

GGR240H1F – Historical Geography of North America

University of Toronto, Fall 2015

Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00pm

Ramsay Wright 117

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Office: Sidney Smith 5040

Office Hours: Mondays, 10:30am-noon; Tuesdays, 10:30am-noon

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Course Website: Accessible through <http://portal.utoronto.ca> (see below)

TAs: Travis Bost and Killian McCormack (contact details and office hours to follow)

Course Description:

Focusing on the period from the 15th century to the early 20th century, in this course we will map North America's past – a necessarily selective exercise that allows us to draw on some fascinating and influential scholarship across history and geography. We will address key geographic topics such as imperialism and the establishment of colonies; environmental transformations; migration and resettlement; frontiers and borders; the cultural dimensions of urbanization; the beginnings of the military-industrial complex; and long-standing social struggles over territory. These broad themes will be given context in the form of place-specific cases. And we will attempt, as much as is possible in one term, to travel across the continent, from the high Arctic to the United States-Mexico borderlands, and from British Columbia to the American South and the Caribbean.

GGR240, a humanities course, also serves as something of an introduction to historical geography, a field that has, like the rest of the discipline, changed substantially in the last few decades. Both the lectures and readings reflect this shift toward a more interdisciplinary, reflective, and politically charged approach. Historical geographers have turned with a new energy to the history of geographical thought, questions of culture and identity, and human-environment relationships. All three of these areas will be central to this course.

Evaluation:

Assignment One:	15%
Assignment Two:	20%
Assignment Three:	30%
Final Exam:	35%

Key Dates:

Tutorial 1:	Week of October 6
Assignment 1 due:	October 13
Tutorial 2:	Week of October 27
Assignment 2 due:	November 3
Tutorial 3:	Week of November 17
Assignment 3 due:	December 1
Final Exam:	TBA (Exams will be held December 11-22)

The Readings:

There is no textbook that adequately addresses the range of topics covered in this course. Instead, the reading list is drawn from three sources:

1. Material posted to the course Blackboard site **(B)**
2. Journal articles accessed through the U of T Library E-Journals portal **(E)**
3. Web-based media **(W)**

If you are unable to access any source, please e-mail me. While I am not permitted to independently post journal articles (#2) on Blackboard, you may find that the Library has done so.

While the benefits of 'free' readings are clear, you will consume a significant amount of paper if you print all of the sources listed below. I encourage you to work with PDFs online or print creatively (two pages per page, double-sided, on recycled paper...).

Class Schedule and Required Readings:

You are expected to come to class with questions based on the readings and prepared to address the questions of others in the class. Lectures will parallel and address the readings, but will also include additional cases and details. For the final exam, you should be familiar with both lectures and readings. For this reason, regular attendance is essential. Slides from the lectures will be posted on the course website before lectures, but *they are not a substitute for attending lectures*. (Unless you have been granted an exception, audio or video recording of lectures is not permitted.)

Week 1 (September 15): Introduction (No reading)

Week 2 (September 22): History, Geography, and Modernity

- J. Brian Harley, "Rereading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82.3 (1992), 522-542 **(E)**

- Michael Heffernan, "Historical Geography," in the *Dictionary of Human Geography*, 5th Edition (2009), 332-335 (B)

Week 3 (September 29): Peoples of a Continent

- Alex Ewen, "Bering Strait Theory," *Indian Country Today* (six parts, 2014) ([http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/advanced/search?fq\[0\]=ts_field_full_name%3AAlex%20Ewen](http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/advanced/search?fq[0]=ts_field_full_name%3AAlex%20Ewen)) (W)
- Scott L. Malcomson, "The Color of Bones," *The New York Times Magazine* 2 April 2000 (www.nytimes.com/2000/04/02/magazine/the-color-of-bones.html) (W)

Week 4 (October 6): Exploration, Empire, and Ecology

TUTORIAL #1 THIS WEEK

- William M. Denevan, "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82.3 (1992), 369-385 (E)
- Charles C. Mann, "1491," *The Atlantic* March 2002 (<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/03/1491/302445/>) (W)

Week 5 (October 13): Constructing and Challenging Colonies

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE

- Cole Harris, "The Northwestern Atlantic, 1497-1632," in his *The Reluctant Land: Society, Space and Environment in Canada Before Confederation* (2008), 20-51 (www.ubcpres.ca/books/pdf/chapters/2008/ReluctantLand.pdf; the chapter is pp. 24-55 of the PDF) (W)

Week 6 (October 20): Slavery and the Black Atlantic

- *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, The African, Written by Himself* (1789), Chapter 2 (http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15399/15399-h/15399-h.htm#CHAP_II) (W)
- Walter Johnson, "Introduction: Boom," in his *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (2013), 1-17 (B)

Week 7 (October 27): Railroads and the Resettlement of the West

TUTORIAL #2 THIS WEEK

- Cole Harris, "How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94.1 (2004), 165-182 (E)
- Rebecca Solnit, "The Annihilation of Time and Space," *New England Review* 24.1 (2003), 5-19 (E)

Week 8 (November 3): Frontiers and Borders, Southern and Northern
ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

