

GEO 270 Rural Geography Wildfire and Conservation



DETAILS

Fall 2021
Tuesday & Thursday | On-demand learning between 8:30 & 20:30

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Zoom Room (ZR)

I will hold open ended zoom meetings (ZRs) once a week. ZRs are open to anyone currently enrolled in one of my classes. I will communicate the day and time of each ZR one week prior to its commencement. The days and times of ZRs are to remain subject to change so that the needs of my students and my irregular schedule may be accommodated.

The best way to contact me is to email me.
Title your email GEO 270.

DESCRIPTION

Translated from Greek, geography means writing about the earth, or simply earth writing. In less poetic terms, geography is an academic field that includes the study of the spatial patterns of both human and physical phenomena. By bridging both social and environmental sciences, geographers are uniquely suited to provide insight into complex spatial interactions that manifest as cultural complexes, climate change, and patterns of land use.

This course pivots on fire. As it happens, so does terrestrial life. The geologic production of inorganic compounds is too slow to maintain life on Earth. Fire is a violent form of decomposition that aides in the maintenance of Earth's biochemical equilibrium. Homo Sapiens is the only species to learn to control fire. Fire and humanity's biological and cultural evolutions are in fact inseparable. Fire enabled hominids to become keystone predators in every ecosystem they entered. Fire sparked the agricultural revolution. It fueled the industrial revolution. Industry and agriculture and the land use systems that give them spatial form root in philosophies of territorial fixity. Yet Earth is a dynamic place. Geologic events, continual erosion, and periodic wildfire misalign with socially produced regimes of cultural and legal permanence. We come to understand this misalignment when we see a wildfire engulf a rural neighborhood, a coastal city submerge under floodwaters, or a landslide scatter the remains of a hilltop village.

Fire destroys. Fire renews. Necessary and destructive, wildfire can be unpredictable. Organized society requires and produces a high degree of certainty. Property lines, municipal boundaries, and national borders are inflexible concepts laid over an ever-changing physical and ecological landscape. This course will help students understand how humans have dealt with unstable fire regimes in the past and how we must (re)learn to live with ecologic and geologic instability in the future.

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 wildfire and rural land use.
5. Have learned to recognize longstanding spatial impacts of fire and and property on forest ecologies.
6. Have gained insight into the philosophies undergirding environmental preservation and resource conservation.

AILA ELEMENTS

Like applied international liberal arts, the academic field of geography pivots on interconnectivity. Geography foregrounds spatial specificity within a wider understanding of physical, biological, cultural, and economic connectivity. My geography courses emerge from my anthropological research methods, my sociological reasoning, the pragmatism I gained in studying urban planning, in operating an award winning restaurant, and in real estate development.

This course roots in the geographical term teleconnection. In physical geography teleconnection refers to the complex relationships between oceanic and atmospheric anomalies over great distances. In human geography teleconnection is about complex relationships between time, space, people, and events.

Finally, I foreground a pedagogy called *writing to learn*. This is a reading and writing rich course. Therefore, it will aid and abet students in developing the core communication skills necessary to prepare for and produce their capstone research project.

READING

Required Book

Heather Hanson (2018) *Wildfire: On the front lines with station 8*

Suggested Books

Stephen J. Pyne (1982) *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire*

Ronald Lewis (1998) *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*

Stephen J. Pyne (2012) *Fire: Nature and Culture*

Timothy Egan (2009) *The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire That Saved America*

Gary Ferguson (2017) *Land on Fire*

Edward Struzik (2017) *Firestorm: How Will Shape Our Future*

ASSESSMENT

Reading Quizzes	30.0
Webinar Paper	20.0
Webinar Participation	20.0
Lecture Participation	5.0
Midterm Exam	12.5
Final Exam	12.5

Total Points Possible	100.0
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Reading/Multimedia Quizzes

In order to encourage a collective and deep engagement with reading/multimedia assignments throughout the semester and to facilitate well-informed discussions threads, I will post a study guide on AIMS each week. Each week I will administer a quiz that will assess student comprehension of assignments as well as allow students to critically analyze this material. Reading/multimedia quizzes comprise nearly one-third of a student's final grade; therefore keeping current with reading/multimedia assignments is essential to earning high marks in this class.

Webinar Papers

In order to demystify the paper writing process, I will send each student personalized 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.

Students must email me the final draft of their webinar paper by the beginning of the webinar for which they are a prime mover. Because I grade papers using track changes and comment features in Apple Pages, students must email me either a Pages or a Word document.

Webinars

In posting executive summaries and discussion questions, prime movers initiate, propel, and give cohesion to webinar forums. Webinar forums constitute sustained discussions revolving around specific tasks that I will have given each prime mover as part of their RAFT.

