

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
University of Toronto

GGR254F: GEOGRAPHY USA
FALL 2020

Instructor: Robert Lewis - lewis@geog.utoronto.ca
Class Times: Online – lecture material accessed through course site on Quercus
Office Hours: Thursday, 11 am-12 pm; or by appointment
Chat Discussions: Wednesday, 10-11 am

Teaching Assistant: Travis Bost – travis.bost@mail.utoronto.ca
Office hours: Friday, 2-3 pm

Teaching Assistant: Jonah Olsen – jonah.olsen@mail.utoronto.ca
Office hours: Wednesday, 9-10 am

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers three broad aspects of the geography of the United States: the building of borders; the social and economic impacts of changes to American regions and cities; 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 you:

- Develop an understanding of some of the key processes and forces shaping the growth and decline of American regions and cities.
- Develop an understanding of some of the important geographic processes producing the internal structure and dynamics of American metropolitan areas.
- 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.

ONLINE INSTRUCTION

For many of us, online learning is new. It certainly is for me. This is the first time I have done it, and I will be learning how to do it as we go through the term. So, please be patient with any technological or pedagogical glitches that may occur. Do let me know if there is anything I can do better. I do promise that I will try my best to provide you with an enriching and stimulating learning environment.

GGR254 is an asynchronous online class, with non-mandatory synchronous elements. Lectures are pre-recorded modules (typically of 10-30 minutes in length) which are uploaded to the course site (at <http://q.utoronto.ca>) on a regular weekly basis (typically on Tuesday mornings).

You will have the opportunity for one-to-one contact with the instructor and the TAs through weekly office hours and chat sessions. These sessions will be held through Zoom. The links to these sessions can be found in the weekly modules on the course "Home" page.

Office hours will be one-on-one with the instructor and TAs. Chat sessions are a chance for you to interact with the instructor and one another to ask questions and work through the material together. Attendance at office hours and chat discussions is not mandatory but participating (or just listening in) will enhance your learning. Please mute your microphone and turn off the video when you are not participating in the chat sessions.

COURSE READINGS

As there is no textbook that adequately addresses the topics covered in this course, weekly readings are drawn from journal articles and book chapters. The weekly readings have been uploaded to the course site. See the weekly schedule below for the list of the readings (pp. 7-8). I expect that you have read and are familiar with the readings before lectures are uploaded to the course site. Course readings provide context and information that support the material covered in the lectures.

It is your responsibility to check Quercus for class updates about readings and other information pertaining to the course.

With respect to the readings, you are strongly advised to do the following:

- Read the material more than once (usually twice is enough). The first time, quickly, and the second time, in some detail.
- Read the materials in advance of class so you are prepared for the lecture material.
- Take detailed hand-written notes. Studies show that written notes are more effective learning tool than typing on a laptop or computer. See, for example, Pamela Mueller and Daniel Oppenheimer, "The pen is mightier than the keyboard; advantages of long hand over laptop note taking," *Psychological Science* 25(2014), pp. 1159-68. (This article is on the course site.)

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Assignment 1: handed out September 22; due no later than 10:59 am, October 13	15%
Assignment 2: handed out October 13; due no later than 4:59 pm, November 2	25%
Assignment 3: handed out November 3; due no later than 4:59 pm, November 27	25%
Reading responses: ten submitted during term time	5%
Final assessment (during the final assessment period)	30%

TERM ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments

There are three written assignments. In all cases, you will be assessed on your ability to analyze and synthesize research literature in geography and the social science and humanities more broadly. Assignments focus on working through geographical issues related to topics and concepts raised in the course lectures and readings. Evaluation of your written work rests on your ability to write an interpretative essay using clear, correct English, which shows a basic command of diction, grammar, syntax and punctuation.

Assignment 1-3 submission policy

Papers must be submitted electronically to Quercus no later than 10:59 am on October 13 for assignment 1; 4:59 pm on November 2 for assignment 2; and 4:59 pm on November 27 for assignment 3. Please keep digital copies of your written and marked assignments until the final course marks are recorded.

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

The University is temporarily suspending the need for a doctor's note or medical certificate for absences from academic participation. Please use the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN to declare absence if you require consideration for missed academic work. You are responsible for contacting me to request the academic consideration you are seeking. Record each day of your absence as soon as it begins, up until the day before you return to your academic activity.

Policy regarding grade changes

If you wish to have a regrade of your paper, you must a) take 48 hours to carefully review the comments, paper, and requirements; and b) provide me with 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 to have revisited during my office hours. 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

You are required to submit ten short reading responses (three to five sentences each) that answer the following question about the chosen course readings: what is the main argument of the author(s)?

You may only submit one response per week (for ten different weeks) and should state clearly in their response which reading they are responding to. The response should be submitted on Quercus no later than 11:59 pm on the dates laid out in the course assignment schedule on p. 6. For example, your response to either the Robert Kagan or Richard Schien reading is due no later than 11:59 pm, September 21. A half 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 receive a zero.

Final assessment

The final assessment exam consists of essays based on material taken from course readings and class lectures. Students will have to take a two-hour exam at some point of their choosing during a 72-hour time slot in the final assessment period (December 11-22). The date and time will be announced at a later date.

COMMUNICATION WITH INSTRUCTOR AND TAs

There are two ways that you can talk with me and the TAs: office hours and the weekly chat session. Email contact with me is limited to questions requiring a simple yes/no answer, making appointments, and dealing with emergencies. Information about which platform we will be using – either Zoom or Bb Collaborate – will be passed at a later time.