- Julie Cruikshank, "Images of Society in Klondike Gold Rush Narratives: Skookum Jim and the Discovery of Gold," *Ethnohistory* 39.1 (1992), 20-41 (E)
- Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893) (www.wwnorton.com/college/history/america9/brief/docs/FJTurner-Frontier_Significance-1893.pdf and other sites) (W)

Week 9 (November 10): NO CLASS (Fall Break)

Week 10 (November 17): Cultures of Industrialization and Urbanization
TUTORIAL #3 THIS WEEK

- Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" (1853) (www.chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/i2l/bartleby.pdf) (W)
- Herman Melville, "The Tartarus of Maids" (1855) (<http://42opus.com/v6n4/thetartarusofmaids>) (W)

Week 11 (November 24): Spectacles of Commerce and War

- Mona Domosh, "A 'Civilized' Commerce: Gender, 'Race', and Empire at the 1893 Chicago Exposition," *Cultural Geographies* 9.2 (2002), 181-201 (E)
- Paul Kramer, "A Useful Corner of the World: Guantánamo," *The New Yorker* 31 July 2013 (www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2013/07/a-useful-corner-of-the-world-a-history-of-guantanamo-base.html) [and the accompanying Slide Show] (W)

Week 12 (December 1): Migration and Modernism
ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE

- Ann Douglas, "Taking Harlem," in her *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (1995), 303-324 (B)
- Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts, excerpt from her *Harlem is Nowhere* (2011) (www.nytimes.com/2011/01/26/books/excerpt-harlem-is-nowhere.html) (W)
- Isabel Wilkerson, "Part One: In the Land of the Forefathers," from her *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (2010), 1-15 (B)

Week 13 (December 8): Struggles over Land / Final Exam Review

- Thomas King, "As Long as the Grass is Green," from his *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* (2012), 215-247 (B)

The Assignments:

1. **Due October 13**; details will be discussed on September 15 and 22 and posted on the course website.
2. **Due November 3**; details will be discussed on October 6 and posted on the course website.
3. **Due December 1**; details will be discussed on October 27 and posted on the course website.

Please submit a paper copy of each assignment at the beginning of the relevant class, and maintain an electronic copy. **Please print double-sided or on recycled paper.**

The penalty for late submission of all assignments will be **5%/day**, or the closest number value to that percentage, *including weekend days*. Late assignments can be placed in the drop-box outside the Geography Department office on the 5th floor of Sidney Smith (during regular departmental office hours). If you wish to submit a late assignment on a weekend day, e-mail it to me. Legitimate excuses aside, assignments submitted more than a week after the due date will not be accepted.

University policy specifies that requests for re-marking assignments should be submitted to the instructor no later than two weeks after the work has been returned.

For more information on U of T writing resources and support, see www.writing.utoronto.ca and www.geog.utoronto.ca/resources/wit-program.

The Tutorials:

For several years GGR240 has been allotted additional TA hours to help you prepare assignments and to provide you with detailed feedback on those assignments. This year, along with time given over to marking, these TA hours will be used to hold **three tutorials** during the term – in the weeks of the **October 6** class, the **October 27** class, and the **November 17** class – before Assignments 1, 2 and 3 are due. These tutorials will provide you with extra advice and support as you prepare the assignments.

Although you must register for a tutorial time on ROSI, attendance is optional. That said, the teaching assistants who lead tutorials will keep an attendance sheet, and **you will receive an extra half-mark on the corresponding assignment if you attend a tutorial**. The TA who leads your tutorial will mark your assignments. Your TA will also hold office hours in the week of each tutorial. And you are always free to e-mail me about assignments – or better yet, visit during my office hours.

The Final Exam

The final exam will cover the entire term, and will feature both short-answer and essay-form questions. The absence of a mid-term exam means that you must review a great deal of material for the final. In recognition of this fact, we will devote the second half of the last class to review. During

that class, I will distribute a sheet with a list of terms and topics. I will draw from this list to create the exam. In other words, there will be no surprises.

Course Administration:

Extensions will be granted only in the case of illness, and only on the prompt receipt of a completed University of Toronto medical certificate (copies are at <http://illnessverification.utoronto.ca>). Please consult your college registrar should you be having difficulties during term that prevent you from completing your course work due to extenuating circumstances.

You are certainly encouraged to discuss lecture content and readings with each other. However, plagiarism, submitting an assignment under your name that you have not completed, and submitting the same assignment twice are all offences under university policy. Plagiarism is quoting (or paraphrasing!) the work of an author, including fellow students, without a proper citation. Quotation marks are required for any word-for-word copying from a source text.

Given that it is crucial to learning and scholarship, if you are unsure what constitutes academic integrity, consult section B.i. of the University's "Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters" (www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm) for further information, along with the useful resource at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize.

If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or www.accessibility.utoronto.ca.

The Course Website:

Once you have logged in to the "Learning Portal" (portal.utoronto.ca) using your UTOrid and password (see www.utorid.utoronto.ca), look for your **Courses**, where you'll find the link to the GGR240 website along with all of your other Blackboard-based courses. The GGR 240 site will contain copies of the syllabus, readings, lecture slides, and handouts related to assignments.

All students should have a valid UofT email address, and you should also ensure that this address is properly entered in the ROSI system. Forwarding your utoronto.ca e-mail to an external account (Gmail, Hotmail, etc.) is not recommended.