GEOGRAPHY 208
Geography of the US & Canada
Summer 2015
Online

Instructor: Dr. Leslie McLees
Email: lmclees@uoregon.edu

GTFs:

This is an introductory course on the study of people and their relationships with their place and the environment with a focus on the United States & Canada. In this course we will survey the major political, economic, cultural, and environment processes shaping this region of the world, study contemporary issues that pertain to each sub-region, and explore conceptual themes that transcend regional boundaries.

In this class, you will be introduced to tools for geographical exploration that range from searching for information to critically processing it. To pass this class, you will not be required to memorize trivial facts. Instead, I expect you to explain processes that shape this region of the world. We will use the online platform to explore basic concepts, but also to engage in the environment around us (wherever we may be) in order to apply these concepts and how they fit more broadly.

This syllabus is subject to change. If any changes are made, you will be notified through Canvas and/or email in a timely manner.

Canvas

This course will be delivered via Canvas, your online learning community, where you will interact with your classmates and instructor. Visit Canvas.uoregon.edu to access the course.

Within the course Canvas site you will access the learning materials, tutorials, and syllabus; discuss issues; submit assignments; take exams; email other students and the instructor; participate in online activities; and display your projects. For technical assistance in Canvas visit:
http://library.uoregon.edu/scis/Canvas/help/index.html

One of the most common problems with not seeing content in Canvas is browser compatibility. If you are having troubles viewing the content posted on Canvas (either the websites or the pdfs posted within it), check out this link to make sure your browser is compatible:
http://library.uoregon.edu/scis/Canvas/browser/browsersupport.html

Communication guidelines

As this course is entirely provided online, communication should be primarily through email. While I expect that I will be able to respond to all inquiries within a day or less, please allow up to 48 hours (unless otherwise notified) for a response, especially on weekends.

Please remember that the relationship between students and the instructor (and even between students) is a professional one. As such, any communications should be conducted in a professional manner. Do not use text lingo in emails to me or on the discussion boards. Emails have the course title in the subject area (either GEOG 208 or GEOG of US & Canada) and should begin with a salutation, a brief a clear description of the question and a sign off, such as in the example below:
Subject: GEOG 208
Hi Dr McLees,
I just wanted to say that I really enjoyed this week's course content. I look forward to what we will learn next week!
Thanks,
Leslie

If you have any issues or concerns about the course, please bring them up as they arise. I want to alleviate any communication problems as early as possible.

Finally, a discussion thread will be created during week one where I will ask you to post any general questions about the course mechanics (due dates, guidelines, etc). I will try to respond as soon as possible, but I encourage the entire class to monitor that thread in case any questions that you may have were already addressed. This will save time for the instructor, GTF and students who can use this discussion thread as a resource to address these types of issues.

Learning goals
At the end of the course, you will:
• Understand and utilize the regional approach in geography as a way to understand processes that shape regions, specifically the US & Canada.
• Apply concepts explored in class to the real-world through observation of the local environment.
• Identify the interconnections of economics, politics, culture & the environment in shaping this region, and in turn how this region is integrated in wider global processes
• Reflect upon and understand how you are situated in these processes.
• Observe and reflect on the potential and limitations upon various groups across the region with regards the dominant processes explored in the course.
• Develop and understanding and respect for different sub-regions and peoples who inhabit them.
• Learn how to understand the positions of various stakeholders throughout the region and how this contributes to various discourses with regards to politics, economics, culture & environment.

Requirements:
* Note that all times given below and in the course are Pacific Standard Time, or local Eugene time.
• Readings: Each student will be responsible for reading the assigned chapters and materials. This class covers a lot of material in eight weeks and there will be at least two chapters a week. Student guides and content slides (discussed below) will help guide you as to which material you should focus on.
• Fundamental content slides: Each week student is required to read over the content slides carefully and thoroughly. Not all material from the text will be covered, but there will often be supplemental information, both in the content of the slides and in links to outside material (videos, news articles, etc.). Students will be responsible for viewing and/or reading all links posted in the content slides.
  ◦ Any images shown in the content slides that are not in the book will be linked. You should be able to click on the image and be taken to the website where the image was procured.
• Participation in online discussions: Each week there will be questions relevant to the course posted on the discussion boards on Canvas. Each student should post at least one response directly to the questions posed each week. These may require you to read outside material, depending on the week (links will be posted in the question as it is posed). In addition, each student will be required to respond to at least one of their classmate's responses. All responses posted on the discussion board should be thoughtful, show active engagement with the idea and, particularly when responding to classmate's thoughts, respectful and non-combative.
  ◦ Discussion board topics will be posted on Sunday by 5pm (when other course content for the week is released) and the individual response and the response to a classmate are due by Thursday at 11:59pm. For details on how these will be graded, see Discussion Board Grading Rubric below.
Weekly assignments: Each week (except weeks four and eight) you will have an assignment that asks you to analyze and reflect on certain core concepts and places covered that week in the course. The final product to turn in will vary depending on the assignment, so read through the entire assignment description carefully.