Office hours

The instructor and the two TAs will hold office hours throughout the semester. My hours will run from September 17 to December 10; those of the TAs from September 23 to November 27. For the times that office hours will be held see the top of page 1 of the syllabus. The purpose of the TA office hours is to help you with the assignments. Travis and Jonah will be grading all three assignments. It is strongly advised that you take advantage of their assistance during their office hours. I am available during my office hours to discuss assignments, lectures, and other course issues. See the weekly modules on the “Home” page on the course site for links to the office hours.

Chat sessions

I will hold chat sessions on Thursdays during the semester from 10 am to 10:45 am. These sessions start September 17 and end December 3. All students are welcome to join. The purpose of the sessions is to provide you with an opportunity to discuss the weekly lectures and the course assignments in the company of other students. See the weekly modules on the “Home” page on the course site for links to the chat sessions.

COURSE ENVIRONMENT

Everyone in the course has responsibilities. My primary obligation is to provide a safe and open space that provides a stimulating learning environment. Your primary obligation is to engage with the course readings, ready to ask questions and foster conversations about lectures and the readings. All of us must contribute to a respectful course space. Please do

not hesitate to speak to me during office hours if you have concerns about the course environment.

Please make sure that you act respectfully when you are online during the chat sessions with other students, TAs, and the instructor. This involves, among other things, not answering your phone and making sure that you leave the session without any noise or fuss. It also involves showing respect to everyone involved in the course – instructor, TAs, and other students. You have the right to expect respect from them in return. In accordance with University policy, a course 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

AUDIO RECORDINGS

Making audio recordings of chat sessions and office hours can only be done with the prior permission of the instructor. If you are granted permission, 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.

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. You 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 as well as the useful resource at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize

COURSE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Week 2: September 21-27

September 21(11:59 pm): reading response 1 due (either Kagan or Schien)
September 22: assignment 1 handed out

Week 3: September 28-October 4

September 28 (11:59 pm): reading response 2 due (either Andreas or Golash-Boza)

Week 4: October 5-11

October 5 (11:59 pm): reading response 3 due (either Lewis or Singer)

Week 5: October 12-18

October 13 (11:59 pm): reading response 4 due (either Casey-Leininger or Seligman)
October 13 (10:59 am): assignment 1 due
October 13: assignment 2 handed out

Week 6: October 19-25

October 19 (11:59 pm): reading response 5 due (either Dreier or Pulido)

Week 7: October 26-November 1

October 26 (11:59 pm): reading response 6 due (either Jargowsky or Martin)

Week 8: November 2-8

November 2 (11:59 pm): reading response 7 due (either Alberts or Ellis and Wright)
November 2 (4:59 pm): assignment 2 due
November 3: assignment 3 handed out

Week 9: November 16-22

November 16 (11:59 pm): reading response 8 due (either Beauregard or Knox)

Week 10: November 23-29

November 23 (11:59 pm): reading response 9 due (either Hartley or High)
November 27 (4:59 pm): assignment 3 due

Week 11: November 30-December 6

November 30 (11:59 pm): reading response 10 due (either Abbott or Grantham)

WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1: September 14-20 - Introduction

No readings

Week 2: September 21-27 – Territory and the making of America

Kagan, Robert “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 3: September 28-October 4 – Borders and Immigration

Andreas, Peter, “The escalation of border policing” in Peter Andreas, *Border Games: Policing the U.S.-Mexico Divide* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 3-14.

Golash-Boza, Tanya, “Roots of immigration to the United States” in Tanya Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation* (London, Routledge, 2016), pp. 15-44.

Week 4: October 5-11 – Metropolitan America

Lewis, Robert, “An urban history” in Lisa Benton-Short (ed.), *Cities of North America* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), pp. 59-83.

Singer, Audrey, “Contemporary immigrant gateways in historical perspective,” *Daedalus*, 142 (2013), pp. 76-91.

Week 5: October 12-18 – Residential segregation and the metropolis

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.

Seligman, Amanda, “What is the second ghetto?” *Journal of Urban History*, 29 (2003), pp. 272-80.

Week 6: October 19-25 – Risksapes: landscapes of environmental injustice

Dreier, Peter, “Katrina and power in America,” *Urban Affairs Review*, 41 (2006), pp. 528-49.

Pulido, Laura, “Rethinking environmental racism: white privilege and urban development in southern California,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90 (2000), pp. 12-40.

Week 7: October 26-November 1 – Poverty in America

Jargowsky, Paul, *Concentration of Poverty in the New Millennium* (Rutgers Center for Urban Research and Education, 2015).

Martin, Deborah, "Urban inequities" in Lisa Benton-Short (ed.), *Cities of North America* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), pp. 221-46.

Week 8: November 2-8 – Place, ethnicity and community

Alberts, Heike, "Changes in ethnic solidarity in Cuban Miami," *Geographical Review*, 95 (2005), pp. 231-48.

Ellis, Mark and Richard Wright, "The Balkanization metaphor in the analysis of U.S. immigration," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 88 (1998), pp. 686-98

November 9-13 – Reading Week – No class

Week 9: November 16-22 – Suburban America

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

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

Week 10: November 23-29 – The Rust Belt

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

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.

Week 11: November 30-December 6 – The Sunbelt

Abbott, Carl, "Urbanizing the Sunbelt," *OAH Magazine of History*, 18 (2003), pp. 11-16.

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.

Week 12: December 7-9 - Summary

No readings