

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT & GEOMATICS
WINTER 2024

GEOG*4880: Contemporary Geographic Thought

Instructor

Dr. Jennifer Silver

Pronouns: she/her

Email: j.silver@uoguelph.ca

Lecture time & location, office hours & TA info to be posted on Courselink

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Guelph resides on the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. These lands are a gathering place and home to many past, present, and future First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. The Dish with One Spoon is an agreement between Hodinöhsö:ni', Anishinaabeg and their allied nations to live peaceably on these lands and those throughout what is now known as the Great Lakes Region. The Dish with One Spoon speaks to interconnectivity and our collective relations with each other and the Earth. Abiding by it means that one should always strive to take only what they need, leave enough for others, and keep the shared dish clean.

Acknowledging the land on which we live, learn and work recognizes the importance of place-based histories and upholds Indigenous peoples as having been in relation with this place since immemorial. The acknowledgement above is adapted from material shared online by the Indigenous Student Centre.

Course Description

This course explores the origins and evolution of contemporary geographic thought. The course builds around major thinkers and analytical lenses in geography. As a capstone course that students complete near to the end of their degree, it also encourages students to reflect and to examine the relevance and significance of geographical knowledge to society, their own lives, and future career paths.

Class sessions will be participatory, combining lectures with in-class workshops and exercises, online reading discussions, and engagement with assignment materials submitted by you and your classmates. The success of the course rests on the level and quality of effort that students bring. Students are expected to keep up with readings and come to class and online discussions prepared to meaningfully engage.

Course Objectives

The course is designed to have students bring together what they have learned during their degree and to think more about what it might mean to be 'a geographer'. By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of historical and contemporary geography;
- examine, assess, and critically discuss key scholarly contributions of geography;
- construct a logical, well-supported, and convincing argument;
- demonstrate mastery of skills in written and oral presentation;
- demonstrate enhanced skills in professionalism, group work, and case study analysis; and,
- identify and professionally communicate personal skills and career goals.

Class Schedule

	DATE	TOPIC and/or ACTIVITY	READINGS and RESPONSIBILITIES
1	Jan 8	Course Introduction and Overview	---
	Jan 10	Human geography, physical geography, and explaining the world around us	- Optional, read Kelley (2018)
2	Jan 15	Histories of Geography	- Read Chapter 1
	Jan 17	Society, environment, and critique	- Read Chapter 13 & Lave et al. (2018)
3	Jan 22	Modes of research in geography	---
	Jan 24	What do geographers do? Career trajectories and professional development strategies	---
4	Jan 29	What have you learned and what skills have you gained through your degree? In-class learning portfolio activity	---
	Jan 31	Introducing the group assignment: introduction, overview, & group formation Summarizing the course to date: an in-class exercise in/with your assignment group	- Read Group assignment document - Groups will be formed in class & groups will make choices about their week/topic ** <u>Cover letter due 11:59pm, Feb. 4</u> **
5	Feb 5	Place	- Read Chapters 9 & 10
	Feb 7	Scale	- Read Chapters 11 & 12
6	Feb 12	Nature note: Prof. Silver is traveling home from a research trip today so the lecture will be in video format posted to Courselink	- Read Chapters 17 & 18
	Feb 14	Each news/podcast group meets with Prof. Silver during class time (precise schedule TBD)	- Come prepared to overview and discuss your group's ideas and plan for the news report assignment
READING WEEK: FEBRUARY 19-23			**<u>Group assignment due 11:59pm, Feb. 25</u>**
7	Feb 26	Explaining deforestation and land cover change	- Watch this week's news report(s) - Read Kelley (2018); Metz (2009) - Make your reading discussion posts
	Feb 28	Lecture & reading discussion debrief	---

	DATE	TOPIC and/or ACTIVITY	READINGS and RESPONSIBILITIES
8	Mar 4	Explaining industrial agriculture and food insecurity	- Watch this week's news report(s) - Read Bezner Kerr (2014); Pritchard (2009) - Make your reading discussion post
	Mar 6	Lecture & reading discussion debrief	---
9	Mar 11	Explaining biodiversity and conservation	- Watch this week's news report(s) - Read Campbell & Godfrey (2010); Jay and Morad (2009) - Make your reading discussion post
	Mar 13	Lecture & reading discussion debrief	---
10	Mar 18	Explaining urbanization/sprawl and land use planning	- Watch this week's news report(s) - Read Cadieux et al. (2013); Beesley & Ramsey (2009) - Make your reading discussion post
	Mar 20	Lecture & reading discussion debrief	---
11	Mar 25	Explaining commodity chains and globalization	- Watch this week's news report(s) - Read Serrano & Brooks (2019); Hassler (2009) - Make your reading discussion post
	Mar 27	Lecture & reading discussion debrief	---
12	April 1	Class wrap-up & questions about the take-home exam	--- <u>**Self-assessment due 11:59pm, Apr. 1**</u>
	April 3	No Class – Open office hours in Hutt 237	--- <u>**Take-home exam released**</u> (due 5pm, April 12)

Readings (please also see Courselink and/or Ares)

TEXTBOOK (REQUIRED CHAPTERS LISTED IN CLASS SCHEDULE)

Key Concepts in Geography (2009), Edited by: N.J. Clifford, S.L. Holloway, S.P. Rice, and G. Valentine.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED READINGS

Beesley, K. B., Ramsey, D. (2009). Agricultural Land Preservation. In Kitchen, R. & Thrift, N. (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 65-69). Elsevier. ISBN: 9780080449111.

