

**GEOGRAPHIC THOUGHT:
Seminar in the History and Philosophy of Geography**

UNC Department of Geography (GEOG 702)

Tuesdays 6:30-9 pm, SA 321

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Course website: via <https://sakai.unc.edu/>

Overview

Geography describes a long running conversation about the earth and humanity's place on it, and a tradition in "earth-writing," to take the word literally from its Greek roots, that began long before any of us were born. What counts as geographical knowledge, and the acceptable means of producing it, has itself changed over time, and in relation to changing historical, institutional, and geographical contexts. As students and novice producers of geographic knowledge, you enter this long running conversation; it is the premise of the course that it is worthwhile for you to examine, both generally and in specific ways related to your own research interests, what has been said before, how it has been said, and why. The course is thus meant to raise questions. What practices have been formative in the development of geographic theories and ideas, what methods, values, and philosophies have defined geographic thought and practice, and how have these changed over the course of the modern discipline's development? What are the implications of this history today?

The seminar explores the making of Geography, geographers, and geographical knowledge, focusing on the western geographical tradition from the nineteenth century to the present. We will examine key ideas, debates, institutions and discourses that have shaped the modern discipline, but also attempt to keep in view the broader historical, social, and political contexts in which different models of science have taken shape. A special focus on the venues or settings of geographical knowledge production, drawing on points of emphasis in the recent *Handbook of Geographical Knowledge* (Agnew and Livingstone 2011), will also help us to explore how developments in geographic thought have related both to the local settings of knowledge production and to broader dynamics in science and society. We will conclude with a survey of contemporary approaches in geography, and in continuing discussions of the relations between natural and social sciences in geographic thought and practice.

Format and Requirements

The seminar focuses on close reading and discussion of texts, including original work from Humboldt, Darwin, and Mackinder to a range of more recent geographical thinkers, as well as research articles and book chapters in the history and philosophy of science and geography. The primary course requirements include weekly short responses (1-2pp)*, engaged discussion (along with occasional, more formal presentations*), and a term paper*. Some would call it a small price to pay to better situate yourselves in the sweeping history and continuing ebb and flow of geographical ideas.

The seminar format is meant to create an environment for critical evaluation and discussion of course texts and topics. Instead of lecturing (although I will begin most weeks with a brief set of comments), the instructor is there mainly to structure the course through the reading list, to help guide or direct discussions, raise questions, exchange ideas, and to offer advice for course research and other topics. The success of a seminar, then, depends largely on the quality of the class discussions and on our abilities (and at times, perseverance) in engaging with course texts both individually and collectively. This requires a commitment for reading weekly texts before class (expect ~ 75-125 pages per week combining journal articles and book chapters, and set aside time accordingly), and, with the acknowledgement that some will tend to participate more than others on a given topic and in general, an effort to participate actively and generously in class discussions. I also encourage you to raise questions about issues arising from course readings that concern you or which may be confusing.

Each week, I assign a set of articles (below: **schedule**). By Tuesday at ~ noon please email me a 1-2 pg. *response**. I have just one specific requirements for these (while reserving the right to add more later!) – that it must explicitly *respond* to the readings. You may respond to one or two of the readings, or to several. You may use this space to simply digest or raise questions about the literature, to critique it, or perhaps something more experimental. In seminar we will work through the set of readings each week, and can also address issues raised in your responses, with students assigned as a primary discussant of some of the texts each week (expect 2-3 per the semester*) and other texts indicated for mutual discussion and background.

Requirements/Grading

Grades will be based on fulfillment of the following requirements:

- Informed class participation (50%) – *including formal and informal participation.
- Weekly responses (25%)
- Final projects: term paper/progress report* (25%)

SPRING 2014 SCHEDULE**

Tuesdays @ 6:30-9:00pm, SA 321

Introduction

Jan 14 Welcome and introduction to course

- Audrey Kobayashi, "President's column: Valuing the history of our discipline" *AAG Newsletter* 47(6): 3 (June 2012).
- Clive Barnett, "Awakening the Dead: Who Needs the History of Geography?" *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, 20(4): 417-419.

