

## **GEOG 4000G – The Nature and Philosophy of Geography**

### **Course Outline: Section 001 - Winter 2020**

#### **1. Course Information**

##### 1.1. Classroom Location:

Seminars: Friday, 9:30 – 11:20, Room #66, UCC

##### 1.2 Contact Information:

Instructor: Professor Jeff Hopkins

Email: [jhopkins@uwo.ca](mailto:jhopkins@uwo.ca)

Office: #2423, Social Science Centre

Office Hours: Monday, 1:00 - 3:00

Phone: 519-661-2111 x85027

#### **2. Calendar Description**

##### 2.1. Course Description

The discussion of geographical paradigms within an historical and social context. A central concern is the relationship between the academic and professional practice of geography.

2 lecture hours, 0.5 course

Antirequisite(s): none

Prerequisite(s): Fourth year status, and enrollment in a major or Honors Specialization in the Department of Geography.

*Prerequisite checking is the student's responsibility*

##### 2.2. Senate Regulations

Senate Regulations state, “unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

#### **3. Textbook & Other Course Materials**

Paul, R. and L. Elder (2006). *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking*. Foundation for Critical Thinking: CA. (Available at The Bookstore in UCC)

Other weekly reading materials will be posted on the course website in OWL.

## 4. Course Objectives

The major purpose of this course is to pause and reflect on the geographical education you have experienced and practiced over the past three and half years. In this, your final term of a four-year journey, let us consider what it is you think you have learned in *'geography'*, and what it means to you to be a *'geographer.'* How might the many tools, insights and *'knowledge'* you have acquired be applicable to both your professional and personal lives post-graduation? This course examines the nature and *'philosophy'* of geography: what it is and what lens or perspectives does geography bring to your world? How has it influenced the way you think about, and see, the world and others? Of what practical utility is *'geography'* in your life? What do you carry forward as a *'geographer'*?

In keeping with the *Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations* of our programs, this course promotes several objectives to varying extents:

1. Develop knowledge and understanding of the fundamental characteristics, processes and temporal changes of human systems and their interactions
2. Demonstrate awareness of geographical diversity through knowledge of different places and understanding of the processes that shape them spatially and over time
3. Combine breadth of knowledge of Geography with understanding of selected sub-fields.
4. Describe and explain the scope and nature of Geography as a discipline.
5. Synthesize and evaluate geographical information from diverse sources
6. Collect, analyze and interpret geographical data in relation to social systems
7. Describe and explain, analyze and interpret geographical phenomena outside the classroom by engagement with people, places and/or environments
8. Analyze real-world problems and policy applications using geographical concepts, skills and understanding.
9. Communicate geographic ideas and understanding effectively to a variety of audiences in writing, orally, and graphically.

## 5. Learning Outcomes

Fulfilling these objectives will provide numerous *'learning outcomes'* that will enable you to:

1. Develop knowledge and understanding of the fundamental characteristics, processes and temporal changes of human systems and their interactions
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3. Combine breadth of knowledge of Geography with understanding of selected sub-fields.
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7. Describe and explain, analyze and interpret geographical phenomena outside the classroom by engagement with people, places and/or environments
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9. Communicate geographic ideas and understanding effectively to a variety of audiences in writing, orally, and graphically.

## 6. Format and Course Content

### 6.1 Seminar Format

The format of this course is unconventional, hence the use of the WALs room: *Western's Alternative Learning Space*. There is a time and place for professors to lecture at the podium—to profess and share their knowledge—and for students to take notes, to memorize, to learn: this is not such a time or place. You are now well-seasoned, knowledgeable, and highly-skilled: it is time for you to be more actively engaged in how you learn, what you learn, to recognize your personal insights, and to share them with your peers. There will likely be readings to have read and exercises to have completed before we meet on Fridays; there may well be some readings during the seminar; there will most definitely be individual and group work exercises, challenges and activities during the seminars. It will be largely student-driven, student-lead and student-centred. The instructor's role is more that of co-ordinator, moderator, mentor and coach. What you get out of this course is dependent upon what you put into it.

Given this is a mandatory course, it is expected that you will attend all seminars, come prepared to do so, and be constructively engaged with your peers.