On GEO 220, GEO 240, GEO 260, GEO 270, and GEO 300 AIMS pages you will find a topic field titled Webinars. Under webinars you will find links to each webinar under the day it will be held. Under each webinar link you will find executive summaries and discussion questions posted by each webinar's prime movers.

All students are required to post multiple comments on each webinar forum. Prime movers are required to post their executive summaries and discussion questions. All other students are required to post an answer to at least one discussion question from each prime mover's executive summary. Finally, each student is required to comment on at least one answer to a post from another student.

I will monitor each webinar forum thread, checking each student's posts for intellectual merit, tone and objectivity. Performance in webinar forums constitutes 100% of students' webinar participation grade.

Webinar forums comprise an asynchronous element of this class. Nevertheless, time matters for prime movers, who must post their executive summaries and their discussion questions before the official beginning of the webinar to which they contribute. Because, I expect circumspect, well-considered responses, students will have five (5) hours after the end of the official class period to post their answers to prime movers' discussion questions as well as to post at least one comment to at least one other student's answer to a prime mover's question.

Executive Summaries

Executive summaries are used to quickly acquaint readers with the main points of a larger paper, proposal or project. For the purposes of this course, executive summaries consist of a *summary* of the section of the reading assigned to the student, a *summary* of the student's paper (including thesis statement and argument), and two *discussion questions*.

All students in this class are responsible for reading all the reading materials. Therefore, prime movers' summaries of readings should be written in such a way as to refresh classmates' memories of the assigned text. Prime mover summaries of readings are very different from summaries of their webinar papers. A webinar paper is an argument hinging on a very specific task that I assigned. The best way to summarize a webinar paper is to reword the introduction and conclusion. Doing so will give webinar participants the bare bones of each prime mover's argument.

At the end of their executive summaries prime movers must pose two discussion questions. One question must relate to the thesis of your paper. The other question must contextualize the paper's thesis in another context: if the reading pivoted on a historical context, then *another* context could be a modern context, if the context reading pivoted on a foreign context, then *another* context could be a domestic context, if the reading pivoted on the lives of others, *another* context could be the lives of your webinar colleagues.

In total executive summaries should comprise between 350 - 550 words. They must be double spaced. A first page header must include all relevant identifying information (name, date, course, professor's name, and a paper title).

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

Webinar Participation

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

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

Lecture Participation

Whether real time or recorded, my lectures will be interspersed with discussion questions. Because this course pivots on a *writing to learn* pedagogy, students will write out their answers to these questions. With recorded lectures students will be directed to appropriate lecture forums on AIMS. With live lectures, students will be given time to write out their answers. I will then facilitate a class wide discussion of these answers and collect answers for further review.

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

Students are expected to submit some written assignments, including forum posts, webinar posts, and discussion questions on the AIMS platform. Students must email other written work including webinar and other papers to me at slangegger@aiu.ac.jp.

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 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 accordance with AIU policies and good practices in higher education, acts of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism, cheating, forgery (on a paper, examination, test, or other assignment) may result in the failure of the course. An act of academic dishonesty during the final examination, or assignment in lieu of the final examination, may result in failure of all courses registered in the relevant academic term. Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Records 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 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.

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

Foundations

Sept 2	Lecture - Introductions
Sept 7	Lecture - The Social Production of Space
Sept 9	Lecture - Preservation & Conservation
Sept 14	Lecture - Land as Commons, Land as Property
Sept 16	Lecture - Dynamic Planet & Static Territory

Wildfire

Sept 21	Lecture - A Planet on Fire
Sept 23	No Class
Sept 28	Lecture - Anatomy of Wildfire
Sept 30	Lecture - Fire Ecology

Oct 5	Lecture - Hearth & Home
Oct 7	Webinar
Oct 12	Lecture - Fire & Culture
Oct 14	Webinar
Oct 19	Lecture - Indigenous Forest Management
Oct 21	Midterm Exam

Conservation

Oct 26	Lecture - National Forests, Private Enterprise
Oct 28	Webinar
Nov 2	Lecture - The Big Burn & Conservation
Nov 4	Webinar
Nov 9	Lecture - Twentieth Century Forest Management
Nov 11	Webinar
Nov 16	Lecture - Fighting Fire
Nov 18	Webinar
Nov 23	Lecture - Climate Change
Nov 25	Webinar
Nov 30	Lecture - Megafires
Dec 2	Webinar
Dec 7	Lecture - Adaptation and Resilience
Dec 9	Webinar
Dec 14	Final Exam