

Geography 242-01: Regional Geography of the U.S. and Canada

Fall 2018 FYC

Meets: MWF 10:50 – 11:50 a.m.
Car 107

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Office hours: M 1:30–2:45 p.m.
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W 1:15–2:30 p.m.
or by appointment

Teaching Assistants: Elena Gottesman (writing assistant), Orion Dick-Neal



I. COURSE INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

What is it? Where is it? Why is it located there? So what? Geography is much more than a collection of facts about capital cities and mountain ranges; the essence of geography is to study why locations and features matter. Geography is the study of spatial organization of human activity, and of people's relationships with their environment – whether in an urban or a rural setting. How have human activities and social/cultural characteristics in a place been shaped by the landscape, and in turn, how has the landscape been shaped by human activities?

In Regional Geography of the U.S. and Canada, we will explore the ways in which diverse groups of people interact with the natural environment to produce the contemporary landscapes (human and physical) and regional differentiation (social and cultural) of the U.S. and Canada. The course emphasizes patterns of human settlement, economic activity, and land use, with special attention given to social and legal issues relevant to Native populations in the U.S. and the historic and current status and development of Native lands. This course fulfills the U.S. Identities and Differences (USID) general education requirement.

This course will introduce you to a variety of concepts and methods that geographers use to analyze spatial patterns and processes. The course is organized regionally, but this does not preclude broader thematic discussions. I hope that this will be an interactive course – and that we can draw on our classmates' "regions of expertise" to learn from each other. I encourage sharing of any type (articles, literature, music,

food...) that will help us “experience” and understand each region. We will also travel into the field for some first-hand experience with the Boreal Forest region in Minnesota.

As a First-Year Course, considerable emphasis will be placed on research and writing; this course also fulfills the Argumentative Writing (WA) general education requirement. You will develop skills that should serve you well in your academic career and beyond, such as:

- The use of library resources, including online indexes.
- The use of primary data sources, e.g. the U.S. Census.
- How to plan, organize, draft, and revise a college paper.
- How to construct a thesis statement and support your claims through appropriate analysis and argumentation.
- How to cite sources and avoid plagiarism.
- How to write for different audiences (e.g. a scholarly community vs. the general public).



II. FIELD STUDY

Within the discipline of geography, fieldwork is central to developing our skills of observation and analysis and to improving our understanding of places and regions. Fieldwork also provides memorable and enjoyable experiences! For many geographers, fieldwork solidified our disciplinary choice.

This course includes a field study through the Boreal Forest region of northern Minnesota. Our study will focus on the topics of “reinvention” of a traditional natural resource-based regional economy, the impact of primary activities on the landscape and on the form of human settlements, and issues of environmental sustainability in an area of continued primary industry. Specifically, we will examine the impact of iron ore and taconite mining on the physical landscape and on the cities and populations of Minnesota’s Iron Range, learn about the historic and contemporary forestry and paper industries of the area, and discuss the economic geography and urban redevelopment strategies of the international port of Duluth on Lake Superior. Our visit to the Heritage Center of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa and stay at the tribal Fortune Bay Resort Casino will allow us to also experience and explore cultural history and contemporary Native American economic development issues in the region.



III. READING MATERIALS

Textbook: Birdsall, Stephen S., et al. 2017. *Regional Landscapes of the United States and Canada*. 8th ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Additional required readings will be posted on our Moodle site.



IV. EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING

Attendance

Class attendance and participation are expected. The class will consist of lectures and in-class discussions and activities. You are expected to have done all required reading before coming to class and be prepared to discuss it. A productive discussion is one in which participants listen and learn from one another, that focuses on understanding an issue and making connections (to other readings, to real life events, etc.), and that advances our collective knowledge of a topic.

Assignments

You will complete four short writing assignments throughout the semester (two map write-ups, one policy letter, one field essay), as well as a moderate-sized research paper and oral presentation. There will be considerable emphasis placed on steps in the research and writing process for your final paper, including multiple drafts, peer review, and revision. Details of each assignment will be handed out well in advance of the due date. Assignments must be turned in during class (not later in the day) to be considered on time; late assignments will be penalized 10% per day.

