

GEO 270 Rural Geography

Land, Labor & Culture



DETAILS

Fall 2016
Tuesdays & Thursdays 14:00 - 15:15
Room B 205

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DESCRIPTION

Taking a global perspective and focusing on marginalized and impoverished populations, we will survey the many meanings, representations, and regulations of the rural. A complex place, the countryside can be a source of food and energy, a celebrated or stigmatized bucolic notion, a primitive place in need of modernization, a playground to be enjoyed, and a pristine wilderness in need of

protection. In learning how ideas of the rural have been historically produced and continue to be politically, economically, and culturally reproduced, we will explore how manifold ideas shape social and economic structures of rural localities and impact the everyday lives of people who live, work, or play in rural areas. The first half of the semester foregrounds the geographical concept of place: belonging, collective memory and authenticity tied to a specific locality. The second half of the semester focus on territory: the cultural, economic, and political control of people thought the control of area. This course is pivots on two pedagogical tools: lectures and seminar discussions. Using perspectives offered by political geography, historical geography, and rural geography lectures focus on patterns of rurality, territoriality, and cultural complexes. Seminar discussions will emerge directly from readings that explore the causes and ramifications of rural poverty.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course students will:

1. Have learned fundamental geographical concepts and theories.
2. Have improved their reading comprehension skills.
3. Be comfortable using geographical terminology in written and verbal discourse.
4. Be able to think, write, and argue critically about rural problems.
5. Have learned to recognize interdisciplinary relationships between geography, history, economics, and anthropology.
6. Have learned to recognize longstanding spatial impacts of planned and unplanned rural development.
7. Have gained insight into how rurality is coproduced by political systems, economic systems, and cultural complexes.

READING

Required Texts

J.D. Vance (2016) *Hillbilly Elogy*

Cynthia Duncan (2015) *Worlds Apart: Politics and Poverty in Rural America*

Additional Readings

Readings selected from my library are posted on AIMS under the appropriate week.

ASSESSMENT

Seminar Papers	40
Seminar Participation	15
Midterm Exam	20
Final Exam	25
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Total Points Possible	100

Seminar Papers

The presentation of seminar papers will form the basis of each week's seminar discussions. I expect to read well organized papers that include the following: an introduction, a body comprised of a logical argument, and a conclusion. Scholarship of others, if included, must be adequately cited. The citation style is at the authors' discretion. Papers must be double spaced. Seminar papers should be between 750 and 1250 words.

Seminar papers must accomplish four tasks. First, they must be well written. That is, they must lack distracting grammatical, syntactical, semantical, and spelling errors. And they must be written in such a way that engages the reader. Second, authors must then select **one** compelling aspect/event/outcome/etc. from the reading and briefly summarize it. Third, each paper's argument must be based in a geographic theory. Finally, the paper must synthesize the compelling aspect/event/outcome/etc. of the reading within this theoretical argument. This fourth component is essentially an processes of assembly and critique, whereby authors insert examples drawn from the reading into the theoretical construct they chose to work with and then argue why the theory facilitates a fuller understanding of the summarized compelling aspect/event/outcome/etc.

Midterm Exam

The midterm will cover material presented in lectures and in the reading assignments. It will cover *terms, concepts, and theories* as well as *regional specifics* presented during the first part of the semester. It will comprise multiple-choice, short answer, true/false and essay questions. Aside from an exceptional situation as outlined in the Student Handbook, There will be no chance to make up the midterm exam.

Final Exam

The final will cover material presented in lectures and in the reading assignments during the entire semester. It will cover *terms, concepts and theories* covered during the entire semester and *regional specifics* presented during the second part of the semester. It will comprise multiple-choice, short answer, true/false and essay questions. Aside from an exceptional situation as outlined in the Student Handbook, There will be no chance to make up the final exam.

ASSESSMENT POLICIES

Format Requirements

All written assignments must include the following in the upper left corner of the first page: Student's name, student ID number, assignment name, and due date. All assignments must be formatted in the following manner: double spaced, font size of 11 or 12 point, standard margins, and an indented first line for each paragraph.

