

Geography 630

Seminar in Physical Geography

Thursdays 5:30-8:00 pm
Spring 2010 Semester
(Tillman 401)

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This seminar course focuses on the interface of environment and natural resources. The objective is to expose students with various facets of human impact on natural resources covering all four environmental spheres (hydrosphere, atmosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere). This course also will help students improve their presentation skills. Students are expected to have some basic understanding of physical geography/natural resources. Class will involve weekly review (presentation) of articles by students. Each student will present and submit a review of assigned articles.

Books:

- Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water, Revised Edition, Author: Marc Reisner, 608 pages, ISBN: 9780140178241, 01 Jun 1993, Penguin.
- The Human Impact on the Natural Environment by Andrew Goudie
- Water Follies: Island Press

Note: Above books will be covered in the beginning of the semester. Other readings (journal articles) will be assigned in class

Paper presentations:

Each student should find a peer reviewed journal article on each of these themes: desertification, land degradation due to agricultural activities, river management/river restoration, deforestation, urbanization/urban forestry/urban agriculture, land cover change, and climate change. Selected articles must be approved by the instructor.

Overlapping of journal articles among students is not allowed. Paper presentation on these topics will be based on the article selected by each student and articles/book chapters/readings provided by the instructor. These presentations will include written papers as well as oral presentations by each student. Both written paper and oral presentation will carry equal points (50%).

Instructions for written papers:

- Total length should be 2-3 pages
- Time New Roman font
- 12 Font size
- Line spacing: Double
- 1 inch margin on all sides
- No spelling or grammatical mistakes (edit and spell check your work and punctuate appropriately)
- Clearly type all the information regarding the reading covered

- Include brief biographical information on authors of the assigned readings in the beginning and should not be more than 20 % of your paper length.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Make sure you cite clearly and paraphrase wherever needed. Basically, you are expected to critique assigned readings.
- The written paper should discuss/cover: stated research objectives, methods used, research problem, clarity (is it clearly written or the author used some jargon?), organization, results and conclusions, overall strengths and weaknesses of the work
- Never start a sentence with a number
- The written papers are due in the beginning of each class i.e. before the oral presentations. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Instructions for oral presentations:

Consider these presentations as research presentations in a professional conference such as the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers.

- Each presentation should be approximately 12-15 minutes long. Practice so your presentation does not exceed the give time period. You will be stopped if you cross the time duration.
- Use powerpoint or overhead projector
- Structure your discussion material sequentially
- Speak to the class, do not speak to the screen or to the instructor
- Speak up so that all may hear
- Speak slowly enough so all can follow
- Use maps and any other audio-visual tools
- Clarity of voice
- Confident presentation
- Eye contact
- Posture
- Evidence of rehearsal (make sure you practice your presentation before presenting in the class)
- Response to questions posed by audience. If you don't have the answer to a question, say so. Its OK.

International Case Study:

This case study will comprise 20 % of the total grade. Each student will choose a title for some case study that involves an international dispute on resources and environment. No overlap of topics is allowed among students. The last day to submit titles is Thursday, February 4, 2010. A brief summary on the case study will be due on Thursday, February 18, 2010. This will involve one page long brief description of the case study (title, objective, methods, and sources). Each student will briefly discuss the progress of the case study on Thursday, April 1, 2010. Final presentation of international case studies (May 6, 2010) will be similar to paper presentations (written and oral presentations). The written document should be 8-12 pages long (excluding title and references).

Domestic Case Study:

This case study will comprise 20 % of the total grade. This assignment is similar to the International Case Study with only one difference. In this case, students will be completing a case study on a dispute related to resources and environment within the United States. No overlap of topics is allowed among students. The last day to submit titles is Thursday, February 4, 2010. A brief summary on the case study will be due on Thursday, February 18, 2010. This will involve one page long brief description of the case study (title, objective, methods, and sources). Each student will briefly discuss the progress of the case study on Thursday, April 1, 2010. Final presentation of case studies (Finals week) will be similar to paper presentations (written and oral presentations). The written document should be 8-12 pages long (excluding title and references).

Grading:

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Paper Presentations | 60 % |
| International Case Study | 20 % |
| Domestic Case Study | 20 % |

Tentative Schedule:

| | Date | Assignment | Topic |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Thursday, January 21, 2010 | Overview | ➤ Introduction and Overview (Suggested readings for the next class: Cadillac Desert, Water Follies, and Tragedy of Commons) |
| 2 | Thursday, January 28, 2010 | Overview | ➤ Class discussion on natural resource conservation based on Cadillac Desert, Water Follies, and Tragedy of Commons ➤ Each student must be prepared to discuss some aspect of water resource conservation based on suggested readings and use that aspect as the topic of your paper presentation for the next class |
| 3 | Thursday, February 4, 2010 | Class Discussion | ➤ Paper presentations on some aspect of water resource conservation (based on Cadillac Desert, Water Follies, and Tragedy of Commons) ➤ Titles of both case studies due ➤ Students should decide an aspect of Bureau of reclamation for the following week's presentation and must discuss it in this class |
| 4 | Thursday, February 11, 2010 | Paper presentations | ➤ Paper presentations on Bureau of reclamation |
| 5 | Thursday, February 18, 2010 | Paper presentations | Desertification Brief introduction of both case studies due |
| 6 | Thursday, February 25, 2010 | Paper presentations | Land degradation due to agricultural activities |
| 7 | Thursday, March 4, 2010 | Paper presentations | River management / river restoration |
| 8 | Thursday, March 11, 2010 | Paper presentations | Deforestation |
| 9 | Thursday, March 18, 2010 | Spring Break (March 15-19): No Class | |
| 10 | Thursday, March 25, 2010 | Paper presentations | Urbanization, urban forestry, urban agriculture |
| 11 | Thursday, April 1, 2010 | Lecture | Land cover change Brief update on both case studies by each student due |
| 12 | Thursday, April 8, 2010 | Lecture | Lecture on application of GIS and statistics in Physical Geography/Natural Resources |
| 13 | Thursday, April 15, 2010 | Guest Lecture | To be announced |
| 14 | Thursday, April 22, 2010 | Paper presentations | Climate Change |
| 15 | Thursday, April 29, 2010 | Paper Presentations | Climate Change |
| 16 | Thursday, May 6, 2010 | Paper presentations | International case studies on disputes related to physical geography/resources and environment/resource management |
| Finals Week: May 10 – May 14 | | Paper presentations | Domestic case studies on disputes related to physical geography/resources and environment/resource management |
| * The above schedule is tentative and there can be changes in this schedule. In case of any such change, students will be informed in the class. | | | |

Other General Advice:

- **Treat this syllabus as a contract** and discuss confusing items with me immediately
- Keep track of your cumulative grades throughout the semester
- Stay on top of the reading assignments
- Approach your instructor immediately when difficulty arises
- Pair with a classmate for discussions, but write-up your own assignments
- Internet (www.google.com) is a very useful resource for more information and clarification of various topics.
- Know (& always follow) the University regulations
- plagiarism will not be tolerated