

History and Nature of Geography
Geog. 440.500
Spring 2025

TUES. AND THURS. 11:10-12:25
O&M 203

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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays, 3:00-4:00; Wednesdays, 9:00-10:00.

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This is a course about some of the ways humans have thought about geography, the nature of geographical inquiry, and what it means to be a geographer. We will look at some of the most important answers given to these questions over the past 2500 years, and at some of the reasons these answers have changed.

This course is primarily intended for advanced geography majors, however it is open to juniors and seniors in other majors and has no prerequisites. It will appeal to any student with a general interest in geography or the history and philosophy of science.

Course Design

This is a “flipped” course in which course content is delivered in videos and class meetings are used for group discussions of the course content. Because it requires more time to watch a video and attend the corresponding class, there will be no video or in-class discussion on February 6, March 6, April 22 and April 24. ***Attendance and participation are otherwise required, and you may not take this as a de facto on-line course.***



Learning Objectives

- 1) The student will be able to explain what is meant by the nature of geography and describe the principal definitions that geographers have given of this nature.
- 2) The student will be able to explain what is meant by the history of geography and describe the principal theories of change in geographical thought.
- 3) The student will be able to compare and contrast geographic thought in the ancient, medieval, and early modern periods, and illustrate their claims with relevant geographers and geographic ideas.
- 4) The student will be able to describe the unique character of modern, academic geography, name its principle schools, and explain change in terms of endogenous and exogenous factors.

Supplies

Readings will be posted on Canvas as pdf's.
Students will download or print these files to
read them

Evaluation and Grading

Your final grade is based on three examinations, attendance and participation, and one written assignments. The weighting of these elements is:

Exams	3@	23%	=	69%
Particip.		21%	=	21%
W.A.		10%	=	10%

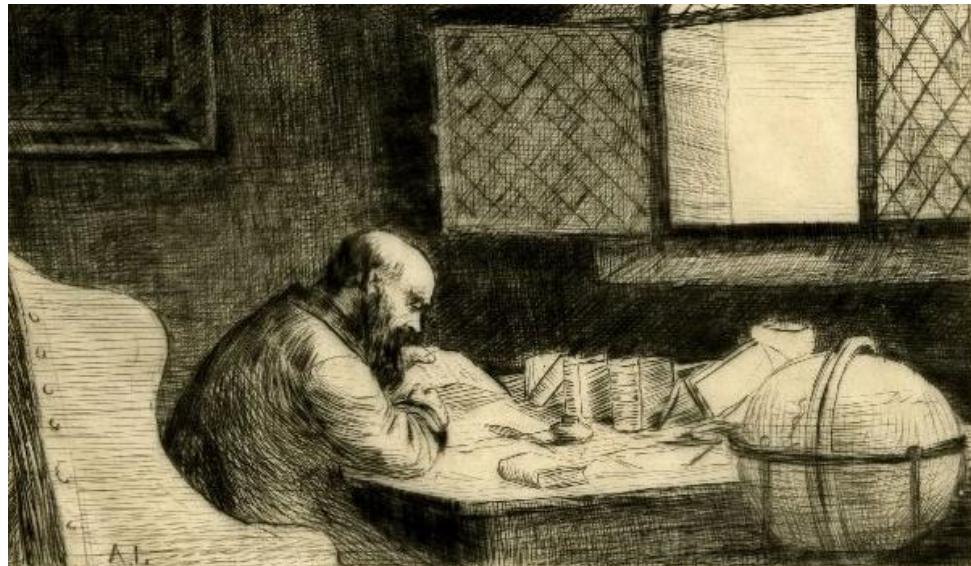
The examinations include multiple-choice and true-false questions drawn from the videos, discussions and reading assignments. Neither the second nor the third test is cumulative. The writing assignment is an essay of two to three thousand words. The dates on which the writing assignment will be distributed and collected are given on the course schedule.