Campbell, L. M., & Godfrey, M. H. (2010). Geo-political genetics: Claiming the commons through species mapping. *Geoforum*, 41(6), 897-907.

Cadieaux, K. V., Taylor, L. E., & Bunce, M. F. (2013). Landscape ideology in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt Plan: Negotiating material landscapes and abstract ideals in the city's countryside. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 32, 307-319.

Hassler, M. (2009). Commodity Chains. In Kitchen, R. & Thrift, N. (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 202-208). Elsevier. ISBN: 9780080449111.

Jay, M., Morad, M. (2009). Conservation and Ecology. In Kitchen, R. & Thrift, N. (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 259-267). Elsevier. ISBN: 9780080449111.

Kelley, L. C. (2018). The politics of uneven smallholder cacao expansion: A critical physical geography of agricultural transformation in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Geoforum*, 97, 22-34.

Kerr, R. B. (2014). Lost and found crops: agrobiodiversity, indigenous knowledge, and a feminist political ecology of sorghum and finger millet in northern Malawi. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(3), 577-593.

Lave, R., Biermann, C., Lane, S. N. (2018). Introducing Critical Physical Geography. In Lave, R., Biermann, C., Lane, S. N. (Eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Critical Physical Geography* (pp. 1-21). Palgrave. ISBN: 9783319714608.

Metz, J. J. (2009). Deforestation. In Kitchen, R. & Thrift, N. (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 39-50). Elsevier. ISBN: 9780080449111.

Pritchard, B. (2009). Food Regimes. In Kitchen, R. & Thrift, N. (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 221-225). Elsevier. ISBN: 9780080449111.

Serrano, A., & Brooks, A. (2019). Who is left behind in global food systems? Local farmers failed by Colombia's avocado boom. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 2(2), 348-367.

Assessments overview

Cover Letter Assignment: 15%

Group Assignment (News/podcast): 35% (Recording 25% + Bibliography 10%)

Online Reading Posts: 20%

Self-Assessment: 10%

Take-home exam: 20%

Airborne illness, including Covid-19

Risks for many people, especially fully vaccinated individuals, have lessened since the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, risks have not disappeared. Reinfection and negative health outcome risks remain elevated for people who are immunocompromised or unable to receive vaccines, those with frequent or intense patterns of exposure, and those with certain types of care-giving or family circumstances/responsibilities.

Wellness in our classroom is a shared responsibility. For University of Guelph policy statements and updates on campus health, including the request that anyone who feels sick stay home, please see: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/healthy-campus/>. **Students are very welcome to wear masks any time we meet together, in groups, or for one-on-one meetings.**

Instructor policies

Video and Audio Recordings

Slides and any video/audio content developed for this course by Prof. Silver are her intellectual property. Likewise, slides and any video/audio content developed for this course by students and student groups are their intellectual property. Students are welcome to cite them in assignments and discuss them with classmates and other students. However, slides and any video/audio content developed for this course **are not** intended for circulation outside of the course and permission is not granted for students to permanently save, post or publicly share content that they have not played a part in developing.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to undertake this course with honesty and integrity, and to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Refer to the Academic Calendar and the university policies below. If you still have uncertainty about how to avoid plagiarism, complete the U of G tutorial (see: <https://guides.lib.uoguelph.ca/academicintegrity>) and/or speak with the instructor or library resource-persons for guidance. Plagiarism and other types of misconduct will not be tolerated; any instances will be treated seriously and are likely to be referred on to the Associate Dean Academic of the College.

Communication

Please check your university email account and the 'news' section of the Courselink page frequently (ideally at least once every 1-2 days). Any important information arising throughout the semester will be communicated by these means and the university mandates that students must check them. The instructor and TA will do their best to respond to emails within 2 business days. Emails received after 3pm on Friday will not be responded to until at least the following Monday, and questions that are answered in course documents will receive short replies only (i.e., see course syllabus). Please use proper punctuation and professional language when emailing the instructor or TA.

Assignment submission, grading and grade reviews, and monitoring your Courselink gradebook

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are clear on when, where, and in what format assessments are due, and in the case of Courselink submissions, to double-check that the upload has worked successfully and that uploaded files are not corrupt. Prof. Silver and the TA(s) cannot download corrupt files, which means that we cannot grade them and that regular late penalties will apply.

It is the student's responsibility to check their Courselink class gradebook weekly to ensure that all grades are entered and accurate. If any concerns arise about assignment grades or grading, the student must immediately contact the instructor. Requests to review or revisit assignment and presentation grades must be made within 10 days after they are released in the gradebook; thereafter, it is likely that the instructor will deny requests and that the grade will stand as final.

If a student would like to request an extension, it is their responsibility to contact the instructor directly and with as much advance notice as possible. To do so, students should send an email or request a meeting to discuss generalities of the situation and to reach agreement about the length of extension.

University statements and policies re. undergraduate courses

Email communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses are available in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Copies of Out-Of-Class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time.

More information: www.uoguelph.ca/sas

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).