

Contemporary Geographic Approaches

Geography 870

Fall 2020

3 credits

Meets:	Tuesday 5:00 pm – 7:40 pm
Location:	Online – Collaborate Ultra via Canvas site
Instructor:	Ryan Holifield
Office Location:	Bolton 434 (office hours will be held virtually in fall 2020)
Phone:	229-4868 (note: email is a more reliable way to reach me)
Email:	holifiel@uwm.edu
Office Hours:	By appointment

Introduction to the course

The first major objective of this class is to introduce graduate students to the range of approaches— theoretical, conceptual, methodological, technical, philosophical, etc.—that characterize “contemporary geography” as a discipline. We cannot possibly cover all of them, but we will engage with a wide variety of approaches that you’re likely to encounter in current journals featuring geographic scholarship.

Our emphasis in this class is on breadth rather than depth, and we’re aiming not for *mastery* of all contemporary geographic approaches but instead for *familiarity* with their staggering diversity. We also won’t delve deeply into the history of geographic thought; however, in order to help distinguish the “contemporary,” we’ll take a brief look at some major approaches in Anglo-American geography from the first half of the 20th century.

Instead of systematically marching through a series of approaches, we’ll learn about them through empirical studies, theoretical essays, and literature review papers that put them to use in some way. The weekly topics are not intended to be representative of the “most important” or “most widely studied” phenomena in geography; instead, I have chosen them to represent the range of interests in this semester’s group of students, as well as topics that are currently “in the news.” This means, unfortunately, that many subfields within geography will necessarily be absent or underrepresented.

Another major objective of this class is to develop graduate students’ skills at writing, focusing on the important genre of the literature review paper.

There are no specific course prerequisites for this class, but priority for enrollment goes to geography graduate students. Geography 870 is a required course for the master’s and Ph.D. degree programs in geography at UWM.

Required and recommended materials

(1) There is no required textbook this semester. All required and many recommended readings will be available on the class Canvas site.

(2) The following books are strongly recommended for this class, but not required.

Essential reference books for geographers:

Castree, N., Kitchin, R., and Rogers, A., eds. (2013). *Oxford Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Gregory, D., Johnston, R. J., Pratt, G., Watts, M., and Whatmore, S., eds. (2009). *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (5th ed.). Oxford, UK and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.

Thomas, D. S. G., ed. (2016). *The Dictionary of Physical Geography* (4th ed.). Oxford and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.

Valuable guides to Anglo-American human and physical geography:

Clifford, N.J., Holloway, S.L., Rice, S.P., and Valentine, G., eds. (2009). *Key Concepts in Geography*, Second Edition. London, Thousand Oaks, CA, and New Delhi: SAGE Publications. (as well as other titles in this series – see <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/courses/Course111>).

Johnston, R. J., & Sidaway, J. D. (2010). *Geography and Geographers: Anglo-American Human Geography Since 1945* (7th ed.). London and New York: Arnold/Oxford University Press.

Aitken, S. and Valentine, G. (2015), eds. *Approaches to Human Geography: Philosophies, Theories, People and Practices* (2nd ed.). London, Thousand Oaks, CA, and New Delhi: SAGE.

Gregory, K. J. (2000). *The Changing Nature of Physical Geography*. (2nd ed.) London and New York: Arnold/Oxford University Press.

Recommended resources on academic reading and writing:

Adler, M. J., and Van Doren, C. L. (1972). *How to Read a Book* (Rev. and updated ed.). New York: Simon and Schuster.

Boice, R. (1990) *Professors as Writers: A Self-Help Guide to Productive Writing*. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press.

Strunk, W., and White, E. B. (1959). *The Elements of Style*. New York: Macmillan.

Williams, J. M. (1989). *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. Glenview, IL, Boston, and London: Scott, Foresman & Company.

Course learning objectives, assignments, and grading policy

By the end of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- (1) *Discuss* and *explain* the basic arguments, assumptions, and premises of dominant contemporary approaches to geographic research.
- (2) *Compare, contrast,* and critically *evaluate* different contemporary geographic approaches, both in general and in relation to a particular substantive area of research.

The components of your class grade are linked closely to these learning objectives. Your final grade will be determined by the following:

1. Class participation (20% total)

This class will operate primarily as a discussion-oriented seminar. By class participation, I mean the following: showing up regularly, being prepared for every class (i.e., having carefully read the assigned readings), and participating actively in discussions. “Participating actively” does not mean talking constantly, but it requires at least speaking up in each class session. Regular attendance and participation are crucial to the success of this course.

