

G&ES 205: Cultural Geography – Fall 2019

205-01: 2:00-2:50 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, ATS 152

Prof. Stentor Danielson

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Office hours: Official office hours are 1-2 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and 3-4 p.m. Thursday. My door is generally always open when I am in the office, and I welcome students anytime I'm in.

About this class

All human activity is cultural – shaped by learned patterns of meaning and practice. And all cultural activity is geographical – it happens in particular places and across particular spaces. In this course, we will explore how culture is shaped by the places it comes from and moves into, and how it shapes those places.

This class is built around the concept of the cultural landscape. A *cultural landscape* is a part of the Earth that has been physically modified and/or interpreted by cultural beings. All of our interactions with the world occur through cultural landscapes. In this class we will explore how cultural landscapes are created, what effects they have on people's lives, and how people struggle over the different ways landscapes can be constructed and interpreted.

Outcomes

By the end of this course, a successful student will be able to:

- Explain what culture is and how it shapes our interactions with the world around us.
- Identify how the landscape, and our perception of it, are shaped by culture.
- Describe how inequalities in access to places arise and are maintained.
- Trace changes in cultures across space and time.
- Read and interpret data sources used by cultural geographers, including both qualitative and quantitative data.

This course addresses the following departmental outcomes:

- Each graduate will demonstrate an understanding of features and patterns of the human environment. (4.2)
- Each graduate will demonstrate an understanding of the major spatial features and patterns in the cultural environment such as language, religion, and agriculture and economic, political, and demographic regions. (4.7)
- Each graduate will demonstrate an understanding of the major processes such as settlement, migration, trade, technological development, diffusion, and landscape transformation that shape cultural patterns. (4.8)
- Each graduate shall develop the ability to respect and integrate diverse worldviews in problem-solving frameworks. (1.5)
- Each graduate will deliver oral presentations, demonstrating the ability to effectively communicate discipline-specific concepts. (1.1)
- Each graduate will write scholarly papers using acceptable format and organization with proper citations to appropriate literature. (1.2)

- Each graduate will demonstrate professionalism and integrity in his/her academic conduct. (1.4)
- Each graduate will demonstrate the ability to develop valid research questions and hypotheses. (2.1)
- Each graduate will demonstrate the ability to apply proper techniques for data acquisition and interpretation in a problem-solving context. (2.2)
- Each graduate will demonstrate the ability to solve open-ended problems using scientific methodology. (2.3)
- Each graduate will develop the ability to make informed, scientifically-based decisions regarding environmental issues. (2.4)

And the following university-wide outcomes:

- Communication: Communicate effectively in speech and in writing, using appropriate information sources, presentation formats, and technologies. (1)
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: Locate, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and ideas from multiple perspectives--mathematical, scientific, and humanistic. Apply this information literacy to contemporary challenges. (2)
- Values and Ethics: Demonstrate an understanding of how the values of personal integrity, cooperative action, and respect for diversity influence one's own behavior and the individual and group behavior of others. (3)
- Social Awareness and Civic Responsibility: Use knowledge of evolving human institutions and of diverse cultural and historical perspectives to interact effectively in a variety of social and political contexts. (4)
- Global Interdependence: Act with an understanding of the cultural, socio-economic, and biological interdependence of planetary life. (5)
- Personal Development: Demonstrate intellectual curiosity, as well as a commitment to wellness, and to emotional and spiritual growth. (6)
- Professional Proficiency: Apply knowledge and skills to meet professional competencies within a specific discipline. (8)

Assignments

General assignments policies

All written assignments must be uploaded to the Dropbox on D2L by the beginning of class on the day they're due. Assignments will be docked 5% for each 24 hours or part thereof they are late, unless a documented unforeseeable excuse is provided. Since you have the entire semester's schedule now, please plan your time so as to complete all assignments early, so that you are prepared if something unexpected happens. Please notify me *immediately* if there are any technical problems with D2L, and double-check that your paper has uploaded properly.

Word limits are meant to give you a sense of how comprehensive the paper ought to be, not as strict rules. If you have something important to say, say it. If you don't, don't waste your time (and mine) by padding the word count.

All information you acquire from sources other than your own creativity must be appropriately cited in APA style (the library webpage has several guides to APA style under the "Cite It!" link). I expect students to exercise critical judgment in evaluating sources, both from the internet

and from the library. If you have any questions about sources or citations, please talk to me before the due date – I would rather have you ask how to do it right than lose points for doing it wrong.

