University of Toronto

MA Human Geography Core Course (GGR1105H)

Fall 2014

Class time: Monday. 1 – 3pm
Venue: SS2124A, Sidney Smith Hall
Instructor: Thembela Kepe
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Office Hours: Monday. 3-5pm or by appointment

Description

This graduate seminar seeks to encourage students to think critically about social and spatial issues relating human geography. Using keywords/concepts approach, the seminar aims to provide different lenses through which key geographical concepts can be understood, as well as exploring the evolution in thinking about these concepts. The second aspect of the course includes taking a journey through the field of geography, with a specific focus on the ‘what’, ‘how’, ‘where’ and ‘why’ of geographers in their profession. This includes discussing skills in proposal writing, academic writing, peer review, non-academic jobs, ethics and geography for public engagement.

Course Requirements

1. Think pieces and participation (20%)

Students are required to write a one to two-page (single spaced) critical reflection on the readings assigned for each week. Students should not simply summarize the readings, but should explain central concepts and comment on what they see as the strengths and weaknesses of the material. This must be done for at least eight of the classes. The one to two-page reflections should be posted on Blackboard not later than 5pm the day before the next class.

2. Seminar Presentation (20%)

Students will work in pairs to lead at least one class discussion. Students should feel free to contact the instructor about a week or so before their seminar presentation to discuss their plan and ask any questions if there are any. Students should prepare a few questions for discussion. If the presenters see fit, they should prepare a short handout for the class. All students must read the prescribed reading before class, and be prepared to participate in the discussion.

3. Funding Proposal and Peer Review (10%)

Students are responsible for peer reviewing two pieces of writing from two classmates. The first piece of writing is the short funding proposal. The proposals are to be posted on Blackboard by 5pm on 30 September. Two peer reviews per student are to be posted on Blackboard by 5pm on 06 October. The peer review system will be decided by lottery in class. You will be asked to provide a thoughtful and constructive review of your classmates’ work that addresses, as applicable, the paper’s theoretical, research design and central arguments. Peer reviews will be graded according to the quality of the feedback provided. The peer reviews should be
between 250 and 500 words. All the peer reviews will be posted on Blackboard and available to all members of the class.

4. Concept Paper (50%)

Students are required to each write a concept paper of about 2000 words on a topic of their choice, but that applies concepts from the course. Students are encouraged to engage with one or more of the geographical concepts discussed in class (Not only those in the course outline). Students cannot choose to write their concept paper on the same topic that they lead a seminar on in class. It is suggested that students follow a similar style and depth as the one used in the Dictionary of Human Geography. With the permission of the instructor, two students are allowed to collaborate on their concept paper. In such cases students must deal with two or more concepts that are seen as interacting, ideologically or in practice (e.g. space and place; land and power etc). There must be a clear rationale for choosing the concepts for collaboration purposes. In the case of collaboration, the joint paper should not be less than 3000 words. Additionally, 100/200-word note explaining the process of collaboration should be included in the final draft, detailing who did what, and the challenges that might have been experienced. The concept paper is due on 02 December, 2014.

**Accessibility Needs:** The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit [http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility) as soon as possible. Students may also want to contact Accessibility Services Office if they have problems arising from chronic issues or injuries sustained during the term that affect their ability to do tests. For more information, see [http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/Faculty-and-Staff.htm](http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/Faculty-and-Staff.htm)

**Academic integrity.** Plagiarism is an academic offense at the University of Toronto. Plagiarism is quoting (or paraphrasing) the work of an author (including the work of fellow students) without proper use of citation (and quotations marks when using an author’s words). Students also should not be submitting any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought, without first discussing with the instructor. Please consult the “Rules and Regulations” section of the Arts and Science Calendar (http://www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/Rules_&_Regulations.html) for further information and check the ‘How not to plagiarize’ website at: [http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize).

For further advice and suggestions for instructors around issues of academic integrity. see [http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/facultyandstaff/prevention](http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/facultyandstaff/prevention)

**Weekly schedule and readings**

**Week 1 (08 Sept):**  Introduction

**Week 2 (15 Sept):**  Geography – within and across


Week 3 (22 Sept):  Geography and Public Engagement


Week 4 (29 Sept):  Funding Proposal Writing

Week 5 (06 Oct):  Geography in the Academe


Week 6 (13 Oct):  THANKSGIVING

Week 7 (20 Oct):  Outside the Academe


Week 8 (27 Oct):  Nature


Week 9 (03 Nov):  Space


**Week 10 (10 Nov) : Property and Land**


**Week 11 (17 Nov) : Power**


**Week 12 (24 Nov) : Conceptual Frameworks in Research Design**


**Week 13 (01 Dec) : Conclusion**