

GEO 220 Geography of North America



An abandoned shop by the railroad tracks in
Demopolis, Alabama
Photograph by Steve McCurry

DETAILS

Spring 2019
Tuesdays & Thursdays 14:00 - 15:15
Building D Room 105

Sig Langegger PhD
Office: Building C 1-8 (open door policy — longer meetings by appointment)
slangegger@aiu.ac.jp | slangegger.com

The best way to contact me is to email me.
Title your email GEO 220

DESCRIPTION

A geographical perspective provides insight into the mechanics of the movement of people and ideas between wildly disparate places. Often these processes are wantonly violent, other times they are conciliatory. The calculated ethnic cleansing of First Nations from the American Frontier epitomizes the former; the often joyous collaborative creation of American music by laborers from Western and Central Europe and Africa serves as an example of the latter. North America continues to be shaped culturally and economically shaped by complex patterns of mobility, regimes of structural and symbolic violence and by the integration of the Other into a widening national consciousness. The United States and Canada are nations of immigrants. To waves of European and Asian migrants, who made arduous journeys, the New World epitomized “the good life.” However, not all who migrated chose to make the journey. Upwards of 12.5 million African people were shipped

to North America, South America, and the Caribbean and forced into slave labor. Today African influence on North American cultural landscapes is indelible. This influence is especially evident in music. For example, Jazz is the product of a complex and contested combination of African and European musical traditions in North American cities, specifically Havana, New Orleans, Chicago, Kansas City and New York City. And the Blues emerged from the collective hardship suffered by Black Americans in the rural Deep South. This course is pivots on two pedagogical tools: the lecture and the seminar. Using perspectives offered by cultural and economic geography, lectures help students construct a theoretical vocabulary. Weekly seminars emerge directly from the required texts and give students the opportunity to use this vocabulary while analyzing the diffusion of cultural and economic practices throughout various North American spaces.

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 cultural, economic, and historical geographies of North America.
5. Have learned to recognize relationships between the Atlantic slave trade, the western expansion of the United States and the cultural complexes comprising the many nations in North America.
6. Have learned to recognize the longstanding socio-spatial impacts of colonization and chattel slavery.
7. Have gained insight into how North American cultural complexes are themselves products of the complex and often violent meshing of Native American, African, and European ways of life.

READING

Required Books

Colin Woodard (2012) *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Cultures in North America*
 E. Annie Proulx (1996) *Accordion Crimes: A Novel*

Suggested Books

Isabel Wilkerson (2010) *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*

Additional Readings

Periodically I will post on AIMS readings selected from my library

MULTIMEDIA

Suggest Viewing

Les Blank (1967) *The Blues According to Lightnin' Hopkins*

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcVbNaiBZCU>

Les Blank (1978) *Always for Pleasure*

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTwVGA-axiw>

ASSESSMENT

Reading/Multimedia Quizzes	30
Seminar Papers	20
Seminar Participation	10
Midterm Exam	20
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>20</u>
Total Points Possible	100

Reading/Multimedia Quizzes

In order to encourage a collective and deep engagement with the assignments throughout the semester and to facilitate robust seminar discussions to which each student contributes, I will post a study guide on AIMS each week. Each week there will be an in-class quiz that will assess both comprehension and critical thinking. Reading/multimedia responses comprise nearly one third of a student's final grade. Therefore keeping current with the assignments is essential to earning high marks in this class.

Seminar Papers

The presentation of seminar papers will form the basis of seminar sessions. To help students craft seminar papers, I will provide each student with a RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, Task). In other words, I will indicate what Role I want you to assume as the author. I will indicate the Audience to which I would like you to address your essay. I will remind you of the Format I expect. And I will give you a Task to accomplish with your paper.

On days their seminar papers are due, students will also be responsible for presenting their paper to the class. The presentation style is open and therefore may include mini-lectures, projected slides, handouts, group work, among other means of communicating and wrestling with ideas. At least two discussion questions, posed to the rest of the class are required of all presentations.

Seminar papers and presentations will be graded in accordance with the grading rubric posted on AIMS.

Seminar Participation

The consistent attendance and engaged participation of each student is essential to the success of seminars.

I will maintain a log detailing each student's engagement in each seminar.

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 PDF (.pdf) documents. 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 due date. 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 Dishonesty

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.

In accord with AIU policies and good practices in higher education, acts of academic dishonesty will result in the failure of the course at a minimum. An act of academic dishonesty during the final examination or assignment in lieu of the final examination will result in failure of all courses registered in the relevant academic term. Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs for relevant action.

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 exceptional or extended absences on a case-by-case basis.

Special Needs

If you require accommodations, please alert me as to 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.

Collaboratively and critically engaging with ideas is a powerful pedagogical tool that may lead to disagreement. Colleagues must learn to disagree *and* maintain respect for each other. 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 lectures and discussions.

SCHEDULE

Week 1	Foundations
April 9	Lecture - What is Geography?
April 11	Lecture - Cultural Geography
Reading	American Nations - Introduction
Week 2	Foundations
April 16	Lecture - Geographies of African Music
April 18	Lecture - Geographies of European Music
Reading	American Nations - Chapter 1
Week 3	Foundations
April 23	Lecture - New Spain
April 25	Lecture - First Nations
Reading	American Nations - Chapter 2
Week 4	Golden Week
April 30	NO CLASS
May 1	NO CLASS
Week 5	The Black Atlantic
May 7	Lecture - Sugar, Salt & Slaves
May 9	Seminar
Reading	American Nations - Chapter 3
Week 6	The Black Atlantic
May 14	Lecture - Urban Slavery, Rural Slavery & the Genesis of Cuban Music
May 16	Seminar
Reading	American Nations - Chapter 4
Week 7	Tidewater
May 21	Lecture - Geographies of Violence, Logics of Capitalism
May 23	Seminar
Reading	American Nations - Chapter 7
Week 8	The Deep South
May 28	Lecture - Geographies of Cotton
May 30	MIDTERM EXAM
Week 9	The Deep South
June 6	Lecture - Blues Geographies: The Mississippi Delta, Jim Crow & Juke Joints
June 7	Seminar
Reading	Accordion Crimes

Week 10	New France
June 11	Lecture - Nouvelle France: Acadia & New Orleans
June 13	Seminar
Reading	Accordion Crimes
Week 11	New France
June 18	Lecture - New Orleans under French, Spanish & American Rule
June 20	Seminar
Reading	Accordion Crimes
Week 12	The Far West
June 25	Lecture - Indian Wars & The Dawes Act
June 27	Seminar
Reading	Accordion Crimes
Week 13	The Far West
July 2	Lecture - Vaqueros & Meat Packing
July 4	Seminar
Reading	Accordion Crimes
Week 14	The Far West
July 9	Lecture - Movable Borders & Migrant Labor
July 11	Seminar
Reading	Accordion Crimes
Week 15	New France
July 16	Lecture - Jazz Geographies: Brothels & Jazz Clubs
July 18	Seminar
Reading	Accordion Crimes
Finals Week	
July 23	FINAL EXAM (Room D105 14:00-15:15)