1. *Essays*

Over the course of the semester you will have to write three essays of approximately 1500-2000 words. For each essay, I expect you to use **at least two new academic sources** (journal articles, scholarly books and chapters) in addition to any class readings and non-academic sources you might cite.

All of your essays will be about one particular place somewhere in the USA. This place must *not* be in western Pennsylvania – we will be using various parts of western Pennsylvania as an in-class case study that will model the type of analysis that I expect from your essays. During the third week of classes, you must make an appointment with me to discuss your choice of place.

A. *Contested Landscapes: Due October 11*

For this essay, you will be evaluating how the identity of your place is contested between different people or groups. You should be identifying not just a conflict that is occurring *in* your place, but a conflict that is *about* what kind of place it is or should be. You will need to examine the actual words of people involved in the contestation, by looking at sources such as newspaper articles or social media posts in which parties to the conflict outline their viewpoints.

Your essay should answer the following questions:

- What is the basis for the conflict? What positions are different parties articulating?
- Why has this conflict arisen? What is at stake for the different parties?
- How might this contestation be resolved – either by a compromise, or by the “right” side winning?

B. *Landscapes of Inequality: Due November 10*

Using data from the US Census, you will fill out a short demographic profile of your place. From this, you will identify an example of inequality between people within your place, or between your place and other parts of the country. Using existing research and/or other data sets, examine the possible causes and consequences of this inequality.

Your essay should answer the following questions:

- How did the distribution of people come to be so unequal? What processes and forms of power were at work?
- What effects does this unequal distribution have? Are certain groups of people disproportionately harmed by it, or is it a positive thing?
- What sorts of policy responses might be appropriate, either to rectify a harmful situation or to preserve a good one?

C. *Socio-ecological Landscapes: Due December 9*

Identify an important natural resource or environmental constraint in your place. Trace the history of how this natural feature has been understood and interacted with by people living in your place.

Your essay should answer the following questions:

- Has this natural feature always been seen as a resource/constraint? Has it become more or less useful/constraining at different points in history?
- What is it about the culture of your place that has shaped people's interaction with this natural feature?
- Has this natural feature affected your place's relations with other places? If so, has this been a beneficial relationship or has it involved domination and exploitation?

2. *Campus event paper: Due December 11*

Throughout the semester, there will be various events that relate in some way to the topics and concepts covered in our class. You will choose one event to attend, and write a short paper (1000-1500 words) showing how the event relates to the class. Your paper should explain:

- What you learned from the event
- How the concepts you learned in our class helped you understand the event
- How the event broadened your understanding of our class material, or challenged something we learned in class

An appropriate event can be a film showing, a lecture, a panel discussion, a performance, or any other suitable extracurricular event. You may write about an event you attend for another class, but you may not write about an event that occurs during your normal class meeting time. I will do my best to announce potentially suitable events during class, but it is your responsibility to make sure you attend an event.

3. *Class participation: Graded on October 9 and December 11*

Interaction with other students is a vital part of social science study. I hope that our classes will feature substantive, critical discussion of the material in the readings as well as relevant ideas from your other experience and the world around us. At the midpoint of the semester and again on the day of the final exam, you must hand in a report of up to 500 words telling me what grade you believe you deserve for your class participation, and giving a justification for that grade. Your justification should give an overview of what you feel has been your level of participation in class discussions, as well as highlighting at least two specific contributions you made to the class. Your grade will be based both on your report as well as my own notes on students' participation during class, so there is no guarantee you will receive the grade that your report asks for – but I do take your reports seriously.

4. *Final exam: December 11*

The final exam will be held during the time slot that the university assigns to this class. It will be a combination of short answer and essay questions covering all reading and class discussion material from the whole semester.

Grading

The final grade for this class will consist of:

- 60% Essays (20% each)
- 10% Campus event paper
- 10% Participation
- 20% Final exam

Attendance and Preparation

Cultural geography is a complex subject, and no manageable set of readings can cover all of the information that I think is important to highlight on each topic. I expect all students to attend every class, because class lectures and discussions will be key to learning the material. You should come prepared to talk about the readings.