Submission Requirements

Unless otherwise instructed, students are expected to submit written assignments on the AIMS platform. I will only accept Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF (.pdf) formats. All files submitted must be saved in the following manner: Student Name_Assignment Name.docx. I expect assignments to be submitted on time. Assignments due in class must be turned in at the beginning of class. I reserve the right to deduct points for late submissions and I reserve the right to determine the percentage to be deducted.

Makeup work

Aside from exceptional situations, there will be no chance to make up missed exams or quizzes or turn assignments in past their due day/time. Proof of an exceptional situation must be submitted to me in writing and signed by the appropriate authority within 24 hours of the beginning of the missed exam. I reserve the right to define an exceptional situation and furthermore to make all final decisions relating to amending, redoing, or making up late or incomplete work.

GENERAL POLICIES

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty consists of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submission of the same work, misuse of academic materials, and complicity in the academic dishonesty other others. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated; the consequences of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to failing an assignment, failing the class, and possibly dismissal from the university. Students are responsible for being observant of and attentive to Akita International University's policies about academic honesty.

Attendance

Learning is an ongoing process; one that builds upon previously acquired insights and skills. Consistent and engaged attendance is vital for success in this course. I reserve the right to deal with or exceptional or extended absences, on a case-by-case basis.

Special Needs

If you require accommodations, please alert me of your needs on the first day of class so that I can work with the administration to meet them.

Civility & Classroom Decorum

Silence all cell phones, beepers, etc. during class. Speaking on cell phones, texting, or using electronic equipment in any way that is not directly related to class is strictly prohibited.

Participation

Because this course is based in large measure on discussion, the consistent attendance and engaged participation of each registered student is essential.

Collaboratively and critically engaging with ideas may lead to disagreement. Colleagues can disagree *and* maintain respect for each other and one another's views. I insist that students strive to learn from the differences that manifest while debating the merit of theoretical and empirical evidence by maintaining an atmosphere of civility during discussion.

SCHEDULE

Week 1	What is Geography?
Sept 6	Lecture
Sept 8	Lecture
Week 2	Thinking Spatially
Sept 13	Lecture
Sept 15	Lecture
Reading	Hillbilly Elegy
Week 3	Blues Geographies
Sept 20	Lecture
Sept 22	NO CLASS
Reading	Hillbilly Elegy
Week 4	Blues Geographies
Sept 27	Lecture
Sept 29	Seminar
Reading	Hillbilly Elegy
Week 5	Banjo Geographies
Oct 4	Lecture
Oct 6	Seminar
Reading	Hillbilly Elegy
Week 6	Seminar
Oct 11	NO CLASS
Oct 13	Seminar
Reading	Hillbilly Elegy
Week 7	Property & Land Tenure
Oct 18	Lecture
Oct 20	Seminar
Reading	Hillbilly Elegy
Week 8	Land Tenure & Land Reform
Oct 25	Lecture
Oct 27	Seminar
Reading	Hillbilly Elegy

Week 9 Nov 1 Nov 3	Deep Souths - Georgia Sea Islands MIDTERM Lecture
Week 10 Nov 8 Nov 10 Reading	Deep Souths - Georgia Piedmont NO CLASS Seminar Worlds Apart
Week 11 Nov 15 Nov 16 Nov 17 Reading	Deep Souths - Mississippi Delta Lecture Make-up Lecture Seminar Worlds Apart
Week 12 Nov 22 Nov 24 Reading	Colonialism & Land Reform Lecture Seminar Worlds Apart
Week 13 Nov 29 Dec 1 Reading	Communism & Land Reform Lecture Seminar Worlds Apart
Week 14 Dec 6 Dec 8 Reading	Capitalism & Land Reform Lecture Seminar Worlds Apart
Week 15 Dec 13 Dec 15 Reading	Neocolonialism & Land Reform Lecture Seminar Worlds Apart
Week 16 Dec 20	Exam Week FINAL EXAM (14:00 – 15:15, room B 205)