mind as you prepare for the examination. Practice for the examination by writing the sample exam within the required two-hour time limit and without any books. Pay careful attention to the description of the type of questions that will be on your examination.

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A NOTE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Acquaint yourself with the University's policy on cheating, plagiarism, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and Policy section of the University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar. Note: These policies are also located in your Distance and Online Education Student Handbook.

An excellent practical source on the issue of maintaining academic honesty is the handbook *Cheating, Plagiarism and Fraud*, available from the Student Advocacy Office, Room 519 University Centre, University of Manitoba; or from their website at http://www.umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/cheating_plagiarism_fraud.shtml Please make sure you understand the nature and the serious consequences of compromising academic integrity.

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DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION (DE) STUDENT RESOURCES

In your course website there are links for the following:

- Contact Distance and Online Education Staff
- Distance and Online Student Handbook
- Distance and Online Education Website

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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	<p>William Norton is a Senior Scholar in the Department of Environment and Geography at The University of Manitoba. Following undergraduate studies in geography (B.A.) and education (Dip. Ed.) at the University of Hull, England, he completed an M.A. degree at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and a Ph.D. degree at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. After completion of these studies, and before settling in Winnipeg in 1979, he held teaching positions at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa; at the State University of New York College in Buffalo, USA; and at the University of Sheffield in Sheffield, England. William has taught a variety of courses in human geography but particularly enjoys teaching introductory level human geography, cultural and social geography, and historical geography. These teaching interests are reflected in the publication of the books, <i>Historical Analysis in Geography</i> (1984), <i>Explorations in the Understanding of Landscape: A Cultural Geography</i> (1989), <i>Human Geography</i> (8th ed., 2013), and <i>Cultural Geography: Environments, Landscapes, Identities, Inequalities</i> (3rd ed. 2013). William conducts research in several areas of cultural and historical geography and has authored about 50 journal</p>

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Sample