

GEOG 2170
Culture, Environment, and Society
Fall 2025
Mondays and Wednesdays 9.30-10.50AM
Terrill Hall: 120

Instructor: Prof. Ipsita Chatterjee

Office: ENV 320G

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 11.00AM to 12.00 PM and by appointment

Email: Ipsita.Chatterjee@unt.edu

Teaching Assistant: Jennifer Long

Email: JenniferLong8@my.unt.edu

Office hours:

Office hours:

Preamble: The world is a complex and dynamic place where humans are constantly reshaping the geographies of life and livelihood. GEOG 2170 studies human interaction with the world and critically investigates how these interactions change the places, communities, cities, and nations that we are so familiar with. Processes like, development, under development, poverty, inequality, globalization, urbanization, suburbanization, gentrification, inner-city decay, migration, conflicts, and war represent complex set of interactions between human societies and the spaces they inhabit, these specific processes of interaction are the topics under study. We will begin with a brief introduction to the history, nature and scope of Human Geography, and study the dominant ‘schools of thought’ like, environmental determinism, possibilism, regional school, quantitative revolution, behavioral approach, and radical geography. The aim is to understand different philosophical traditions and theoretical positions within the discipline of Human Geography so that we are armed with a set of conceptual tools. Using these conceptual tools we will then explore human interactions in specific contexts: human interaction with the urban environment (urban geography), human interaction with cultural phenomena (cultural geography), human interaction with social issues (demography), human interaction with economic processes (economic geography), and human interaction with political issues (political geography). By understanding how urban, economic, cultural, social, and political processes are negotiated by humans, this course hopes to offer a comprehensive understanding of Earth as the home of humans.

Purpose: To provide you with conceptual tools, which will enable you to not only understand, analyze, and explain local, national and international events for academic purposes, but also to enable you to use these concepts in ‘real’ life so that you develop critical skills to comprehend, and articulate the reality around you more comprehensively.

To encourage you to think critically; think critically means to delve really deep beneath appearances, superficiality, and manifestations to understand the mechanisms, the nuts and bolts, systemic imperatives, and the hidden power structures guiding events and phenomena.

To introduce you to the World of Geography, and demonstrate the use of spatial perspectives in understanding and explaining global and local events

General Objectives: Therefore, we want to share an understanding of the value and importance of modern human geography by considering:

- what a human geographer does,
- what theories inform our understanding of the human world
- how a human geographer critically analyzes the processes/issues that affect human societies, and hence imagine a better world that is more emancipatory, compassionate and equal for all.

Important dates

Mental map and short paper due	9/3
Examination 1	9/24
Deliberative long essay due	10/20
Examination 2	10/29
Examination 3	12/3

Required Text: The only required text for the class is: *Human Geography: Places and Regions in Global Context*, current edition, by Paul L. Knox and Sallie A. Marston. Students must possess this book. This book is available at the University bookstore.

Text and Readings: Additional readings: All other additional readings are posted on CANVAS. Please go to CANVAS (unt.instructure.com) – go to the course website (GEOG 2170: Culture, Environment, and Society) and then click on “module” on the left to access the readings arranged by folders and labeled by topic numbers that correspond to the schedule included later in this syllabus. Use Firefox, Google chrome as your browser for swift downloading of the readings.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation- in class lecture is mandatory for everyone. Lectures will parallel and expand upon the readings and will also include material not contained in the readings. You will need to attend lectures and take careful notes in the lectures and participate actively in the sections in order to succeed in this class. **Your participation grade will primarily reflect your attendance in class**, the instructor will also keep a careful mental note of students participating in class, good participation may entail a bump up at the end of the semester if your total score for the class happen to be in the borderline.

Readings - You are required to come to class having done all readings listed for that day as under class schedule.