Jan 21 On geographic thought and geography's history

- Cresswell (Introduction, 1-13)
- Withers, "'Geography's narratives and intellectual history", *Handbook*
- Innes M. Keighren, Christian Abrahamsson and Veronica della Dora, On canonical geographies. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 2(2012): 296-312
- Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp 1-17.
- Keith Richards, "The Field", *Handbook*

Part 1: Geography and Enlightenment

Jan 28 1a. Mapping and geographical knowledge

- Livingstone, 63-101
- Cresswell (Ch. 2 Early Geographies)
- Matthew Edney, "Reconsidering Enlightenment Geography and Map Making: Reconnaissance, Mapping, Archive" in C.W.J. Withers and D. Livingstone (eds), *Geography and Enlightenment*, pp. 165-198 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- Couze Venn, "The Enlightenment" *Theory, Culture & Society* 23(2006): 477-486 (New Encyclopedia Project)
- Bowman expedition editorials. *Political Geography* 29/30 (2010-2011)

Feb 4 1b. Humboldtian science

- Livingstone, 102-138
- Alexander von Humboldt, Preface, introductory selection (pp 61-75) from *Essay on the Geography of Plants* (1807)
- Alexander von Humboldt and A Bonpland, *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America, during the years 1799-1804* (selections)
- Mary Louise Pratt, "Alexander von Humboldt and the reinvention of America" in *Imperial Eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (Routledge, 1991), pp. 111-143
- Gabriel Finkelstein, "Conquerors of the Künlün? The Schlagintweit Mission to High Asia, 1854-57." *History of Science* 38, pt. 2, no. 120 (June 2000): 179-218.

Feb 11

1c. *Exploration, empire, and scientific travel*

- Driver (Ch 2-3, 24-67, "The Royal Geographical Society and the Empire of Science" "Hints to travelers: observation in the field")
- Janet Browne, "Biogeography and empire," pp. 305-321 in N. Jardine, J. Secord, E. Spary (eds), *Cultures of Natural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- Gillian Beer, "Traveling the other way" (1996) in Beer, *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Gerard Toal, Battlefield. *Handbook*

Part 2:

Disciplinary Identities

Feb 18

2a. *Geography and evolution*

- Livingstone (177-215)
- Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (1859) selections
- Halford Mackinder, "A Journey to the Summit of Mount Kenya, British East Africa" *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 5 (May, 1900), pp. 453-476.
- Driver (Ch 5 "Becoming an explorer: the martyrdom of Winwood Reade" 90-116)
- Gerry Kearns, *Geopolitics, Handbook*.
- Cresswell (Ch. 3 "The emergence of modern geography")

Feb 25

2b. *"Environmentalism", geography, and the modern sciences*

- David Livingstone, "Environmental determinism", *Handbook*
- Ellen Churchill Semple, selections from *Influences of Geographic Environment*, first published 1911.
- Peter Kropotkin, excerpt from "Mutual Aid" in P. Appleman (ed), *Darwin: A Norton Critical Edition* [1902].
- Richard Peet, The social origins of environmental determinism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 75 (1985): 309-333. Oct 17
- Theodore M. Porter, How science became technical. *Isis* 100 (2009): 292-309

Mar 4

2c. *Landscape and Region*

- Carl Sauer, "The morphology of landscape" first published 1925.
- Carl Sauer, "Historical Geography and the Western Frontier" in J. Leighly (ed), *Land and Life: A Selection from the writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp 45-52 [1930].
- John Wylie, *Landscape, Handbook*.

- Cresswell, (Ch 4 Thinking about regions)
- Kirsch (2007) Ecologists and the experimental landscape: The nature of science at the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River Site. *Cultural Geographies* 14(4): 485-510.

Mar 11 **No classes – Spring Break**

Mar 18

2d. Geography and the Cold War University

- Neil Smith, "Geography as a museum: Private history and conservative idealism in *The Nature of Geography*" in *Reflections on the Nature of Geography*, eds N. Entrikin and S. Brunn (Washington: AAG, 1989), 91-120.
- Barnes, Trevor J. and Farish, Matthew, Between regions: Science, militarism, and American geography from World War to Cold War. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96(2006): 807-826
- David Harvey, "Owen Lattimore: a memoir" in Harvey, *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp 90-107. [1983]
- Fraser MacDonald (2011) Doomsday fieldwork, or, how to rescue Gaelic culture? The salvage paradigm in geography, archaeology, and folklore, 1955–62. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29: 309–335
- Entrikin, Region and regionalism, *Handbook*

Part 3: Geography and Revolution ... or, as the world turns?

