The current age is one in which globalization is posing a serious challenge to the meaning of ‘place’ and to the meaning of ‘culture’. In such a context, what meaning can be retained, or rebuilt around the concept of place? Are the alternatives limited to the end of the uniqueness of place on the one hand or a return to a (mythologized) exclusivity of place on the other? (D. Massey)

Course overview:
The primary topics investigated, discussed, and debated in GEOG 4/510 this winter center on Oregon’s past and present human geographies. Themes such as ‘Ecotopian’ perceptions of Oregon as a central part of Cascadia; intersections of race, ethnicity, and place in Oregon; Oregon’s unique land use planning history; and the patterns, experiences, and impacts of immigrants and refugees in urban, suburban, and rural places in Oregon will be featured in assigned readings, written assignments, and class discussions.
Analysis of the historical, cultural, economic, and social construction of the identities, landscapes, and ‘peopling’ of particular places has guided and inspired geographic analysis since the earliest explorations of the Greeks and other early adventurers, and the work of early cartographers, journalists, and travel writers. *Reading the Oregon landscape*, however, is more than the domain of only one or two disciplines and, in fact, the richness of documenting and analyzing the diverse landscapes that exist in our state are part of their multidisciplinary appeal. Interpreting images of place in Oregon (as in other parts of the world), requires a synthesis of science and humanities, geography and history, words and images, a land and environmental ethic, and an acute moral, ethical, and spiritual awareness.

Landscapes (and the social relationships within and between them), may be physical/environmental or cultural/historical and the eclectic blend of studying landscapes and identities as constructions and relationships fascinates many human geographers. Constructing a historic/cultural/social geographic account of the meaning and significance of historical landscapes and identities requires addressing all the various ways that particular places have been observed, analyzed, recorded, interpreted, explained, understood, and appreciated over time. A synthesis of these themes, theories, issues, and interpretations – along with a focus on the ‘peopling’ of the state of Oregon in the past and present – will guide our scholarly dialogue, written assignments, and exams, and more informal conversations in GEOG 4/510 during winter term, 2013.

**Learning outcomes:**
Completion of *People, Place, and Identity in Oregon* will enable advanced undergraduate and graduate students to:

- Document and understand some of the key intersections and interrelationships linking regional, social, cultural, political, and environmental landscape analysis in human geography and other related fields.

- Apply key concepts related to the geographical and historical construction of people, place and identity to understand the processes shaping and (re)shaping the state of Oregon.

- Document, analyze, and compare the patterns, issues, and opportunities framing the settlement and survival of various immigrant and refugee groups in Oregon – during the past century and a half.

- Understand and apply some of the many ways that the perspectives of early humanistic geographers and the approaches used by today’s more critical/theoretical scholars may be useful in uncovering and re-visioning the deeper meanings of social, cultural, and political landscapes and identities in Oregon in space and time.
Success in this course depends on your regular participation in class discussions and your ability complete an original research project or paper by the end of the term. As a whole, GEOG 4/510 is designed to hone your critical thinking skills about the settlement of Oregon, and the related evolution of places, landscapes, environmental planning, and identities via the completion of two written assignments, a final exam, assigned readings, and regular, well informed participation in class discussions.

Readings:

Reading Packet (to be posted on the GEOG 4/510 Blackboard site in early December)

Course requirements:

- Participation in class discussions: 25 pts.
- Field exercise in local landscape (Week 3): 75 pts.
- Final exam (Week 9): 100 pts.
- Research paper/project (due during final exam week): 100 pts.

Total points possible: 300 pts.

Please note that a complete list of discussion topics, readings, and assignment rubrics and guidelines will be posted on Blackboard by early December.