

GEOG 4000B – 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, via Zoom live. Address posted in Resources file of course OWL site.

1.2 Contact Information:

Instructor: Professor Jeff Hopkins

Email: jhopkins@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Monday, 1:00 - 3:00 (via Email; phone calls TBA)

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

Weekly reading materials will be posted/linked on the course website in the Resources folder of 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
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.
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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 in that it is large student driven. 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. 15
2	Philosophies: Ways of Thinking, Ways of Knowing	Friday Jan. 22
3	Geographies: Key Concepts & Traditions	Friday, Jan. 29
4	Geographies: Shifting Sands & Contemporary Challenges	Friday, Feb. 5
5	Knowledge, Power, Ideology	Friday, Feb. 12
	NO SEMINAR – READING WEEK	Feb. 15 - 19
6	Morals, Values and Your Geographical Compass	Friday, Feb. 26
7	Geographical Skills, Professionalism & Careers	Friday, Mar. 5
8	Individual vs Group Work / Presentation Workshop	Friday, Mar. 12
9	Presentation Workshop	Friday, Mar. 19
10	Group Presentations (3 groups)	Friday, Mar. 26
	GOOD FRIDAY – UNIVERSITY CLOSED	Friday, Apr. 2
11	Group Presentations (3 groups)	Friday, Apr. 9 th

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. Statements concerning Online Etiquette

To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette during our Zoom seminars:

- Please “arrive” to class on time
- Please use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- Ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- To minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- Please be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor’s request if the internet connection becomes unstable
- Unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting

The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:

- If you wish to speak, use the “raise hand” function and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question
- Remember to unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking
- Self-identify when speaking
- Remember to mute your mic and turn off your video camera after speaking (unless directed otherwise)

General considerations of “netiquette”:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment. “Flaming” is never appropriate.
- Be professional and scholarly in all online postings. Cite the ideas of others appropriately.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other

serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

Please see the *Western Zoom User Guide* in the Resources folder in the course OWL site for more tips.

Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently.

If students need assistance, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

8. Evaluation

Evaluation Components	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
Group #1 Self Evaluation	5%	Feb. 5 th
Essay Term Paper	30%	Feb. 26 th
Group #2 Self Evaluation	5%	Mar. 5 th
Group #3 Self Evaluation	5%	Mar. 19 th
Group #3 Presentation Peer/Prof. Evaluation	30%	Mar. 26 th or Apr. 9 th
Final Examination	25%	T.B.A. April 14 th – 30 th

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.

Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned readings.

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

The final examination will be posted on OWL at the time and date of the scheduled exam slot. It will be a take-home exam and open book. Response to the final exam will be uploaded into the student's drop box at the appropriate time (TBA).

9. Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

10.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 the instructor 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).

11.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.***

12.Plagiarism & Academic Offences

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.

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

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>).

13. Make-Up Examinations

Please contact the instructor to arrange for a make-up exam. To prevent prior disclosure, the format and contents of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

14. 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

15. 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.

16. 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

17. 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.

18. Support Services

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

19. Use of Electronic Devices

Never record digitally or otherwise any part of the class seminars. Do not record our Zoom seminars.

20. 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 I hope you do—I will be delighted to address them during my office hours over the phone or Zooms. 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 me by email, please do not expect an instantaneous response: it may take 24-36 hours. I will not respond to emails after 5:00 pm and rarely on weekends. ***Please respect these boundaries.*** Please use proper English in your text mail. Communication, like politeness, is a two-way street, and I shall extend to you the same courtesies. Thank you.

21. Mutual Respect

Students can expect the Professor to come prepared for, and attend, all seminars regularly and punctually. He expects the same of you. The professor will strive to promote a collegial atmosphere of mutual respect conducive to the exchange of ideas and the process of learning. Our seminars are open intellectual forums to explore philosophical issues from a geographical perspective; everyone's voice and interpretations are welcome. Your own grounded interpretations and opinions in no way whatsoever need parallel the Professor's to succeed in this course. Freedom of thought and expression is strongly encouraged: please do so in a courteous, responsible, and respectful manner. By abiding to this code of mutual civility and respect, we set the stage for a safe, healthy and stimulating intellectual forum for each other.

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.

22. 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.

23. Important Dates for Winter 2021

January 11: Classes resume

January 19: Last day to add a second term half course

February 15: Family Day – Department Office Closed

February 13 to February 21: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

March 15: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

April 2: Good Friday

April 12: Classes end
April 13: Study day
April 14 to April 30: Examination Period

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