- Assignments will be released with other weekly course material at 5pm on the Sunday of that week. Assignments will be due by Thursday, 11:59pm of that same week unless otherwise specified.

Diary project: Throughout the course we will be covering key themes and concepts in geography and applying them to specific places within the US & Canada. Each student will keep a diary exploring how these concepts play out in their own lives. More details on this project will be described on the related assignment sheets. All diaries will be due Sunday after week 8 at 11:59pm.

Weekly quizzes: each week there will be a quiz covering basic material covered in the course that week. These will cover the course text, fundamental content slides and any other materials assigned during the week.

- Quizzes will be released, along with other weekly materials, at 5pm on Sunday and. They should be completed by 11:59pm on Saturday of the same week. There will be quizzes during the weeks you also have exams, so plan accordingly.

Exams: Students will complete two online exams; a midterm in week four and a final in week eight. Exams will cover material from the readings, content slides and outside materials linked in the course. The purpose of the exam is to test your ability to comprehend, integrate and apply the information covered in the course materials. Tests will cover basic geographies of the region and sub-regions we cover, but also ask you to apply theories about various spatial processes to understanding phenomena of the region.

- Exams will be made available by 5pm on Wednesdays of weeks four and eight and are due by Sunday of the same week by 5pm.

Assignments & late work
The due dates for all assignments, discussions, quizzes, exams and other projects will be posted as each product is placed online. If you know that you will be busy during a certain deadline, you are welcome (and encouraged) to turn work in early to ensure that you receive full credit.

In some cases, late work will be accepted for partial credit. See below for details of late work policies for each type of assignment.

Discussion board: You must make an initial discussion board posting by Thursday at 11:59 pm of the corresponding week to receive full credit. If an initial posting is made after Thursday at 11:59 pm, partial credit will be awarded (see Discussion Board Grading Rubric). Discussion board postings will not receive any credit if completed after Sunday at 11:59 pm.

Exams and Quizzes: Exams must be completed by the assigned due date and time unless prior arrangement has been made for a legitimate reason (e.g., documented illness or attendance at a family funeral) with the instructor.

Assignments: Late assignments will lose 10% if turned in the day after the due date (between 1 and 24 hours late), 25% if two days late (24 – 48 hours late), 40% if three days late (48-72 hours late). Late assignments can be turned in up to a week late for a deduction of 50%. No late assignments will be accepted more than a week after the due date.

*All assignments and exams for the course must be turned in no later than Sunday after week eight at 11:59 pm.
Late work will not be accepted for full credit unless a previous arrangement has been made with the instructor and the student has a *legitimate* reason for missing a due date.

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<td>Discussion boards</td>
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<td>Weekly assignments</td>
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<td>Diary project</td>
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<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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Academic honesty:
Please follow this link and read the University of Oregon’s policy on academic dishonesty. This is not just an exercise. I will enforce any issues I see that conflict with the university’s stated policy. http://tep.uoregon.edu/workshops/teachertraining/learnercentered/syllabus/academicdishonesty.htm

Diversity statement:
The University of Oregon affirms and actively promotes the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education and employment at this institution without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or any other extraneous consideration not directly and substantively related to effective performance. This policy implements all applicable federal, state; and local laws, regulations; and executive orders. Direct related inquiries to the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, 474 Oregon Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403; telephone (541) 346-3123; TDD (541) 346-0852.

Students with disabilities:
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please bring a notification letter from Disability Services outlining your approved accommodations.

Course schedule:
Week 1: Introduction to the course and the region:
chapters 1-4

Week 2: The Atlantic Periphery, Quebec & Megalopolis
chapters 5-7

Week 3: The Great Lakes & the Corn Belt, The Great Plains
chapters 8, 11

Week 4: The Inland South, The Coastal South
Midterm exam
chapters 9-10

Week 5: The Rocky Mountain Region, The Intermontane West
chapters 12-13

Week 6: Mex-America, California
chapters 14-15

Week 7: The Pacific Northwest, Hawaii & The Pacific Islands
chapters 16-17

Week 8: The Far North, The Future of North America
chapters 18-19
Final exam