I assume that all members of this class are adults who have chosen to take this class because you are interested in learning about cultural geography. Therefore, behavior that is disruptive to your own learning or that of others will not be tolerated, and you will be asked to leave. Such behavior includes: eating, smoking, sleeping, working on work for other classes or personal business, talking about topics other than cultural geography, and the use of non-approved electronic devices (iPods, laptops, cell phones, etc. – all cell phones must be *turned off* when you enter the class and remain off until you leave).

Special Needs

Your ability to master the class material should not be hindered by anything other than your own effort. If you have a disability, health issue, outside responsibility, or other concern that may affect your ability to succeed in this class, do not hesitate to contact me or the university's Office of Disability Services (738-4877, 105 University Union), and we will work together to find an accommodation for you.

Slippery Rock University and its faculty are committed to assuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to meet this commitment and to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a University-approved research project. Faculty members are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the person designated in the University protection of minors policy. Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is set forth at: <http://www.sru.edu/offices/diversity-and-equal-opportunity/sexual-misconduct-and-victim-resources>.

I hope to create a space where students have the opportunity to bring all aspects of their selves into the classroom in order to fully engage in this course. I support people of all gender expressions and gender identities and encourage students to use the name and set of pronouns which best reflect who they are. In this spirit, I welcome and expect all students to also use the correct name and pronouns of their classmates. I will do my best to respect and use the language you use to refer to yourself and will encourage other members of our classroom community to do the same. Please inform me if my documentation reflects a name or set of pronouns different from what you use, and if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me after class, by email, or during office hours.

Changes

While I do not expect much to change about this syllabus, I reserve the right to make changes and will notify students of them in class and/or by email.

Readings

There are three books for this class, plus a collection of shorter readings. The books are available through the campus bookstore, or from an online seller such as powells.com or amazon.com. The remaining readings are available through the library's electronic reserve system (these are marked [E-Reserve]) or online (URL given after the citation). You are expected to have thoughtfully read each week's readings by the beginning of the week. Many weeks have fairly large reading loads, so plan ahead and don't wait until the weekend before to start reading.

- Besteman, Catherine. 2016. *Making refuge: Somali Bantu refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Modan, Gabriella Gahlia. 2007. *Turf wars: discourse, diversity, and the politics of place*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Teaiwa, Katerina Martina. 2015. *Consuming Ocean Island: stories of people and phosphate from Banaba*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

One good strategy for thoughtful reading is called the “yes, no, hmm” method. That is, after finishing the article you should come up with at least one important thing you think the author got right (“yes”), one thing the author got wrong (“no”), and one thing the author said that prompted you to think more deeply and go beyond the text (“hmm”). I expect all students to participate in class discussions, so thinking about the reading in this way will ensure that you have something to contribute.

I reserve the right to add graded response papers or quizzes to the class if it becomes apparent from class discussions that a substantial number of students are not doing the reading, or not doing it thoughtfully.

Desire2Learn

I will use the D2L system to distribute assignments, to record grades, and to send messages about the class. Students should make sure that they are able to log in to the class's D2L site as well as the electronic reserves for this class on the library website. It is your responsibility to contact ITS or the library if you have a problem. You are also responsible for checking your SRU email account daily, as I will be sending class emails through D2L to those addresses.

Academic Honesty

Cheating (any method for getting the correct answers other than knowing the material yourself) and plagiarism (representing others' work as your own) will not be tolerated, and I will be alert for signs of both. In your papers, any idea that you take from any person other than yourself must be properly cited, and any words or phrases that you take from others must be clearly marked as quotations. You may discuss ideas with your classmates, or get help proofreading, but all of the writing must be your own. On the first instance of cheating or plagiarism, you will receive a zero for that assignment. On the second instance, you will receive a zero for the course. Review the section in your Student Handbook on Academic Honesty for a more detailed explanation of the university's procedures for handling cheating and plagiarism.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week 1, Aug. 26–30: Cultural Landscapes

What is culture? How does culture affect the shape of the landscape? Why do people from different cultural backgrounds interpret the landscape differently?

Danielson, Stentor. 2010. Cultural landscapes. In *Overview of Human Geography*.

<http://debitage.net/humangeography/landscape.html>

Meinig, D.W. 1979. The beholding eye: ten versions of the same scene, In *The interpretation of ordinary landscapes: geographical essays*, ed. D. W. Meinig. New York: Oxford University Press, 33-48. [E-Reserve]

Week 2, Sept. 4–6: Entitlement to Space

How are people's lives affected by the spaces that they inhabit? What factors shape the set of places that a person has access to?