### 6.2 Seminar Topics

#	Seminar Topics	Dates
1	Introduction & Organization: Meet & Greet <i>(without the food or drink ☺)</i>	Friday, Jan. 10
2	Philosophies: Ways of Thinking, Ways of Knowing	Friday Jan. 17
3	Geographies: Key Concepts & Traditions	Friday, Jan. 24
4	Geographies: Shifting Sands & Contemporary Challenges	Friday, Jan. 31
5	Knowledge, Power, Ideology	Friday, Feb. 7
6	Morals, Values and Your Geographical Compass	Friday, Feb. 14
	<b>NO SEMINAR – READING WEEK</b>	<b>Feb. 17 - 21</b>
7	Geographical Skills, Professionalism & Careers	Friday, Feb. 28
8	Individual vs Group Work / Presentation Workshop	Friday, Mar. 6
9	Presentation Workshop	Friday, Mar. 13
10	Group Presentations (3 groups)	Friday, Mar. 20
11	Group Presentations (3 groups)	Friday, Mar. 27
12	Last Undergraduate Class Ever: What Now?	Friday, Apr. 3

### 6.2 Notes and Note-Taking

Note taking, like reading, form the foundation of communication, critical thinking, and decision making. If you write information down by hand, retention is heightened relative to passive

observation. Keeping track of what you do in each seminar—noting down your thoughts, ideas, concepts, insights, and any questions you generated or acquired for others—is worthwhile and encouraged. Such a record may prove useful in the writing of your essay, your group presentation, and during the final, open-book, final examination. At the very least, after each seminar, take ten to fifteen minutes and summarize your thoughts.

## 7. Evaluation

Evaluation Components	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
Group #1 Peer/Self Evaluation	5%	Feb. 7 <sup>th</sup>
Essay Term Paper	25%	Feb. 28 <sup>th</sup>
Group #2 Peer/Self Evaluation	5%	Mar. 6 <sup>th</sup>
Group #3 Peer/Self Evaluation	10%	Mar. 20 <sup>th</sup> or 27 <sup>th</sup>
Group #3 Presentation Peer/Prof. Evaluation	30%	Mar. 20 <sup>th</sup> or 27 <sup>th</sup>
Final Examination	25%	T.B.A. April 6-26

Students will be assigned to work in three different groups during the term. At the end of each cycle students will evaluate their own participation and contributions to the group, as well as their peers, using an evaluation rubric provided. The Group #3 Presentation will also be subject to peer evaluation as well as the professor’s assessment. Both the Term Paper and Final Examination will be evaluated by the professor. Detailed explanations of all of these will be provided in class well in advance of the due dates.

Given this is a mandatory course, **your attendance is required**. Unless you provide a legitimate and documented account of your absence (see below) you will be deducted marks on your final course grade based on the following absentee rates:

- One Absence: 0% (*We all deserve a break*)
- Second Absence: 5%
- Third Absence: 10% -- cumulative so it is 15%
- Fourth Absence: 15% -- cumulative so it is 30%
- Fifth Absence: ‘F’ -- failed the course

## 8. Requesting Academic Consideration

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

- (i) Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form provided that the conditions for submission are met;

- (ii) For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
- (iii) For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in order to be eligible for academic consideration. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Counselling unit to clarify what documentation is appropriate.

Students seeking academic consideration:

- are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (upset stomach) or upsets (argument with a friend) are not normally an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- **must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Academic consideration is not normally intended for the following circumstances:

- **Students who require academic accommodation based on an ongoing physical or mental illness (recurring or chronic) or an existing disability.** Students with an ongoing physical illness or mental disorder (recurring or chronic) or an existing disability are responsible, in consultation with their doctors or other health professionals, to determine if they are capable of pursuing their studies and, if so, with what accommodations. Students are expected to seek and arrange reasonable accommodations with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible in accordance with the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disability. Students with pre-existing accessibility plans arranged through SAS may not need to provide additional documentation when seeking academic consideration where such request for consideration relates to their disability and where their accessibility plans allow for coursework deferral or deadline extensions.
- **Students who experience high levels of stress related to academic performance** (including completing assignments, taking part in presentations, or writing tests or examinations). Students with academic or exam stress should access supports through Student Health and Wellness and Learning Skills Services in order to deal with this stress in a proactive and constructive manner.

## 9. Late Submissions and Extensions

Assignments submitted late will lose 10% of the assignment's value each day. Assignments submitted after three days late will receive zero but will be graded for your educational benefit. All requests for extensions on assignments must be made in writing to your Teaching Assistant at least one week before the due date. You may have up to three days beyond the initial due date. Material submitted beyond the new due date will be penalized as per the course penalty

(10% per day). Never slip assignments under a door. Submit late assignments in the 'Geography Drop Box' adjacent the door of room 2322A SSC (main geography office).

