

GEOGRAPHY 102: THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Spring Semester 2007, 3 units; Section 2: TTH 11:00-12:15, Room HSS 278

Professor: Jason Henderson, Assistant Professor, Geography

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Required Text: (Both books available at the SFSU bookstore)

Knox & Marston (2005) *Human Geography: Places and Regions in the Global Context* (4th edition). Required for entire semester.

Kunstler (2005) *The Long Emergency*. Required beginning March 1st.

Selected readings (TBA): Selected short readings relating to Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans will be made available online at the appropriate point in the semester. You are responsible for all announcements made in class regarding readings.

Course Description:

The theme of SFSU is: "Making a difference in a diverse society: leadership for a new millennium." With that, we will explore selected issues relevant to the diversity and complexity of our new millennium by utilizing and understanding human geography. We will also explore, as an ongoing and unfolding case study, the debate about rebuilding New Orleans. After a brief introduction to human geography, the course is divided into four parts reflecting the more salient geographic issues today. The first part covers the geography of globalization, with an emphasis on how globalization impacts everyday life in the Bay Area and a comparison to New Orleans. Part two explores issues surrounding fossil fuel consumption, and debates about population and resources. It will emphasize the geography of population density and the geography of consumption patterns. Additionally, a special section on the Geography of Hurricane Katrina will expose students to the key issues surrounding the causes of the disaster in New Orleans and the debate about rebuilding New Orleans. Part three examines contemporary debates about culture in the US, and then reviews current debates about drawing boundaries for political representation, again, using New Orleans rebuild politics as a case study. Part four explores the role the urban built environment plays in energy, environmental, and social issues. This too will include discussions of the debate over rebuilding New Orleans.

Course Objectives:

Humans are at once shaping their landscape and being shaped by the landscape. The aim of the course is to encourage critical thinking about the relationships between humans and their environment. This will require taking a more holistic approach for thinking about your own position in the complex matrix of human-environmental relations. As an introductory course, a variety of topics in human geography will be surveyed, including economic, environmental, cultural, political, and urban geographies. This is a brief and incomplete survey of contemporary human geography and there is much more to human geography than what is covered in this course. The hope is that you, the student, will pursue a deeper investigation into human geography by engaging in academic research or keeping yourself enlightened as you pursue your interests at SFSU and beyond.

Course Requirements:

Readings: You are expected to have read each chapter, chapter section, or assigned reading by the date the reading is listed in the lecture schedule. During the second third of the semester you are expected to read the book titled *The Long Emergency*. You should begin reading before March 1st and finish by mid-May. Additionally, pay special attention to the selected readings assigned for New Orleans, as they will be announced in class when they are determined.

Lecture: Students will be responsible for ALL materials presented in lecture, even if they are not in the readings. This includes specific case studies that are not in the text, but that strongly relate to the course themes. If you miss a lecture, you are responsible for catching-up. This includes any films, maps or special presentations. DO NOT ask me for lecture notes.

Exams: There will be three exams. The exams are based on lecture, readings, and discussion. This means that even if something is not mentioned in class, but found in the readings, it can show up on the exam. If something is not in the readings, but mentioned in lecture, it can also appear on an exam. The exams will consist of 50 multiple choice questions and you will need to bring a scan-tron “Zeus” test form and #2 pencil for each exam.

Assignments: There will be five assignments (4 points each), to be completed outside of class and turned in on the date identified in the course schedule. Time will be set aside for in-class discussion of the assignments, so be prepared to share your work with the class. Assignment material may appear on exams, so it is important to participate. There are no make-ups for assignments.

Grading Distribution:

Assignments= 20%; Exam 1 = 20%; Exam 2 = 30%; Exam 3 (Final) = 30%

Academic Integrity

The university has established codes concerning proper academic conduct and the consequences resulting from improper behavior. Please be aware of these codes. Students are responsible for knowing the SFSU regulations concerning cheating and plagiarism that are in the University bulletin. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating on exams, fabrication of reports, assignments sources, interfering with another students work or helping another student cheat. Plagiarism is defined as copying another person's works without appropriate acknowledgement. This includes 1) quoting another persons' actual words. 2) Paraphrasing another person's words; 3) use of another persons' ideas, opinion or theory; or 4) borrowing of facts, statistics, or other illustrative material, unless information is common knowledge. Additionally, do not cut and paste large quotes or other people's writing into your short writing assignments.

General Rules & Expectations:

- Talking during class is very disruptive. If found to be consistently disruptive, you will be asked to take your conversation outside for the remainder of class.
- **TURN OFF CELL PHONES.** If your phone rings, you will promptly be asked to leave class and not return for the remainder of the period.
- **COMING TO CLASS LATE:** People who come late should be considerate and enter at the rear of the room. Please do not disturb your neighbors. While it is understandable that unforeseen events make people late, if you are consistently late you will be asked to leave class.

Assignments

Assignment 1: (4 pts) Map identification

Part of studying geography is knowledge of where places are, and how to find them on a map. In this assignment you will become familiar with many of the key cities, countries, natural features, and other localities that will be discussed in the class. The point is not memorization of certain capitols or major rivers, but knowing where things are in order to understand geographic relationships.

This is a take-home assignment. You will be provided a handout of two maps – one of the US and one of the world. Each map will have points that are numbered or labeled with letters. Using the list of places provided, match the points on the maps with the corresponding place*. Write the name of the place in the space provided on the answer sheet**.

