ADVANCED CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY:
A Cultural Politics of Space

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Office Hours: T.B.A. or by appointment

Seminars:
Date, Time, Location T.B.A, 2 hours

Syllabi from
Graduate Course Descriptions, Geography, UWO
http://geography.ssc.uwo.ca/grad/courses/course_descriptions.html#9518

Geography 9518: Advanced Cultural Geography
This course examines the production and interpretation of cultures, the major cultural markers of identity, and the politics of space, place and landscape. Final list of seminar topics and readings for discussion are developed in consultation with students.

2 hour seminar, 0.5 course

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.”¹ 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 how major markers of cultural identity—e.g.s. ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, the body—are distributed and practiced spatially? How and why people are spatially included or excluded because of identity? And how do the aspatial or non-spatial processes of economy, politics and power give rise to these cultural landscapes?

PURPOSE
This graduate course has several objectives:

i. Develop critical thinking and intellectual discussion.
ii. Expose students to contemporary theories in cultural studies.
iii. Introduce dominant themes and topics in cultural geography.
iv. Encourage responsibility for independent learning.
v. Exercise and develop reading, writing and verbal skills.

Fulfilling these objectives will enable the student to

i. Situate his/her own research in the larger theoretical and topical contexts of cultural geography and cultural theory.
ii. Critique and differentiate cultures and cultural creations in a logical and systematic fashion.
iii. Systematically critique the politics of culture as manifested in, over, and through space.
iv. Better articulate his/her opinions, interpretations and arguments in both verbal and written form.

FORMAT AND EVALUATION
Because this is primarily a ‘reading’-based, seminar course, students are expected to read numerous works identified through instructor-student consultation. Course material is tailored specifically toward the needs and research interests of the student(s), particularly in the latter half of the term. Weekly seminars are used to discuss materials and address the two essay assignments. These seminar meetings are intellectual forums to discuss, debate, question and critique the literature, and to development and successfully complete the two essay assignments. With mutual participation and unbridled enthusiasm, the process should prove both stimulating and interesting!

Evaluation is based on written evidence of your ability to construct and present a lucid, well-structured, articulate and grounded argument on relevant topics of your choice in two 3,000 to 4,500-word/ten to fifteen-page papers (M.A. level and PhD. levels, respectively). The precise topic of the papers and the specific dues dates will be determined through consultation with the instructor. Format requirements will be made explicit at that time.
First paper  Approx. 3,000 - 4,500 words  50%  February, T.B.A
Second paper  Approx. 3,000 - 4,500 words  50%  April, T.B.A

How do I grade? I regard the mark of ‘B+’ (78%) indicative of average work at the graduate level: this is both competent and acceptable. You have completed all of the readings and demonstrated a general understanding of the course material as evidenced in the essays and seminars. An ‘A’ is reserved for outstanding effort and achievement. Exceptional diligence, a thorough knowledge of course materials and the ability to apply key concepts in an effective, logical and literate fashion are clearly evident. Hard labour and exceptional effort are necessary but not, by themselves, sufficient to warrant an ‘A.’ An ‘A+’ (90%+) are rare, but it is awarded on occasion. An outstanding performance in the seminars and written work demonstrating a superb command of English and a critical mind capable of synthesizing complex facts and ideas to arrive at particularly astute conclusions, will earn this prestigious grade.

CONTENT

Course content is largely student driven by student interests and his/her needs as perceived by the instructor. In keeping with the course title and intent, works will necessarily address key concepts and issues in contemporary cultural geography, but will necessarily be drawn from the larger, interdisciplinary body of work on cultural identities and practices within the social sciences. Students are encouraged to suggest topics and specific readings as the term progresses.

The topics, authors and readings we cover in much of the course are flexible. Possible topics and/or authors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Age
- The Body
- Class
- Consumption
- Ethnicity
- Feminism
- Gender (feminism/masculinity)
- Hybridity
- Ideology
- Landscape
- Media
- Multiculturalism
- Nationalism
- Nature
- Political economy
- Pop/mass Culture
- Post-colonialism
- Post-modernism
- Racism
- Sexuality
- Social Justice
- Symbolic economy
- Others of your own choice....

- Chomsky
- Cosgrove
- Duncan
- Foucault
- Hall
- Harvey
- Jackson
- Ley
- Marx
- Mitchell
- Rose
- Smith (David M.)
- Valentine
- Young
- Others of your choice
Useful journals available on-line and most likely in DB Weldon Periodicals that may assist you in topic and author selection, as well as with your essay assignments, include, but are certainly not limited the following:

- *Annals of The American Association of Geographers*
- *Annals of Tourism Research*
- *Antipode*
- *Area*
- *The Canadian Geographer*
- *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*
- *Geografiska Annaler Series B*
- *Geographical Review*
- *Gender, Place and Culture*
- *Journal of Cultural Geography*
- *Landscape*
- *Progress In Human Geography*
- *Social & Cultural Geographies*
- *Theory, Culture & Society*
- *Transactions of The Institute of British Geographers*
- *Tourist Geographies*

**ASSORTED ADMINISTRIVA:**

**Safety**
Safety is a shared responsibility. Complacency, inattention, lack of preparation and/or training will all increase risks to health and safety. Ultimately each individual must act in a reasonable manner in order to ensure their safety and the safety of others. (For more information, please see our departmental web address on ‘Health and Safety’:
http://geography.ssc.uwo.ca/health-safety/fieldwork.htm).

