

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
University of Toronto

**GGR 254F GEOGRAPHY USA  
FALL 2017**

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Instructor:	Robert Lewis
Office:	Sidney Smith Hall 5003
Phone/Email:	(416) 978-1590 / lewis@geog.utoronto.ca
Class Times:	Tuesday 12-2 in Sidney Smith, room 1069
Office Hours:	Tuesday 2-3 pm; 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 American territory; the changing fortunes of regions (the American South and the Manufacturing Belt); the metropolitan geographies of poverty and racism; the rising importance of the postwar suburbs; the geographical effects of changes to twentieth-century immigration policy; and the contested and inequalities of the politics of place.

### **Course Goals**

The aim of the course is to help students:

- Develop a broad understanding of some of the key processes and forces shaping American regions, cities, and borders.
- Develop an understanding of some of the important processes responsible for the geographic patterns of growth, decline, 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**

As there is no textbook that adequately addresses the range of topics covered in this course, weekly readings are drawn from academic journal articles and book chapters. You have access to all class readings on the Library's Course Reserves module on your Portal dashboard. I expect that you are familiar with the readings before class time. Slides of class lecture notes will be posted on Blackboard after the lecture.

## Course Requirements

Assignment 1: handed out, September 19; due no later than 8.59 am, October 10	20%
Assignment 2: handed out October 10; due no later than 11:59 pm, November 13	35%
Reading responses: 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 analyze and synthesize research literature in geography and the social science and humanities more broadly. Both assignments focus on working through social and political issues related to topics and concepts raised in the course lectures and readings. Evaluation of your written work 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 8.59 am on October 10 for assignment 1 and 11.59 pm on November 13 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:* There is a penalty of 5% per day. No assignments are accepted seven days after the deadline. 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 have a regrade of your paper, you must a) take a couple of days to carefully review the comments, paper, and requirements; and b) bring me during my office hours your paper (the one with the TA's comments) and a brief rationale (1-2 paragraphs) that sets out the substantive aspects of the assignment that you would like revisited. If the request is accepted, there are three possible outcomes: the mark can stay the same, it can go up, or it can go down. By University of Toronto policy, you have two weeks after receiving the mark to make a request.

*Reading responses:* Students are required to submit five short three to five sentence reading responses that answer the following question about five of the course readings: what is the main argument of the author(s)?

Students may only submit one response per week (for five weeks) and should state clearly in their response which reading they are responding to. The response should be submitted on Blackboard no later than 11:59 pm the night before the class in which the reading is due. For example, your response to either the Robert Kagan or Richard Schien reading is due no later than 11:59 pm, September 25. A full mark will be given to a thoughtful response that responds in some way to the question. An answer of fewer than three or more than five sentences will not be accepted and the student will not receive a zero.

*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 and open space that provides a stimulating learning environment. Your primary obligations are to come to class having completed the course readings, ready to ask questions and foster conversations about lectures and the readings. All of us have to contribute to a respectful classroom space. 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 (and sit at the front).
- 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) 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. 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)

### **Audio recordings**

Making audio recordings of lectures for your own personal use can only be done with the prior permission of the instructor. If you are granted permission by the course instructor, 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.

### **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 submit any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought without first discussing it 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**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1	September 12	Introduction	
2	September 19	American exceptionalism	Agnew and Sharp; Gilley
3	September 26	Territory, property and land	Kagan; Schien
4	October 3	The Rust Belt	High; Hartley
5	October 10	The Sunbelt	Grantham; Abbott
6	October 17	Segregation and race	Seligman; Casey-Leininger
7	October 14	Poverty and class	Glasmeier; Kraus
8	October 31	Immigration and the border	Heyman; McDuffee
	November 7	Reading week: no class	
9	November 14	Ethnicity and community	Price et al.; Alberts
10	November 21	Suburban America	Knox; Beauregard
11	November 28	Environmental Risk	Pulido; Dreier
12	December 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: 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 7: 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 8: 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 9: 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 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