Writing assignments:

Short paper/mental map:

One short paper with a mental map exercise will be assigned on a specified week mentioned in the schedule below and the date on which it will be due is also noted in the schedule. Question 1 of the short paper, i.e. the mental map should be drawn or printed clearly on one sheet of paper. Question 2, i.e. the written portion of the short paper should be answered in NOT more than 2 pages, please answer each part of Question 2 in separate paragraphs. A good answer is one, which can demonstrate that you have read your material, understand it, and can provide suitable examples to substantiate your point. While sharing reading materials, and discussing informally in groups are encouraged, copying assignments from other students will not be accepted, and if discovered will result in loss of grades. Exceeding the page limit will result in loss of grades. We will grade the mental map based on:

- Completeness
- Amount of details, insight and thoughtfulness
- Clarity

See specific instructions in the schedule below

Deliberative essay:

The deliberative essay should be a maximum of 2 pages; work cited can exist beyond the 2-page limit. The topic for the deliberative essay is noted on the schedule below, the instructor will discuss ideas and approaches to this paper when she assigns the essay, you will be given a one week to complete it. Due date for the deliberative essay is noted in the schedule below, the paper must be handed in hardcopy in the beginning of class. In writing the paper you should begin with an introductory section that presents the context of your topic and identifies your basic position (argument). Then develop in the body of your essay three or four reasons by drawing from course materials and outside sources that will persuade the reader that your position is valid. In your conclusion you need to summarize your argument while talking about its significance for geography and society. Your instructor will typically look for the following features when evaluating your deliberative essay: 1. Whether your argument/position is articulated clearly; 2. Whether the three or four major claims that you make in support of your argument are well substantiated and cited; 3. Whether the essay shows an understanding of the course readings and class lectures; 4. Whether the essay cites sources correctly; and 5. Whether the essay is grammatically correct and proofed for errors (spelling, punctuation, typos, etc).

Note: If you quote or paraphrase from an article or book, you may use in-text citation for those ideas, for example -- (Smith, 2002, p. 21). If you choose to quote verbatim, you must cite the source, both to be intellectually honest about where the idea's origins, and to direct your reader to the page/article so that s/he may delve into the idea more fully. Your instructor will be

glad to help you learn both when and how to cite sources well. Not citing the actual article on which your essay is based will result in loss of points.

You are encouraged to seek the TAs and/or the instructor's editing expertise before submission. You will do better if you meet us during office hours to show us your drafts before final submission.

Paper submission and deadline: Please staple your assignments and write your name before submitting them. We will collect the papers on the date specified in the schedule in the **first 5 minutes** of the class. Submission in class after the first 5 minutes have elapsed counts as late submission and 3 points will be deducted for it. No paper will be accepted after class. **Assignments will have to be handed in hard copy; email attachments will not be accepted.** If you anticipate that you cannot be present on the day an assignment is due either due to an official religious holiday, job interview, doctor's appointment, you have the option of submitting it to the instructor ahead of time. The deadline for this assignment must be strictly followed, an exception will only be made in case of an official, written document of a death in the family, personal medical emergency, or if your traveling because of academic reasons, or are part of the university sports team. Over-sleeping, alarm failing to go-off, computer crashing and printer not working, car breaking down, leaving for vacation are not acceptable excuses for late submission.

Formatting assignments– The short paper and the deliberative long essay should be in 11.5-to-12-point font size in Times New Roman with 0.5-1.0-inch margin on each side, and 1-1.5 line spacing. Noncompliance with the formatting guidelines will result in loss of grades.

Examinations (total of 3) – There will be 3 exams in the semester (the dates are specified in the schedule) each will include only material covered since the previous exam. There is no cumulative final examination. The examinations will be held within the class time. The exams will include a combination of multiple-choice questions and short answers based on the class lectures, readings and films shown.

Make up exam policy– Make-up exams will only be allowed in case of an official written document of a death in the family, personal medical emergency, religious holiday, or if you are part of a sports or academic team representing the university and will be out of town on that day for an university event. In that case, please contact the TA and schedule a make-up within one week of the original exam-day on a date and time that is convenient for your TA. Make-up exams may be significantly different and harder than the original exams.