**Prerequisite checking - the student’s responsibility**
If applicable, a list of the prerequisites for the course and the following notation regarding the Senate regulation with respect to the student’s responsibility for ensuring that course prerequisites have been completed successfully or special permission from the Dean obtained. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Appeals**
You are advised to read the course calendar to familiarize yourself with Western's regulations and procedures concerning appeals, grades, regulations, penalties and such at
Requests to have an assignment or examination re-evaluated must be submitted to me 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. I stand by the marks assigned. Be aware that marks may be raised—as well as lowered—through an appeal process.

**Dropping the Course**
Please see the Geography Graduate Assistant for the appropriate procedures.

**Medical or Non-Medical Absence, Exemption and Tardiness**
Students who have documented ‘special needs’ and/or official notifications of accommodation from the Dean’s office—e-mailed directly to me—will be accommodated accordingly, including exemption of exams and assignments if circumstances warrant. For either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean’s office and not to the instructor. It will be the Dean’s office that will determine if accommodation is warranted. In all other instances of absences, omissions and tardiness on your part, I respect your maturity: you are adults. If you choose to miss seminars and assignments you are most at liberty to do so. The consequences are made evident in this course outline. If you are late to class—or must leave early—please do so quietly with minimal disturbance to your peers. Thanks.

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC see:  
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):
https://studentservices.uwo.ca under the Medical Documentation heading

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is stealing: it is unacceptable, and those who tempt fate will be persecuted to the fullest extent allowed under the university’s regulations. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:  
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf. Please avoid this experience and do your own work.

Be aware that all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

**Extensions & Late Submissions**
All requests for extensions on essay deadlines must be made in writing to me, Dr. Hopkins, at least two weeks before the essay is due. I do not ask for an explanation or reason, simply the revised due date you wish. You may have up to three days beyond the initial due date. Essays submitted beyond the new due date will be penalized as per the course penalty(10% per day). Never slip assignments under my door. Submit late assignments in the ‘drop box’ outside the main geography office.
Electronic Devices
Never record digitally (AV) or otherwise any part of my seminars without my prior and specific permission. Note taking is highly encouraged.

Accessibility
The University of Western Ontario is committed to achieving barrier free accessibility for persons studying at Western. Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

Support Services
Registrarial Services: http://www3.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm
Student Development Services: http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/

Codes of Conduct
My experiences with previous students have been 99.99% positive! Let us strive to keep that percentage, OK? I will be polite and courteous to you and your peers, and I demand the same from you. Not to belabour the point, but included below is the Code of Conduct for Students, Staff, and Faculty for the Department of Geography. The University of Western Ontario Code of Student Conduct is available at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf: please familiarize yourself with both of these documents should you have concerns about your own or somebody else’s classroom behaviours.

MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS
Because this seminar addresses many contemporary and controversial issues—discrimination and power, gender, language, racism, sexuality—I insist that each of us respect the thoughts and opinions of one another. Our seminars are intellectual forums to explore cultural issues from a geographical perspective; everyone's voice and interpretations are welcomed. As the seminar leader I will provide you with a set of theoretical concepts, models and various interpretations of cultural conflicts. Using these models and concepts, you will be encouraged and challenged to develop your own interpretations of various cultural conflicts. In other words, your grounded opinions and positions in no way whatsoever need parallel my own to succeed in this course: freedom of thought and expression is strongly encouraged!

You can expect me to come prepared for, and attend, all of our seminars regularly and punctually. I will strive to promote a collegial atmosphere of mutual respect conducive to the exchange of ideas and learning. This entails respecting the opinions and questions of others and conducting myself in a courteous manner. I demand the same from you. If we all abide by this code of civility, we set the stage for a healthy, safe, and intellectually stimulating forum.

If you chose to contact me by phone or email, I will usually by 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.

Finally, if you have problems, questions, ideas or concerns with any aspect of the course, please raise the matter before, during or after class, or during my office hours. You can also phone me and email me (see paragraph above). I welcome your questions and constructive criticisms. I am approachable and want to assist you to succeed!

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

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**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY**

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, the Map Library, 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 and 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 (661-3653). 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.

**Student Use of University Facilities and Classroom Decorum:**

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 walkmans and radios, and disruptive conversation. Serious disrespect for classroom decorum should be reported to the instructor and, if required, to the Chair of the Geography Department (SSC 2429, Telephone 661-3653).

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.*