After the first two classes (worth 1.5% combined), each class counts for 1.5%. I will grade your participation using a simple rubric on Canvas, and I will give you brief feedback after every 2-3 sessions. An *excused* absence will not count against you. The other 0.5% is based on your contributions to planning the student-led session late in the semester, which is described in more detail on the Canvas site.

2. Weekly reading annotations (10% total)

For sessions 2 to 11, you will be required to submit weekly annotations on the readings, with one “free pass” (each weekly submission worth 1%, for a total of 10%). This fall, we will pilot the new Hypothes.is app in Canvas to submit annotations. You will find more information about this assignment on the Canvas site. The purposes of the weekly annotations are to help you focus your reading and to provide questions and topics for our discussion.

3. Three outlines and mini-essays (15% total)

You will also submit and share outlines and mini-essays for three sessions during the semester, following instructions and a template provided on the Canvas site. Each submission is worth 5% of your grade. The primary purpose of the outlines and mini-essays is to help you develop the skill of reading for structure and argument, rather than simply for information.

You will be responsible for completing your annotations (each week) and sharing your outlines and mini-essays (on your three assigned dates) with your classmates and me via the Canvas site, **no later than 7:00 pm on the Monday evening before the class session.** We’ll use these as launching points for discussion, and everyone should at least take a look at them before class.

4. Term paper (55% total)

Your major assignment for the semester will be to prepare a term paper of 4000-5000 words in length. The standard assignment is a critical review of literature, in a geographic subfield of your choosing. You will receive more information about the term paper assignment on the Canvas site, including rubrics describing the basis for grading each component.

Timeline:

- ❖ Working topic proposal due by 11:59 pm **Wednesday, September 9** (1%)
- ❖ Working abstract, keywords, and draft question/thesis due by 11:59 pm **Wednesday, September 23** (2%)
- ❖ Working bibliography due by 11:59 pm **Wednesday, October 7** (2%)
- ❖ Working “zero draft” due by 11:59 pm **Wednesday, October 21** (2%)
- ❖ Working outline due by 11:59 pm **Wednesday, November 4** (3%)
- ❖ Selection of workshop date and deadline due by 11:59 pm **Wednesday, November 4** (0%)
- ❖ First complete draft, ready for in-class workshop, due by 11:59 pm **Wednesday, November 18, November 25, or December 2**, depending on selected workshop date (5%)
- ❖ Final draft due by 11:59 pm on **Monday, December 21** (40%)

Estimated time for course components	
	Hours
Time in the (virtual) classroom* (14 sessions)	37
Time spent reading seminar materials	50
Time completing outlines and weekly comments	10
Time preparing discussion facilitation	3
Time preparing term paper	44
<i>Total for semester (@3 credits x 48 hrs/credit hour)</i>	<i>144</i>

Grading

This course follows the UWM Graduate School’s Grade Definitions. Please see the following link for details: <https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/academic-policies-procedures/> (See “Grade Definitions and Requirements.”)

Attendance policy

As a rule, I expect you to attend and participate actively in every class session. You will not learn much from this class if you do not attend.

If you are sick or have a personal or family emergency, please let me know as soon as you can; this will count as an excused absence, and it will not count toward your participation grade either. If you know will

miss a class during the semester for academic reasons (e.g., research-related, conferences, etc.), please let me know; I will also count these as excused.

COVID-19 Attendance Policy (modified from <https://uwm.edu/cetl/covid-19-syllabus-statements/>)

“Students who miss class due to COVID-19 (whether it affects you or someone you need to care for) will not be penalized for their absence and will not be asked to provide formal documentation from a healthcare provider.

If you are unable to attend class, take the following steps.

- Notify me in advance of the absence or inability to participate, if possible.
- Participate in class activities online and submit assignments electronically, to the extent possible.
- Reach out to me if illness will require late submission or other modifications to deadlines.
- If remaining in a class and fulfilling the necessary requirements becomes impossible due to illness or other COVID-related circumstances, contact me to discuss other options.

As your instructor, I will trust your word when you say you are ill, and in turn, I expect that you will report the reason for your absences truthfully.”

Late assignments, make-up assignments, incompletes

The policy for late and make-up assignments varies depending on the assignment.