(No class Monday for Labor Day)

Collins, D., & Procter, A. (2011). Smoking's shrinking geographies. *Geography Compass*, 5(12), 918–931. [E-Reserve]

Freund, Peter. 2001. Bodies, disability and spaces: the social model and disabling spatial organisations. *Disability & Society* 16 (5): 689-706. [E-Reserve]

Week 3, Sept. 9–13: Place Identity

How do people decide what kind of a place a certain place is? How does the identity of a place affect the identity of the people in it and vice-versa? How do people engage in conflicts over the identity of a place?

Modan, Gabriella Gahlia. 2007. *Turf wars: discourse, diversity, and the politics of place*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. (Ch. 1, 2, 3)

Week 4, Sept. 16–20: Gendered Spaces

How is gender socially constructed? How does gender affect the landscape and people's entitlement to space?

Danielson, Stentor. 2010. Gender and sexuality. In *Overview of Human Geography*. <http://debitage.net/humangeography/gender.html>

Modan, Gabriella Gahlia 2007. *Turf wars: discourse, diversity, and the politics of place*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. (Ch. 4)

Doan, Petra L., and Harrison Higgins. 2011. The demise of queer space? Resurgent gentrification and the assimilation of LGBT neighborhoods. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 31 (1): 6–25.

Contested Landscapes paper due Friday

Week 5, Sept. 23–27: Landscapes of Power

What is power? How does power frame our understanding of places? How do certain ways of life lead to certain ways of framing the landscape?

Modan, Gabriella Gahlia 2007. *Turf wars: discourse, diversity, and the politics of place*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. (Ch. 4)

Thompson, Michael. 1997. Security and solidarity: an anti-reductionist framework for thinking about the relationship between us and the rest of nature. *Geographical Journal* 163 (2): 141-149. [E-Reserve]

Week 6, Sept 30–October 4: Symbolic Landscapes

How do landscapes take on meaning for people? How are landscapes represented in literature, film, and advertising? What meanings can landscapes convey and how can they persuade us?

Colombijn, Freek. 1998. Canberra: A sheep in wolf's clothing. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 22 (4): 565-581. [E-Reserve]

Tolkien, J.R.R. 1954. Treebeard. *The Two Towers*, Allen & Unwin. [E-Reserve]

Charlesworth, Andrew. 2003. Landscapes of the Holocaust: Schindler, authentic history and the lie of the landscape. In *Studying cultural landscapes*, ed. I. Robertson and P. Richards, 93-107. London: Arnold. [E-Reserve]

Week 7, Oct. 9–11: Population and Migration

How and why do populations grow and shrink? Why and how do people move from one place to another? How do these movements interact with our political systems?

(No class Monday for Fall Break)

Danielson, Stentor. 2010. Population. In *Overview of Human Geography*.
<http://debitage.net/humangeography/population.html>

Danielson, Stentor. 2010. Migration. In *Overview of Human Geography*.
<http://debitage.net/humangeography/migration.html>

Contested Landscapes paper due Friday

Week 8, Oct. 14–18: Racialization and Geopolitics

How are racial and ethnic categories constructed? How do race and ethnicity affect people's access to spaces?

Danielson, Stentor. 2010. Race and ethnicity. In *Overview of Human Geography*.
<http://debitage.net/humangeography/race.html>

Besteman, Catherine. 2016. *Making refuge: Somali Bantu refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Ch. 1, 2, 3)

Week 9, Oct. 21–25: Nationalism and Assimilation

What prompts someone to migrate internationally? How does migration affect sender, receiver, and migrant communities?

Besteman, Catherine. 2016. *Making refuge: Somali Bantu refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Chapters 4, 5, 6)

Week 10, Oct. 28–Nov 3: Discourses

What is a discourse? How are discourses constructed? What are the effects of particular discourses?

Besteman, Catherine. 2016. *Making refuge: Somali Bantu refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Ch. 7, 8, 9)

Modan, Gabriella Gahlia 2007. *Turf wars: discourse, diversity, and the politics of place*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. (Ch. 8)

Week 11, Nov. 6–10: Culture and the Environment

How do cultures adapt to the natural environment? What are the consequences of maladaptation?