If you anticipate a schedule conflict with any of the exam dates due to personal reasons beyond religious holidays, sickness/death, university representation, DO NOT TAKE THIS COURSE.

Grading -- Grades will be computed on the following scale:

A	85 to 100 points
B	75 to <85 points
C	65 to <75 points
D	55 to <65 points
F	< 55 points

Bargaining for higher grades and requesting that you be bumped up if in the borderline is not acceptable, the instructor will under all circumstances follow the following grading scale strictly:

Short paper/Mental map = 10 points

Deliberative long essay – 15

Exam 1 – 25 points

Exam 2 – 25 points

Exam3 – 20 points

Attendance – 5 points

Attendance/participation: 5 points if student attends 75 percent or more of the class lectures.

Negative attendance points: If attendance is below 75 percent, -2 will be taken off for each percentage point below 75 percent (if student is present 74 percent of the time, they get 0 point for attendance, if they are present 73 percent of the time, they get -2, if they are present 72 percent of the time, they get -4 and so on and so forth. The negative points are deducted at the end of the semester from the student's grand total score for the class.

Class Policies:

Contacting and Office hours – The best way to contact me is to meet me in my office hours, or email me. My email address is listed on the front page of this syllabus, and can also be found on the “CANVAS” course management website. I will try to answer your emails as soon as possible. You are strongly encouraged to meet me and/or your TA to clarify concepts, clear doubts; we are interested in discussing and reviewing materials with you, so utilize the office hours to your advantage.

Cell Phone – Please switch off cell phones during the duration of the class.

Academic integrity-Academic dishonesty includes cheating during exams, copying assignments from each other, or using materials from other published sources and claiming them as your own without appropriate citation (plagiarism). Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and if discovered will result in loss of grade, or even an “F”. Please consult UNT policy on AI use at: <https://guides.library.unt.edu/plagiarism/at-unt>

Based on the above guidelines,

- AI **should not be** used to assist in writing papers, searching for sources, or creating citations. Some citations provided by AI are not reliable.
- AI **can be** used to help students develop an outline for a paper, generate ideas, and learn a citation style.

Disability Accommodation-

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

I reserve the right to make reasonable and responsible changes in the syllabus based on our progress, and any special requirement that may arise as the semester progresses. You will be notified about these changes well in advance. As such, the schedule is tentative, some topics may take longer/shorter than slotted in the schedule below.

Class schedule, readings and assignments **Schedule Fall 2025**

All additional readings are posted on CANVAS

8/18, 8/20, 8/25

Introduction to the course

Topic 1: What is Human Geography? Understanding space, place, location

Readings/Assignments: Hussain, M. Nature, Scope and Schools (Chapter 1, in CANVAS).

Knox and Martson (Chapter 1)

Short paper/mental map assigned: Mental map and short paper (10 points) assigned: Answer EITHER (1a) OR (1b) AND (2)

1. Draw a mental map of:

(a) The places you go during a week of your life in Denton (example: your home, classroom, stadium, grocery, coffee shop, hangouts, friend's place) **OR** **(b)** Draw a mental map of places that were part of your "world" when you were between 5 and 15 years **(5 points)**

AND

2. What according to you is the purpose of Human geography? **(1 point)** How is location different from place? **(2 points)** Explain in not more than 5 sentences, how geography (sense of space, location, and place) influenced your mental map **(2 points) (total 10 points).**

Written portion (question 2) of this short paper should not exceed 2 pages (see more on grading expectations for the mental map and formatting in the section above, pp. 2-3).

Instructions for mental map:

- Map can be drawn by hand or created on your computer with a program like Illustrator or Photoshop.
- Include a heading stating cogently what your mental map depicts, also include landmarks, paths, boundaries (we have discussed these in class) in your map
- Please do not consult a road map, this is a test of how you imagine a place, therefore roads, names forgotten say something about your lack of affinity to those places
- Add texts/icons to clarify which sites are "topophilia" or "topophobia" for you
- Label some sites as "place" and some sites as "location" based on the distinctions between place and location discussed in class
- Include an index to label the various symbols you have used for buildings, gardens, homes, parks (example ● bus stop, ■ building, etc.)

