

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
University of Toronto

**GGR 254S GEOGRAPHY USA  
WINTER 2017 (PRELIMINARY)**

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Instructor:	Robert Lewis
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Class Times:	Wednesday 12-2 in Sidney Smith, room 2135
Office Hours:	Tuesday 12-1; Wednesday 2-3 pm; or by appointment

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### **Course Description**

This course covers three broad aspects of the geography of the United States:

- The making of the United States as a continental economic, social and political empire;
- The social and economic impacts of changes to American regions; and
- The challenges facing American metropolitan areas since the end of World War Two.

Particular attention is given to the creation of an urban-industrial complex after the 1840s; the changing fortunes of the American South and the Manufacturing Belt in the postwar period; the metropolitan geographies of poverty and racism; the rising importance of the suburbs after 1940; the geographical effects of changes to twentieth-century immigration policy; and the contested and inequalities of the politics of place. These issues will be considered within the context of Donald Trump's election campaign and his actions during his first four months as president.

### **Course Goals**

Students of GGR254 will:

- Develop a broad understanding of some of the key processes and forces shaping American regions, cities, and borders.
- Identify the relationship between some key historical events (in the U.S.A/ globally) and the geographic patterns of growth, decline, exclusion and segregation within American cities and regions.
- Learn key concepts used in the discipline of human geography by examining them in the context of the United States.
- Develop critical thinking, reading, writing and research skills.

### **Course Readings and Lectures**

Class readings are posted on Blackboard. The individual readings are linked to specific lectures. I assume that you are familiar with the readings before class time. Slides of class lecture notes will be posted on Blackboard the evening before the lecture.

## Course Requirements

Assignment 1 (handed out in class - January 18; due midnight - February 7)	20%
Assignment 2 (handed out in class - February 8; due midnight - March 15)	35%
Participation (during term time)	5%
Final exam (during faculty exam period)	40%

## Term Assignments

*Assignments:* There are two written assignments. In both cases, you will be assessed on your ability to summarize, analyze and synthesize research literature in geography and the social science and humanities more broadly. Both assignments focus on working through a range of current social, political and economic issues. Evaluation of your written work (both assignments and exam) rests on your ability to write a critical-interpretative essay using clear, correct English, which shows a basic command of diction, grammar, syntax and punctuation.

*Assignment 1 and 2 submission policy:* Both papers must be submitted electronically to Blackboard no later than midnight of the due date: February 7 for assignment 1 and March 15 for assignment 2. It is your responsibility to maintain digital copies of your written assignments and a hard copy of marked assignments until the final course marks are recorded.

*Penalties for late assignments:* A penalty is 5% per day with no work accepted seven days after the deadline. Weekends (Saturday & Sunday) count as one day. Consult your registrar if you are having difficulties during the term that prevent you from completing your work. Your registrar may be able to provide a letter documenting your situation in case of non-medical emergencies.

*Missed Assignment Deadlines:* Extensions will be granted only in the case of documented illness or personal emergencies. For medical reasons, you will need an official medical note that clearly indicates that you were unwell and unable to finish the assignment on time. In the case of a personal emergency, contact your College Registrar. You are responsible for providing official documentation explaining your absence as soon as possible.

*Policy regarding grade changes:* If you wish to request that a course paper mark be revisited, you must a) take a couple of days to carefully review the comments, paper, and requirements; and b) bring your paper (the one with the TA's comments) and a brief (1-2 paragraphs) rationale that sets out the substantive aspects of the assignment that could be revisited to me during office hours. If the request is accepted, there are three outcomes: the mark can stay the same, it can go up, or it can go down. By the University of Toronto policy, you have two weeks after receiving the mark to make a request.

*Participation:* Students are required to give a short (three to five) sentence reading response that answers the following questions about five of the course readings:

1. What is the main argument of the author(s)?
2. What is one question/comment you have about the content/form/method of the reading?

Students may only give one response per week (for five weeks) and should state clearly in their

answer which reading they are responding to. The response should be submitted no later than midnight before the class in which the reading is due. For example, a submission of your response to either the Robert Kagan or Richard Schien readings is due no later than midnight, January 24. A full mark will be given to a thoughtful response that responds in some way to the two questions. An answer of fewer than three or more than five sentences will not be accepted and the student will not receive a mark.

*Final exam:* The final exam consists of definitions and essays, and is based on course readings and class lectures. The date, time and location will be announced midway through term by the Faculty of Arts and Science.

### **Classroom Environment**

Everyone in the class has responsibilities. My primary obligation is to provide a safe, stimulating and open space that provides an exciting learning environment. Your primary obligations are to come to class having completed the course readings, and ready to ask questions and foster conversations about lectures and the related readings. All of us have to contribute to a respectful classroom space. Ultimately, of course, the responsibility is a collective one. Please do not hesitate to speak to me after class or during office hours if you have concerns about the course environment.