Missed Work and Excuses

Put the examination dates on your calendar. If you have an obligation to be elsewhere on these days, tell me about it before the exam. You will be permitted to complete a make-up exam, and you will be excused from class without penalty, under the following conditions:

- 1) The student must have a documented university-approved excuse. (See student handbook).
- 2) The student must notify me of his or her intention to take a make-up test by the time of the examination.
- 3) No student will be allowed make up more than one exam.

Late writing assignments will be penalized one letter grade per day.



The Geographer
Alphonse Legros
c. 1869

Schedule

T 1/14 Introduction to The History and Nature of Geography

R 1/16 The Nature of Geography

Watch Video 1: The Nature of Geography,
before you come to class

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T 1/21 The History of Geography

Watch Video 2: The History of Geography,
before you come to class

Read J. K. Wright, "A Plea for the History of Geography" (1926), *before you come to class*

R 1/23 Ancient Geography 1

Watch Video 3: The Greek Hearth of Western Geography

Read Excerpt from Strabo, *Geographia* (A.D. 22)

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T 1/28 Ancient Geography 2

Watch Video 4: Ecumene and Environment in Ancient Geography

Read Abridgement of Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters and Places* (c. 400 B.C.)

R 1/30 Ancient Geography 3

Watch Video 5: Ethos and Ethics in the Ecumene

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T 2/4 Medieval Geography

Watch Video 6: The Medieval Intermission

Read Abridgement of Sir John Mandeville, *Travels* (c. 1357)

R 2/6 No Class

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T 2/11 European Exploration

Watch Video 7: Navigation and New Worlds

Read Abridgement of *Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama* (1497)

R 2/13 Geography in the Early Modern Period

Watch Video 8: The Birth of Modern Geography

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T 2/18 EXAM 1

R 2/20 Enlightenment Geography

Watch Video 9:
Enlightenment
Environmentalism

Read Excerpt from
Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws* (1748)

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T 2/25 Geography at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century

Watch Video 10: The Chorologic Tradition

R 2/27 Exploring the Continents

Watch Video 11: Exploration of the Continental Interiors

Read Richard Burton,
"Account of the Ascent of the Cameroon Mountains" (1862)

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T 3/4 Academic Geography.

Watch Video 12: Academic Geography

R 3/6 No Class

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T 3/11 Spring Break

R 3/13 Spring Break

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T 3/18 Geography at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century

Watch Video 13: Darwinian Geography

Read Excerpt from E. C. Semple, *Influences of Geographical Environment* (1911)

R 3/20 Early Twentieth-Century Geography

Watch Video 14: The Landscape School

Read C. O. Sauer, "Foreword to Historical Geography" (1941)

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T 3/25 EXAM 2

R 3/27 Physical Geography 1

Watch Video 15: Origins of Physical Geography

Read W. M. Davis, "The Geographical Cycle" (1899).

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T 4/1 Physical Geography 2.

Watch Video 16: Modern Physical Geography

Read C.W. Thornthwait, "The Task Ahead" (1961).

R 4/3 Scientific Geography

Watch Video 17: Positivism and Spatial Science

Read W. Bunge, "Fred K. Schaefer and the Science of Geography" (1979)

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T 4/8 Postmodern Geography 1

Watch Video 18: Humanistic Geography

Read Yi-fu Tuan, "Humanistic Geography" (1976)

R 4/10 Postmodern Geography 2

Watch Video 19: Radical and Feminist Geography

Writing assignment distributed.

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T 4/15 Geography at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

Watch Video 20: Applied Geography

Read G. Demko, "Geography Beyond the Ivory Tower" (1988).

R 4/17 The Future of Geography.

Watch Video 21: The Future of Geography

Read J. R. Harman, "Whither Geography," (2003)

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T 4/22 No Class

R 4/24 No Class

Writing assignment due.

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R 5/1 Third Examination, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Mandatory Notices

Aggie Honor Code

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do."

Disability Accommodations

If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Legal Statement

This course will be conducted in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, including but not limited to The Americans with Disabilities Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Room B118 of Cain Hall. The phone number is 845-1637.

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