Mar 25

3a. Spatial Science and the "Quantitative Revolution"

- Trevor Barnes, Spatial Analysis, *Handbook*
- Trevor Barnes, "My Gunnar Olsson" in C Abrahamsson, M Gren (eds) *GO: On the geographies of Gunnar Olsson* (Ashgate 2012)
- Cresswell (ch 5 Spatial science and the quantitative revolution)
- Luca Muscara, Gottmann's geographic glossa, *GeoJournal* 52(2002): 285-293.
- Stuart Elden, The significance of territory by J Gottmann. *Geographica Helvetica* (2013) 68, 65–68
- Stuart Lane, Making mathematical models perform in geographical space(s), *Handbook*

April 1

3b. Geography and social relevance: critical responses and new agendas

- William Bunge, *Fitzgerald: Geography of a Revolution* (1971), *Selections*
- Nik Heynen, Marginalia of a revolution: naming popular ethnography through William W. Bunge's *Fitzgerald*, *Social & Cultural Geography*, 14 (2013): 744-751.
- Yves Lacoste, An Illustration of Geographical Warfare: Bombing the

- Dikes on the Red River, North Vietnam, *Antipode* 5 (1973): 1-13
- Gavin P. Bowd and Daniel W. Clayton, Geographical warfare in the tropics: Yves Lacoste and the Vietnam War. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103(2013): 627-646.
- David Harvey, "On the history and present condition of geography: an historical materialist manifesto" in Harvey, *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp 108-120 [1984].
- Doreen Massey, "In what sense a regional problem?" in J. Agnew, D. Livingstone and A. Rogers (eds) *Human Geography: an Essential Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp 398-413 [1979].
- Cresswell (ch 7 Marxist geographies)

Apr 8 Final projects workshop/AAG meeting week (Tampa)
No new readings

- Apr 15** 3d. *Encounters with feminism and humanism*
- Linda McDowell and Doreen Massey, "A Woman's Place?" pp 458-475 in J. Agnew, D. Livingstone and A. Rogers (eds) *Human Geography: an Essential Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), [1984]
 - Gillian Rose, "Geography as a science of observation: The landscape, the gaze, and masculinity", in F. Driver and G. Rose (eds), *Nature and Science*, Historical Geography Research Series no. 28, pp 8-18.
 - Cresswell (ch 6 Humanistic geographies; ch 8 Feminist geographies)
 - Yi-Fu Tuan, [1979] "Introduction" pp 1-10, *Landscapes of Fear* (Minnesota, 2013)

- Apr 22** 3e. *Cultural turns and geography's "two cultures"*
- Nigel Thrift, *Space, Theory, Culture & Society* 23(2006)(New Encyclopedia Project): 139-146.
 - Cresswell (ch 9 Postmodernism and beyond)
 - Clayton, Subaltern space, *Handbook*
 - Ron Johnston, "Geography: a different sort of discipline?" *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 28(2): 133-141.
 - Joel Wainwright, Climate change, capitalism, and the challenge of trans-disciplinarity. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 100(2010): 983-991.
 - R. Lave et al. (2013) Intervention: critical physical geography *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien* 2013, xx(xx): 1-10
 - R. Lave, M. Doyle, M. Robertson (2010) Privatizing stream restoration in the US. *Social Studies of Science* 40: 677-703

May 2 Final Exam Date: final projects due*

Texts

Required text, available at the university bookstore and elsewhere:

Tim Cresswell, *Geographic Thought: a critical introduction* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)

- Unless in Cresswell or otherwise indicated, articles and book chapters listed in the schedule (including *Handbook*) below will be available electronically – as pdf files or links – via <https://sakai.unc.edu/>

Additional resources: disciplinary history, philosophy, concepts

- David Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition: episodes in the history of a contested enterprise* (Blackwell, 1992).
- John Agnew and David Livingstone, *The Sage Handbook of Geographical Knowledge* (Sage, 2011) [**Handbook**]
- Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Blackwell, 2000).
- Derek Gregory et al. (eds), *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (5th edn) (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).
 - *an especially useful resource for coursework and future teaching in geography and social sciences.*
- Kevin Cox, *Making Human Geography* (Guilford Press, 2014)
- R Inkpen, G Wilson, *Science, Philosophy and Physical Geography* 2nd edn (Routledge 2013)

*** Additional information will be provided for all assignments**

**** Universal caveat: Schedules are provisional, hence subject to revision ... Some optional or alternative readings may be added, occasionally**