There will also be three exams (of equal weight) given throughout the semester. Exams will consist of matching (including map locations), multiple-choice, and short answer/essay questions. Exams will be based on the textbook, other required readings, lectures, and class discussions.

Grading

Your grade will be determined by the following components (roughly 53% based on written assignments and the research project, 42% on exams, and 5% on class participation):

| | | |
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| <i>Written assignments</i> | | |
| Regional map activity (40 pts.) | | = 4% |
| Site and situation activity (50 pts.) | | = 5% |
| Field essay (55 pts.) | | = 5.5% |
| Colorado River allocation activity (75 pts.) | | = 7.5% |
| <i>Research project</i> | | |
| Project proposal (10 pts.) | | = 1% |
| Argument draft (50 pts.) | | = 5% |
| Project draft and peer review (75 pts.) | | = 7.5% |
| Final paper (100 pts.) | | = 10% |
| Oral presentation (75 pts.) | | = 7.5% |
| <i>Exams</i> | | |
| Exam #1 (140 pts.) | | = 14% |
| Exam #2 (140 pts.) | | = 14% |
| Exam #3 (140 pts.) | | = 14% |
| <i>Class attendance/regional image contributions (50 pts.)</i> | | = 5% |

Grade cut-off percentages are as follows: A = 93-100%; A- = 90-92.9%; B+ = 87-89.9%; B = 83-86.9%; B- = 80-82.9%; C+ = 77-79.9%; C = 73-76.9%; C- = 70-72.9%; D+ = 67-69.9%; D = 63-66.9%; D- = 60-62.9%; NC = <60%.

My goal is to provide feedback and scores within one week after an assignment has been turned in. If you would like to track your overall grade throughout the semester, that is your personal responsibility; I do not provide a digital gradebook.

Make-up exams, extensions

Make-up exams are given only for excused absences. In such cases, notify me as soon as possible before the exam. Extensions on assignments or course incompletes will not be granted unless exceptional circumstances require it and prior arrangements have been made.

Technology use

Within the classroom, students are welcome to use laptops for academic purposes; technology use that is disruptive to an academic space is not welcome. When communicating with me via email, I will answer messages within 24 hours.

The course syllabus, assignments, readings, and other information and announcements will be posted to our Moodle site. Select course information is also available on the Geography Department website at <https://www.macalester.edu/geography/>.

Academic resources

The Macalester Academic Excellence (MAX) Center (www.macalester.edu/max/), located on the first floor of Kagin Commons, provides numerous academic resources from time management and study strategy workshops to quantitative material and writing assistance. The MAX Center has peer tutors available for assisting students in all stages of their writing. Hours are 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (M-F) and 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. (S-Th). Becky Graham and Jake Mohan also provide writing assistance to students during the daytime hours. You may drop in for help or call 651-696-6121 (daytime) or 651-696-6193 (evening) to schedule an appointment.

Academic accommodations

In some circumstances, course design may pose barriers to a student's ability to access or demonstrate mastery of course content. Academic accommodations can be implemented in such circumstances. If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please contact the Disability Services Office (<http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/>) at your earliest convenience. You may schedule an appointment by emailing disabilityservices@macalester.edu, or calling the Disability Services Office at 651-696-6974.

Academic honesty

Academic honesty and integrity are expected at all times. You are responsible for knowing what constitutes plagiarism. If you have questions about Macalester's

academic integrity policy, please refer to the *Student Handbook* (<http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/>).

All sources used in preparing your assignments and project must be cited; this includes maps and data sources. APA is the preferred citation style of the Geography Department; see the library's citation guides and resources under the Research Guides menu at <https://libguides.macalester.edu/citation>.



V. SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

(Please note: schedule and readings subject to revision)

| Date | Topic | Reading/Assignment Due |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Fri-Aug 31 | Introductions and advising info | |
| 2. Wed-Sept 5 | Introduction to regional geography | |
| 3. Fri-Sept 7 | Regional map activity | Birdsall ch. 1 (pp. 2-6); Zelinsky |
| 4. Mon-Sept 10 | Regions of U.S. and Canada | Birdsall ch. 2 |
| 5. Wed-Sept 12 | Regions of U.S. and Canada (pt. 2) | DUE: Regional map write-up |
| 6. Fri-Sept 14 | American Indian policy eras | |
| 7. Mon-Sept 17 | American Indian population | Peacock and Day |
| 8. Wed-Sept 19 | American Indian lands | Meyer DUE: Site and situation assignment |
| 9. Fri-Sept 21 | American Indian lands (pt. 2) | Miller (pp. 83-92) |
| 10. Mon-Sept 24 | American Indian sovereignty | Smith; Marohn DUE: Project proposal |
| 11. Wed-Sept 26 | The Northlands (Boreal Forest) | Birdsall ch. 17 (pp. 355-364); Way; Leschak; Brooks; DePass |
| 12. *FIELD STUDY* | Friday-Saturday Sept. 28-29 Grand Rapids Forest History Center, Iron Range cities, taconite mining, Bois Forte Reservation and Heritage Center, Duluth and Lake Superior | The Boreal Forest |
| 13. Mon-Oct 1 | The Boreal Forest (pt. 2) | Lanegran and Smith; Hart; Brodey |

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Topic</u> | <u>Reading/Assignment Due</u> |
|----------------|--|--|
| 14. Wed-Oct 3 | Urbanization growth eras; Population, transportation, and urbanization | Birdsall ch. 3 |
| 15. Fri-Oct 5 | Population, transportation, and urbanization (pt. 2) | DUE: Field essay |
| 16. Mon-Oct 8 | Current population trends; Megalopolis | Birdsall ch. 4 |
| 17. Wed-Oct 10 | Exam #1 | |
| 18. Fri-Oct 12 | Library research session | |
| 19. Mon-Oct 15 | The Northlands (Arctic) | Birdsall ch. 17; Castner |
| 20. Wed-Oct 17 | Canada's population and lands | DUE: Argument draft |
| 21. Fri-Oct 19 | The Empty Interior | Birdsall ch. 13 |
| 22. Mon-Oct 22 | The Southwest Border Area | Birdsall ch. 14 |
| 23. Wed-Oct 24 | Water in the West | Wines |
| 24. Fri-Oct 26 | No class – Fall Break | |
| 25. Mon-Oct 29 | Water in the West (pt. 2) | Reisner (pp. 510-518); Lustgarten; McKinney |
| 26. Wed-Oct 31 | California | Birdsall ch. 15; MacDonald |
| 27. Fri-Nov 2 | No class – West Lakes conference | DUE: CO River allocation assignment |
| 28. Mon-Nov 5 | Appalachia and the Ozarks | Birdsall ch. 8 |
| 29. Wed-Nov 7 | The Changing South; The Southern Coastlands | Birdsall chs. 9, 10 |
| 30. Fri-Nov 9 | Exam #2 | |
| 31. Mon-Nov 12 | The Manufacturing Core | Birdsall ch. 5 |
| 32. Wed-Nov 14 | The Agricultural Core | Birdsall ch. 11 |
| 33. Fri-Nov 16 | The Great Plains and Prairies | Birdsall ch. 12; Shortridge; Healy |
| 34. Mon-Nov 19 | Peer review of project drafts | DUE: Project draft |

| Date | Topic | Reading/Assignment Due |
|---|--|--|
| <i>(Wed-Nov 21 and Fri-Nov 23 Thanksgiving Break)</i> | | |
| 35. Mon-Nov 26 | The Bypassed East | Birdsall ch. 7 |
| 36. Wed-Nov 28 | Canada's National Core | Birdsall ch. 6; Ragan; Krauss |
| 37. Fri-Nov 30 | The North Pacific Coast | Birdsall ch. 16; Behnke |
| 38. Mon-Dec 3 | Hawai'i | Birdsall ch. 18 |
| 39. Wed-Dec 5 | Research project presentations <i>(Attendance required)</i> | |
| 40. Fri-Dec 7 | Research project presentations <i>(Attendance required)</i> | |
| 41. Mon-Dec 10 | Research project presentations <i>(Attendance required)</i> | |
| 42. Wed-Dec 12 | Research project presentations <i>(Attendance required)</i> | DUE: Final paper (by midnight) |
| Tues-Dec 18 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | Final Exam (Exam #3) | |