Some things that contribute to a better classroom environment are:

- 1) Arriving on time and remain for the duration of the class. If you have to enter or leave during the lecture, please do so as quietly as possible.
- 2) Turning off (or putting in silent mode) cell phones and other communications devices. Do not answer your phone or text message during class. Do not use computer for non-class related activities - it is distracting to people around you.
- 3) Making audio recordings of lectures for your own personal use only with the prior permission of the instructor. If you are granted permission by the course instructor to make audio recordings, you must agree to the following: You will not distribute the audio recordings in any form (websites, email, file sharing, or any other means) or share audio recordings with other students without the explicit permission of the course instructor. No photographs or video recordings are permitted under any circumstances. In accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities act, students with accommodation needs will be permitted to make personal audio recordings of lectures.
- 4) Being respectful to everyone involved in the course – instructor, teaching assistant and other students. You have the right to expect respect from them in return. We will respect one another's views and perspectives during class discussions. In accordance with University policy, this classroom is not a space where sexist, racist, xenophobic, homophobic, ableist, transphobic, classist or otherwise discriminatory language will go unchallenged or unaddressed. Non-compliance with any of the above terms will be subject to disciplinary actions under the Code of Student Conduct. University policies regarding Code of Student Conduct can be found at:  
[http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing\\_Council/policies.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing_Council/policies.htm)

## Communication Policy

Instructor-student interaction occurs in the classroom and during office hours. Email contact is limited to questions requiring simple yes/no answers, making appointments, and dealing with emergencies. Please come to my office hours or see me after class if you wish to discuss matters related to the class.

## Accessibility Services

If you require accommodations for a disability or have any accessibility concerns about the course contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:

<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

## 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 a proper use of citation. 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 for more information. For more information consult the University’s “Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters”: [www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm) as well as the useful resource at [www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize)

## Class Topics and Readings

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	Jan 11	Introduction	
2	Jan 18	Exceptionalism and Empire	Agnew and Sharp; Gilley
3	Jan 25	Territory, property and land	Kagan; Schien
4	Feb 1	The Rust Belt	High; Hartley
5	Feb 8	The Sunbelt	Grantham; Abbott
6	Feb 15	Poverty and class	Glasmeier; Kraus
	Feb 22	Reading Week: no class	
7	Mar 1	Immigration and the border	Heyman; McDuffee
8	Mar 8	Ethnicity and community	Price et al; Alberts
9	Mar 15	Segregation and the ghetto	Seligman; Casey-Leininger
10	Mar 22	Suburban America	Knox; Beauregard
11	Mar 29	Environmental Risk	Pulido; Dreier
12	Apr 5	Summary	

## Course Readings

### Week 2: Exceptionalism and Empire

Agnew, John and Joanna Sharp, "America, frontier nation: from abstract space to worldly place" in John Agnew and Joanna Smith (eds.), *American Space / American Place* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), pp. 79-105

Gilley, Jessey, "Geographical imaginations" in Barney Warf (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Geography* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2010), pp. 1222-26

### Week 3: Territory, property and land

Kagan, "Liberalism and expansion" in Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), pp. 71-103

Schien, Richard, "Populating the continent: the post-Columbian experience" in Frederick Boal and Stephen Royle (eds.), *North America: A Geographical Mosaic* (London: Arnold, 1990), pp. 70-87.

### Week 4: The Rust Belt

High, Steven, "The deindustrializing heartland" in Steven High, *Industrial Sunset: the Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 92-130

Hartley, Daniel, "Urban decline in Rust-Belt cities" in Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, *Economic Commentary* (May 2103), pp. 1-6

### Week 5: The Sunbelt

Grantham, Dewey, "The Sunbelt South," in Dewey Grantham, *The South in Modern America: a Region at Odds* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), pp. 259-80

Abbott, Carl, "Urbanizing the Sunbelt," *OAH Magazine of History*, 18.1 (2003), pp. 11-16

### Week 6: Poverty and Class

Glasmeier, Amy "One nation, pulling apart: the basis for persistent poverty in the USA," *Progress in Human Geography*, 26 (2002), pp. 155-73.

Kraus, Neil, "Local policymaking and concentrated poverty the case of Buffalo, New York," *Cities*, 21.6 (2004), pp. 481-90

### Week 7: Immigration and the Border

Heyman, Josiah, "Why interdiction? Immigration control at the United States-Mexico border," *Regional Studies*, 33.7 (1999), pp. 619-30

McDuffee, Allen, "Who really crosses the US-Mexican border," *Atlantic* (December 31, 2014)

Week 8: Ethnicity and community

Price, Maria, Cheung, Ivan, Friedman, Samantha, and Singer, Audrey, "The world settles in: Washington, DC, as an immigrant gateway," *Urban Geography*, 26.1 (2005), pp. 61-83.

Alberts, Heike, "Changes in ethnic solidarity in Cuban Miami," *Geographical Review*, 95.2 (2005), pp. 231-48

Week 9: Segregation and the ghetto

Seligman, Amanda, "What is the second ghetto?" *Journal of Urban History*, 29.3 (2003), pp. 272-80

Casey-Leininger, Charles, "Making the second ghetto in Cincinnati: Avondale, 1925-70" in Henry Taylor, Jr. (ed.), *Race and the City: Work, Community, and Protest in Cincinnati* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 232-57

Week 10: Suburban America

Beauregard, Robert, *When America Became Suburban* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), pp. 101-21

Knox, Paul, *Metroburbia, USA* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), pp. 1-12

Week 11: Environmental risk

Pulido, Laura, "Rethinking environmental racism: white privilege and urban development in southern California," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90.1 (2000), pp. 12-40

Dreier, Peter, "Katrina and power in America," *Urban Affairs Review*, 41.4 (2006), pp. 528-49