- Map of US and Northern Mexico:
 - Match US metropolitan areas with 1-26
 - Match other US places with A-G

- Map of World
 - Match World cities with 1-18
 - Match World countries with A-F

*Note that the list of places is much longer than the actual number of points on the maps.

**** Each blank or wrong answer will be counted as .5 points off of your grade, such that missing 8 items will equal a zero for the assignment.**

Suggestions for this assignment: If you do not have an atlas in your household, you should get one. Otherwise, the SFSU library has atlases.

Assignment 2: (4 pts) Reaction to Economic Restructuring

Write a two-page essay (see writing guidelines at the end of this handout) outlining some of the key themes of economic restructuring discussed in readings and lecture. What is economic restructuring? Has economic restructuring impacted your own experience living in the Bay Area? For example, have you or someone close to you experienced outsourcing and job loss, or new employment stemming from economic restructuring? Explain, making sure that your thoughts are well-informed by lecture and readings. What is the specific geography of the restructuring you experienced? For example, if outsourced, where did the outsourcing occur? If new opportunities have opened, explain in a geographical context. In sharing your own experience, also provide your opinion about your own future with respect to economic restructuring. Do you see opportunity or decline? Do you see yourself staying in the region or leaving? Are there any public policies that you think should be implemented to address your concerns or hope for the future?

Assignment 3: (4 pts) How you impact the environment

This is an interactive assignment. You will conduct a personal environmental impact and calculate the environmental impact of your neighborhood. The total length should be two pages.

Visit the following website and conduct an audit of your personal impact on the environment:

<http://www.earthday.net/footprint/index.asp>. Click on the United States and your language of choice. You will be asked a series of questions that profile your consumption behavior, on topics such as food, the size of your home, and how you get around. (Note: for the question: "How big is the city where you live?, put "greater than 1 million" if you live in the Bay Area.). On all of these questions you can get more information by clicking on "frequently asked questions" under the subheading "Comments & Questions" that comes at the end of the quiz. After you finish the quiz, read through the frequently asked questions section to get a better understanding of the accuracy of the

ecological footprint and where the data comes from (This is all required reading, and will be on the exam corresponding to this section of the course).

Write a summary and analysis of your quiz results. Do not simply cut and past the results or list statistics, but think about the topics critically and articulate a thoughtful short, 2-page essay (see the writing guidelines above.), incorporating lecture and readings. How did you compare to other people in the US? What was the biggest contributor to your ecological footprint (diet, transport, energy, etc?) Additionally, compare the results of your quiz with various differing inputs. For example, consider how you lived one year ago, or how your footprint might have looked when you lived somewhere else (in other words, run a second audit on yourself from a different year or location). In the conclusion of your essay, describe your reaction to the quiz. Were the results what you expected? Do you take this seriously or do you think it is meaningless? Could there be improvements to the quiz – and if so, what would you add or subtract? Be prepared to share and discuss your results in class.

Assignment 4 (4 pts) How to Rebuild New Orleans? (Part 1)

Write a 3-page essay (see writing guidelines below) describing whether or not you believe that New Orleans should be rebuilt. Who should decide on whether or not the city is rebuilt? If you think it should not be rebuilt, where should all the people, jobs, and human activity be re-located? If you believe the city should be rebuilt, how much should be rebuilt, and who should return? Make sure you address the issues of wetlands, levees, and the Mississippi River in your discussion. Additionally, consider that the Bay Area is vulnerable to a major earthquake. Do you anticipate a similar debate in the Bay Area like the one underway in New Orleans? What are your thoughts on rebuilding San Francisco after a major earthquake? Incorporate readings, including the assigned readings on New Orleans and the book *The Long Emergency*. Make sure you give your opinion in a way that shows you are informed and have thought the questions through. But also make sure you back your claims and opinions with evidence from class lecture, readings, or other sources. An essay that does not back up claims with evidence is not subject to a good grade.

Assignment 5 (4 pts) *The Long Emergency*

Write a 3-page essay providing your thoughts about the book *The Long Emergency*. Specifically, consider these questions and themes: First, what was your initial reaction to this book? Second, what does Kunstler mean by the "fiesta of mobility, and what are your thoughts on that? Make sure that you provide a geographically informed answer – that is, deploy knowledge from class lecture and readings. What is meant by scaling down, or slowing down, in the context of this book and broader geography of everyday life? Do you see yourself “scaling-down” in some way? If so, how or why? If not, why not? Lastly, what is your long-term outlook on the issue of peak oil, the future geography of cities, and everyday life? Again, make sure you don’t just offer an opinion, but back your claims and opinions with evidence from class lecture, readings, or other sources. An essay that does not back up claims with evidence is not subject to a good grade.

******Guidelines for all writing assignments******

Print double-sided. Make sure your papers are stapled and your name is at the top of every page. When responding to the assignment questions, do not simply list statistics and factoids, but rather discuss the questions and topics in an insightful, creative, and succinct way. Back your claims and opinions with evidence from class lecture, readings, or other sources. An essay that does not back up claims with evidence is not subject to a good grade.

Each writing assignment should be typed in 12 point NYT font and you should use 1.5 spacing. Type your name at the top right corner of the page. Papers that are not typed will not be graded.