READING LIST

- Behnke, Steven. 2002. "Alaska's Contested Rural Landscapes and the Subsistence Claims of Alaska Natives." In Berry and Henderson, eds., *Geographical Identities of Ethnic America: Race, Space and Place*. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press.
- Brodey, Sam. 2016. "The 11th Province? Considering the State of Minnesota's Special Relationship with Canada." *MinnPost*. July 12.
- Brooks, Jennifer. 2016. "On the Iron Range, Prolonged Downturn is Taking its Toll." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. May 2.
- Castner, Brian. 2016. "A Disappearing Home in a Warming World." *The Atlantic*. October 12.
- DePass, Dee. 2018. "Workers Again Feeling at Home on the Range." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. July 15.

- Hart, John Fraser. 1998. "The Use of Forests." In *The Rural Landscape*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Healy, Jack. 2016. "Built Up by Oil Boom, North Dakota Now Has an Emptier Feeling." *The New York Times*. February 7.
- Krauss, Clifford. 2004. "An Insolent Puppet Roils Canadian Politics." *The New York Times*. February 16.
- Lanegran, David and Laura Smith. 2009. "Duluth, Minnesota: Reinvention of an American Industrial Center." *Geographische Rundschau International Edition* 5(4): 42-47.
- Leschak, Peter. 2016. "The Iron Range Economy: The End Game, Lights Out?" *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. March 11.
- Lustgarten, Abraham. 2015. "Use It or Lose It Laws Worsen Western U.S. Water Woes." *ProPublica*. June 9. <https://projects.propublica.org/killing-the-colorado/story/wasting-water-out-west-use-it-or-lose-it>
- MacDonald, Glen A. 2012. "Los Angeles Water – Myths, Miracles, Mayhem and William Mulholland." *AAG Newsletter* 47(10): 11-13.
- Marohn, Kirsti. 2017. "Lack of Agreement between Mille Lacs Band, County Leaves Tribal Officers without Policing Power." *MPR News*. October 10.
- McKinney, Matthew. 2003. "Linking Growth and Land Use to Water Supply." *Land Lines*. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- Meyer, Melissa L. 1991. "We Can Not Get a Living as We Used To': Dispossession and the White Earth Anishinaabeg, 1889-1920." *The American Historical Review* 96(2): 368-394.
- Miller, Robert J. 2013. "Tribal Gaming." In *Reservation "Capitalism": Economic Development in Indian Country*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Peacock, Thomas and Donald Day. 2000. "Nations Within a Nation: The Dakota and Ojibwe of Minnesota." In Graubard, ed., *Minnesota: Real and Imagined*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press.
- Ragan, Christopher. 2014. "The Staggering Price of Quebec Independence." *The Globe and Mail*. March 18.
- Reisner, Marc. 1993. "Afterword to Revised Edition." In *Cadillac Desert*. New York: Penguin.
- Shortridge, James R. 2004. "A Cry for Help: Kansasfreeland.com." *The Geographical Review* 94(4): 530-540.
- Smith, Kelly. 2017. "Mille Lacs Policing Dispute Hits a Wall." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. October 7.
- Way, Ron. 2017. "For Love of the Range." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. December 3.
- Wines, Michael. 2014. "Colorado River Drought Forces a Painful Reckoning for States." *The New York Times*. January 5.
- Zelinsky, Wilbur. 1989. "Real Regions." *American Demographics* 11(6): 43-44.