## 10. Appeals

Requests to have a lab or tutorial assignment formally re-evaluated must be done within one week of receiving the graded assignment. In this concise, written request to your Teaching Assistant, you will specify the aspects of your work that you would like re-visited and the justification for doing so. ***Please be aware that disliking or disagreeing with your grade is no grounds for re-assessment.***

Should you feel that your final grade in the course is biased, inaccurate or unfair, you do have the right to appeal your final mark. Please refer to the *Western Calendar* prior to doing so (see web site below). In an attempt to avoid such time-consuming and stressful procedures for all, be assured that each and every piece of work is graded carefully and thoroughly. ***Be aware that marks may be raised--as well as lowered--through an appeal process.***

## 11. Plagiarism & Academic Offences

Plagiarism is stealing: it is unacceptable, and those who tempt fate will be persecuted to the fullest extent allowed under the university's regulations. Penalties may include the following:

- i. Zero on the plagiarized assignment
- ii. An 'F' in the course
- iii. Expulsion from the university

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence. Please avoid this experience and do your own work.

Be aware that all required papers *may* be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

## 12. Make-Up Examinations

Students with special accommodation will write make-up tests and examinations administered by the department on Fridays during respective periods of fall and winter terms. To prevent prior disclosure, the format and contents of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

## 13. Alternative Examination Dates, Dropping the Course

The date of the final examination is set by the Office of the Registrar and will not be changed. If you consider that you have grounds to write a final examination on an alternate date, you must follow the procedure established by the Dean's Office and complete the appropriate forms. The same holds for dropping the course

## 14. Medical or Non-Medical Absence, Exemption and Tardiness

Students who have documented 'special needs' and/or official notifications of accommodation from the Dean's office —emailed directly to the course instructor—will be accommodated accordingly, including exemption of exams and assignments if circumstances warrant. For either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office and not to the instructor. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted. In all other instances of absences, omissions and tardiness on your part, your maturity is respected: you are adults. If you choose to miss lectures, assignments and examinations you are most at liberty to do so. The consequences are made evident in this course outline. ***If you are late to class—or must leave early—please do so quietly with minimal disturbance to your peers.*** Thanks.

## 15. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western's [Health and Wellness website](#) for more information on mental health resources.

## 16. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. [Information regarding accommodation of exams](#) is available on the Registrar's website.

More information about "[Accessibility at Western](#)" is available.

## 17. Support Services

[Western's Support Services](#)  
[Student Development Centre](#)

## 18. Electronic Devices

Never record digitally or otherwise any part of the class lectures or tutorials/labs without prior and specific permission from the instructor (**i.e. do not take photos with your phone of the PowerPoint slides**). Note taking is highly encouraged. No electronic devices will be allowed during the examinations.

If you wish to engage in personal or recreational use of your phone, laptop or any other distraction, please quietly leave the classroom. I will ask you to leave if you do not do so yourself.

## 19. Email Communication

Please use e-mail judiciously. Do not ask the professor questions about your assignments or course material over e-mail that require more than a one or two sentence response. Read the course outline and all assignments thoroughly and completely before asking

questions, the answers to which, may well be found in the outline or assignment. If you have long and complex questions—and we hope you do—we will be delighted to address them face-to-face during office hours or in class. I want to help you succeed and email is rarely the vehicle to do so. Take advantage of the office hours posted on the front page of this outline.

If you chose to contact us by phone or email, please do not expect an instantaneous response: it may take 24-36 hours. The professor will not respond to emails after 5:00 pm and rarely on weekends. Your Teaching Assistant will specify to you the times, locations and means to contact them. **Please respect these boundaries.** Please use proper English in your text mail. Communication, like politeness, is a two-way street, and we shall extend to you the same courtesies. Thank you.