- Weekly annotations that arrive after the deadline and a brief grace period prior to class will receive a maximum of a half-point, unless you have a personal/medical emergency. I will not accept late annotations after the last class before we begin the paper workshops (see calendar, below, for more details).
- If you miss an assigned outline or mini-essay, I will allow you to choose an alternative session to submit a make-up. Outlines submitted after the last regular session (before we begin the paper workshops), but before the last paper workshop session, will receive no more than half credit.
- Late term paper components will receive a deduction of 10% for each 24-hour period, following a one-day grace period; after five days late, you will receive half-credit for the component.

I can make accommodations if you have personal/family emergencies or academic conflicts. Please contact me, and we'll handle these issues on a case-by-case basis.

UWM only allows incompletes in unusual circumstances. See the “Incomplete Policy” for graduate students at the following website: <https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/academic-policies-procedures/>. (The incomplete policy for graduate students is somewhat different than the policy for undergraduates.)

University policies

For the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's official policies on **disabilities, religious observances, active military duty, incompletes, discriminatory conduct, Title IX/sexual violence, academic**

misconduct, complaint procedures, grade appeal procedures, and LGBT+ resources please see the following web site: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>. Geography 870 adheres to all of these policies.

If you have questions or concerns about the class, please do not hesitate to contact the instructor.

Covid-19 policies

For a complete list of UWM's Covid-19 syllabus policies, please see <https://uwm.edu/cetl/covid-19-syllabus-statements/>. Because we will not meet face-to-face this semester, only the following apply to this class (see also Attendance, above):

Synchronous Online Class Recording

"Our class sessions will be audio-visually recorded for students who are unable to attend at the scheduled time. Students who participate with their camera engaged or who utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their audio/video or image recorded. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded."

"All individual student meetings with faculty ... will happen online."

Schedule of required readings

All readings will be available on Canvas as PDFs or as links to online PDFs.

NOTE: **Readings are subject to change**, especially later in the semester. However, I will warn you at least one week in advance when I make changes. Students will select the readings for week 11.

Part I: Background and history

1) Introducing academic geography – September 8

UW-Madison Writing Center (2003). Acknowledging, paraphrasing, and quoting sources.
http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf

Johnston, R. J. (2005). Geography - coming apart at the seams? (Extended version). In N. Castree, A. Rogers & D. J. Sherman (Eds.), *Questioning Geography: Fundamental Debates*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Castree, N. (2005). Is geography a science. *Questioning Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 57-79.

Cox, K. R. (2006). Physical geography and the geographic thought course. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 30(3), 373-388.

2) North American geographic approaches in the early 20th century – September 15

- Davis, W. M. (1906). An inductive study of the content of geography. *Journal of Geography*, 5(4), 145-160.
- Semple, E. C. (1911). *Influences of Geographic Environment, on the Basis of Ratzel's System of Anthropogeography*. H. Holt. (one chapter only)
- Sauer, C. (1925). The morphology of landscape. *University of California publications in geography*, 2(2), 19-54.
- Hartshorne, R. (1939). The nature of geography: A critical survey of current thought in the light of the past. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 29(3), 173-412. (we'll read the concluding summary only)

Part II: Contemporary geographic approaches

3) Urban land, infrastructure, and built environment – September 22

- Harvey, D. (1978). The urban process under capitalism: a framework for analysis. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 2(1-3), 101-131.
- White, R., & Engelen, G. (1993). Cellular automata and fractal urban form: a cellular modelling approach to the evolution of urban land-use patterns. *Environment and planning A*, 25(8), 1175-1199.
- McFarlane, C. (2011). The city as assemblage: dwelling and urban space. *Environment and Planning D: society and space*, 29(4), 649-671.
- Liu, Y., Liu, X., Gao, S., Gong, L., Kang, C., Zhi, Y., ... & Shi, L. (2015). Social sensing: A new approach to understanding our socioeconomic environments. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 105(3), 512-530.

4) Climate, weather, and hazards – September 29

- Cutter, S. L., Mitchell, J. T., & Scott, M. S. (2000). Revealing the vulnerability of people and places: A case study of Georgetown County, South Carolina. *Annals of the association of American Geographers*, 90(4), 713-737.
- Choi, W., Tareghian, R., Choi, J., & Hwang, C. S. (2014). Geographically heterogeneous temporal trends of extreme precipitation in Wisconsin, USA during 1950–2006. *International Journal of Climatology*, 34(9), 2841-2852.

Hardy, R. D., Milligan, R. A., & Heynen, N. (2017). Racial coastal formation: The environmental injustice of colorblind adaptation planning for sea-level rise. *Geoforum*, 87, 62-72.

Dujardin, S. (2020). Planning with Climate Change? A Poststructuralist Approach to Climate Change Adaptation. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 110(4), 1059-1074.