8/27, 9/3

Topic 2: Economic perspectives: Imperialism, Development, Uneven development, and Globalization

Readings Assignments: Knox and Martson (Chapter 2)

Peet, R. Imperialism and Dependency (pp105-111, in CANVAS)

9/1 LABOR DAY, NO CLASS

Mental map/short paper due on 9/3

9/8, 9/10, 9/15, 9/17

Topic 2: Continued

Readings/Assignments: Knox and Martson (Chapter 8)

Peet, R. Washington-Wall Street Alliance in *Unholy Trinity*
(pages 204-205, in CANVAS)

Peet, R. Bretton woods, IMF, WB, WTO (in CANVAS)

9/22 Examination 1 Review

9/24 Examination 1 (25 points)

9/29, 10/1

Topic 3: Demographic perspectives: Population, Scarcity, Mobility and Migration

Readings Assignments: Hussain, M. Population Theories in Hussain, M. 1999. Population Geography (p101-103).

Anmol Publisher: New Delhi. (pp. 99-108, in CANVAS)

Knox and Martson (Chapter 3 till Demographic Transition theory)

Harvey, D. Population, Resource and the Ideology of Science (in CANVAS)

10/6, 10/8

Topic 3: Demographic perspectives continued

Readings/Assignments: Knox and Martson (rest of Chapter 3, p. 85 onwards)

Hussain, M. Theories of Migration Anmol Publisher: New Delhi. (147-157, in CANVAS)

Deliberative Long Essay (15 points) assigned:

Topic:

Problem with the world is that there are too many people -- Build your argument in favor **OR** against this position by using Malthus and Harvey's ideas on population, resource, scarcity, ideology. (Written portion should not exceed 2 pages, bibliography can exist beyond 2 pages, see more on formatting in the section above, pp 2-3).

10/13, 10/15, 10/20, 10/22

Topic 4: Urban perspectives: Urbanization, Cities, Suburbia

Readings/Assignments: Knox and Martson (Chapter 11)

Fyfe, N and Kenny, J. (pp. 19-45, in CANVAS)

Owen, D. Green Manhattan (in CANVAS)

Deliberative long essay due on 10/20

10/27 Examination 2 Review

10/29 Examination 2 (25 points)

11/3, 11/5

Topic 5: Political Perspectives: Geopolitics, hegemony and the state

Readings/Assignments: Knox and Martson (Chapter 10)

Chatterjee, notes on Antonio Gramsci's "Hegemony" (on CANVAS)

11/10

Topic 5: Political Perspectives: Aggressive geopolitics re-examined-- Ratzel and Mackinder

Readings/Assignments: Dutta Dikshit, R.D. on Ratzel (in CANVAS)

Dutta Dikshit, R.D. on Mackinder (in CANVAS)

11/12

Topic 6: Cultural Perspectives: Culture and landscape

Readings/Assignments: Crang, M. Cultural Geography (Chapter 1, in CANVAS)

Peet, R. (1998) Modern Geographical Thought (pages 49-56, in CANVAS)

Peet, R. Social Origins of Environmental Determinism (in CANVAS)

Knox and Martson (Chapter 5)

11/17, 11/19

Topic 6: Cultural perspectives: Cultural identity--race, gender

Readings/Assignments:

Blaut, J. M (1992) The Theory of Cultural Racism. *Antipode* 24:4, pp289-299 (in CANVAS)

Mitchell, D. Feminism and Cultural Change: Geographies of Gender in *Cultural Geography* (pages 199-219, in CANVAS)

11/24 and 11/26: THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASSES

12/1 Examination 3 Review

12/3 Examination 3 (20 points)