## 20. Mutual Respect

Students can expect the Professor to come prepared for, and attend, all seminars. The professor will strive to promote a collegial atmosphere of mutual respect conducive to the exchange of ideas and the process of learning. He demands the same from you. Unsanctioned reading during a seminar, littering the classroom, the use of entertainment electronics—**including cell phones and recreational laptop use**--and other activities--**particularly unnecessary talking**—will impede the ability of you and your peers to learn. Such activities are unacceptable during class: end-of-story. By abiding to this code of mutual civility and respect, we set the stage for a safe, healthy and stimulating intellectual forum. **Please note that NO FOOD OR DRINK IS ALLOW INSIDE THE ROOM.**

Not to belabour the point, but included below is the *Code of Conduct for Students, Staff, and Faculty for the Department of Geography. The University of Western Ontario Code of Student Conduct* is available at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>: please familiarize yourself with both of these documents should you have concerns about your own or somebody else's classroom behaviours.

Thank you for your co-operation.

***Finally, if you have problems with the course, please seek assistance from your peers and/or the professor during office hours: I am approachable and I welcome your questions. I hope that you enjoy the class and learn from the course.***

## 21. Geography Code of Conduct

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Affiliation with the Department of Geography presumes mutual respect among students, staff, teaching assistants, and faculty. A positive atmosphere of professionalism and collegiality is essential for everyone to perform to the best of his or her abilities. This requires respect for the opinions and questions of others and behaviour that is, at all times, courteous, and conducive to creating a pleasant and productive environment for learning and working.

As members of a Department of Geography, we are expected to show special respect for our environment, being individually responsible for promoting a clean and safe work environment within the facilities of the Department and the Social Science Centre, including classrooms, laboratories, the Map Library, offices, hallways, washrooms, exterior grounds, and the facilities and vehicles used in field courses and field trips.



It is inevitable that misunderstandings will occur from time to time. However, it is in everyone's interest to try and resolve problems in a non-confrontational manner. Threatening, violent, or abusive behaviour, harassment (including sexual and racial harassment), rudeness (in person, in writing, or on the telephone), and abuse of authority, for whatever reasons, corrode good working and learning conditions.

Incidents that cannot be resolved amicably may be reported to the Chair of the Department (661-3653). The Chair will consider appropriate actions for resolving the problem, usually after consultation with the parties involved. If required, contact with university services (e.g., Police, Equity) or civil authorities will be invoked.

#### **Student Use of University Facilities and Classroom Decorum:**

Students are expected to comply with the authority of University staff and faculty on all matters relating to access to facilities (offices, classrooms, laboratories, and Map Library) and to use of equipment and resources.

Students are expected to attend all lectures and laboratory sessions regularly and punctually.

Instructors are responsible for maintaining an appropriate academic atmosphere in all class activities; students are expected to cooperate in this effort.

Actions that impede instruction deter the ability of students to learn, or show disrespect for instructors and fellow students, will not be condoned in Geography classrooms and labs. Such actions include reading during lectures, disturbing consumption of food or drink, use of Walkman's and radios, and disruptive conversation. Serious disrespect for classroom decorum should be reported to the instructor and, if required, to the Chair of the Geography Department (SSC 2429, Telephone 661-3653).

Students are expected to adhere to University standards of academic honesty, as outlined under "Scholastic Offences" in the Western Calendar. Unacceptable practices include cheating, impersonation, plagiarism, misrepresentation of research, falsification of documents, obstructing the academic activities of another, aiding or abetting academic misconduct, and abuse of confidentiality. In addition to incurring penalties, as outlined in the Calendar, some academic offences may fall under the Criminal Code of Canada.

*Approved on behalf of Faculty, Staff, and Students by the Council of the Department of Geography on 4 March 1994.*

## **22. Important Dates for Winter 2020**

January 6: Classes resume

January 10: Last day to add a second term half course

February 17: Family Da – Department Office Closed

February 18-23: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

March 7: Last day to drop a second term half course without penalty

April 3: Classes end

April 4 and 5: Study days

April 6-26: Examination Period

#### **Midterm Makeup Dates:** *(not applicable to this course: there is no mid-term makeup)*

- Friday February 7, 9:00 am, SSC 1004
- Friday February 14, 9:00 am, SSC 1004
- Friday February 28, 9:00 am, SSC 1004
- Friday March 6, 9:00 am, SSC 1004
- Friday March 13, 9:00 am, SSC 1004
- Friday March 20, 9:00 am, SSC 1004

#### **Final Exam Makeup Dates:**

- Friday April 17, 9:00 am, SSC 1004
- Thursday April 23, 9:00 am, SSC 1004
- Thursday April 30, 9:00 am, SSC 1004

**PLEASE NOTE** *Course content& order of presentations may deviate from this general outline due to unforeseen circumstances.*