5) Racism and racial segregation – October 6

Pulido, L. (2000). Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in Southern California. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90(1), 12-40.

Yu, D., & Wu, C. (2004). Understanding population segregation from Landsat ETM+ imagery: a geographically weighted regression approach. *GIScience & Remote Sensing*, 41(3), 187-206.

McKittrick, K. (2013). Plantation futures. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, 17(3 (42)), 1-15.

McClintock, N. (2015). A critical physical geography of urban soil contamination. *Geoforum*, 65, 69-85.

6) Knowing the forest – October 13

Baldwin, A. (2003). The nature of the boreal forest: governmentality and forest-nature. *Space and Culture*, 6(4), 415-428.

Nightingale, A. (2003). A feminist in the forest: Situated knowledges and mixing methods in natural resource management. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 2(1), 77-90.

Robbins, P. (2003). Beyond ground truth: GIS and the environmental knowledge of herders, professional foresters, and other traditional communities. *Human Ecology*, 31(2), 233-253.

Liang, L., Schwartz, M. D., & Fei, S. (2011). Validating satellite phenology through intensive ground observation and landscape scaling in a mixed seasonal forest. *Remote Sensing of Environment*, 115(1), 143-157.

7) Sickness and health – October 20

Kearns, R., & Moon, G. (2002). From medical to health geography: novelty, place and theory after a decade of change. *Progress in Human Geography*, 26(5), 605-625.

Andrews, G. J., Chen, S., & Myers, S. (2014). The 'taking place' of health and wellbeing: Towards non-representational theory. *Social Science & Medicine*, 108, 210-222.

Neely, A. H. (2015). Internal ecologies and the limits of local biologies: A political ecology of tuberculosis in the time of AIDS. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 105(4), 791-805.

Boulos, M. N. K., & Geraghty, E. M. (2020). Geographical tracking and mapping of coronavirus disease COVID-19/severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) epidemic and associated events around the world: how 21st century GIS technologies are supporting the global fight against outbreaks and epidemics. *International Journal of Health Geographics* 19, 8.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12942-020-00202-8>

8) Gender, sexuality, and the city – October 27

Kwan, M. P. (2002). Feminist visualization: Re-envisioning GIS as a method in feminist geographic research. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 92(4), 645-661.

Brown, M., & Knopp, L. (2008). Queering the map: the productive tensions of colliding epistemologies. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 98(1), 40-58.

Longhurst, R., Johnston, L., & Ho, E. (2009). A visceral approach: Cooking 'at home' with migrant women in Hamilton, New Zealand. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 34(3), 333-345.

Rosenberg, R. D. (2020). Negotiating racialised (un) belonging: Black LGBTQ resistance in Toronto's gay village. *Urban Studies*, 0042098020914857.

9) Election Day – November 3

Agnew, J. (1996). Mapping politics: how context counts in electoral geography. *Political geography*, 15(2), 129-146.

Sui, D. Z., & Hugill, P. J. (2002). A GIS-based spatial analysis on neighborhood effects and voter turn-out: a case study in College Station, Texas. *Political Geography*, 21(2), 159-173.

Schurr, C. (2013). Towards an emotional electoral geography: The performativity of emotions in electoral campaigning in Ecuador. *Geoforum*, 49, 114-126.

Forest, B. (2018). Electoral geography: From mapping votes to representing power. *Geography Compass*, 12(1), e12352.

10) Food and agriculture – November 10

Murdoch, J., Marsden, T., & Banks, J. (2000). Quality, nature, and embeddedness: Some theoretical considerations in the context of the food sector. *Economic Geography*, 76(2), 107-125.

Abd El-Kawy, O. R., Rød, J. K., Ismail, H. A., & Suliman, A. S. (2011). Land use and land cover change detection in the western Nile delta of Egypt using remote sensing data. *Applied Geography*, 31(2), 483-494.

Guthman, J. (2014). Doing justice to bodies? Reflections on food justice, race, and biology. *Antipode*, 46(5), 1153-1171.

Kelley, L. C. (2018). The politics of uneven smallholder cacao expansion: A critical physical geography of agricultural transformation in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Geoforum*, 97, 22-34.

11) Student-driven session – November 17

TBA – students in the class will choose the topic/theme, the reading load, and the readings for this week.

12) Paper workshop 1 – November 24

13) Paper workshop 2 – December 1

14) Paper workshop 3/Wrap-up – December 8

Note: as part of the term paper project, you will sign up for the workshop date of your choice.