Danielson, Stentor. 2010. Adaptation. In *Overview of Human Geography*.
<http://debitage.net/humangeography/adaptation.html>

Teaiwa, Katerina Martina. 2015. *Consuming Ocean Island: stories of people and phosphate from Banaba*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. (Ch. 1)

McGovern, T. H. (1980). Cows, harp seals, and churchbells: adaptation and extinction in Norse Greenland. *Human Ecology*, 8(3), 245–275.

Landscapes of Inequality paper due Friday

Week 12, Nov. 11–15: Using the Landscape

How do cultures define what counts as a resource? How does one group stake a claim over resources, and what are the effects on those who lose out?

Danielson, Stentor. 2010. Resources. In *Overview of Human Geography*.
<http://debitage.net/humangeography/resources.html>

Danielson, Stentor. 2010. Agriculture. In *Overview of Human Geography*.
<http://debitage.net/humangeography/agriculture.html>

Teaiwa, Katerina Martina. 2015. *Consuming Ocean Island: stories of people and phosphate from Banaba*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. (Ch. 2, 3, 4, 5)

Week 13, Nov. 18–20: Knowledge and Globalization

How is knowledge about the world constructed? How is the landscape affected by different kinds of knowledge? How do global connections change the landscape?

Teaiwa, Katerina Martina. 2015. *Consuming Ocean Island: stories of people and phosphate from Banaba*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. (Ch. 6, 7, 8)

Week 14, Nov. 25: Claiming Place

How do people become native to a place?

Teaiwa, Katerina Martina. 2015. *Consuming Ocean Island: stories of people and phosphate from Banaba*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. (Ch. 9, 10)
(No class Wed and Fri for Thanksgiving)

Week 15, Dec. 2–6: Cultural Diffusion

How do cultural traits move from one society to another? What are the consequences for the society of origin and the receiver society?

Androutsopoulos, Jannis, and Arno Scholz. 2003. Spaghetti funk: appropriations of hip-hop culture and rap music in Europe. *Popular Music and Society* 26 (4): 463-479. [E-Reserve]

Aldred, Lisa. 2000. Plastic shamans and astroturf sun dances: New Age commercialization of Native American spirituality. *The American Indian Quarterly* 24 (3): 329-352. [E-Reserve]

Pilcher, Jeffrey M. 2001. Tex-Mex, Cal-Mex, New Mex, or whose Mex? Notes on the historical geography of southwestern cuisine. *Journal of the Southwest*, 43(4), 659–680. [E-Reserve]

Week 16, Dec. 9: Wrap-up

Socio-ecological Landscapes paper due Monday

Final Exam: Wednesday, Dec. 11, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

Campus event paper due at time of final exam

General essay and presentation grading rubric:

Item	A	B	C	D	F
Completeness 20%	Gives a complete, thoughtful, and integrated answer to all questions in the assignment	Addresses all questions, but gives insufficient depth to some, fails to link them together	Addresses all questions in a perfunctory way, omits some questions or adds irrelevant digressions	Veers significantly from the assigned topic	Essay is on a completely irrelevant topic
Argument 20%	Makes a strong argument, with a clearly stated thesis and demonstration of all key points.	Main argument is apparent but some points weakly argued	Argument is confused or central thesis not clear	Argument difficult to identify, or may contradict itself or leave large gaps	Absence of an argument
Sources 20%	All arguments fully supported by information that is relevant and obtained from reliable sources	Adequate use of information and sources relevant to the argument	Signs of inattention to source quality, some information presented irrelevant or missing but necessary	Failure to distinguish reliable and unreliable sources, “kitchen sink” approach to research results	Large gaps in research and irrelevant digressions, use of manifestly unreliable sources
Citations 10%	All information cited in a clear and consistent manner	Citations may be partially incomplete	Significant inconsistencies in citation style, important points not cited	Pervasive failure to cite sources or to cite them in an understandable way	Citations absent or impossible to follow
Writing 10%	Impeccable grammar and writing style that is enjoyable to read and appropriate to the subject matter	Generally consistent grammar and an easy to understand writing style	Significant grammar mistakes and writing style that is stilted or inappropriate	Rampant grammar mistakes and awkward writing that make it difficult to follow the argument	Pervasive grammar mistakes and clear lack of care about the readability of the text
Insight 20%	Raises new ideas that enter new ground in cultural geography and/or strongly stimulate my own thinking	Reaches deep and substantive conclusions that go beyond the class material	Draws conclusions consistent with the class material, or further insights which are significantly flawed	Contains original ideas that are shallow or clearly incorrect	Lacks any original ideas