

Department of Geography
Geography 301: Geography of North America

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Lecture Hours: TR 8:00 a.m.-9:15 a.m.

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Course Description

Major national and geographic regions of the United States, Canada and Mexico.
Relationship between natural and economic factors.

Course Objectives

1. Introduce students to the regional concept.
2. Identify the major physical and cultural realms of the United States, Mexico and Canada.
3. Examine the population geography of Canada, Mexico and the United States.
4. Examine the economic and political regions of the United States, Mexico and Canada.
5. Provide a comparative analysis of regional issues between Mexico, United States and Canada.

Learning Objectives

1. Students should demonstrate their understanding of the historical evolution of the United States, Canada and Mexico.
2. Provide an understanding of the physical and cultural landscapes of North America.
3. Compare and analyze the political systems of Canada, United States and Mexico.
4. Identify regional economic and social problems within North America.
5. Write a term paper on any aspect of the Geography of North America.

Required Text

McKnight Tom L. 2004. **Regional Geography of the United States and Canada.**
Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Please note that there is no current text book on the Geography of North America. Most of the texts are about 20 years old. While the materials on Canada and United States will be obtained from the above text, materials on Mexico will be derived from several sources. Hand outs will be provided in class.

Academic Dishonesty

Note that academic dishonesty including plagiarism and cheating during examination is a serious offense and carries severe penalty. Refer to the *Pathfinder* and **Department of Geography Policy** for details.

Disruptive Student Behavior

Please refer to *Pathfinder* for details.

Blackboard

To facilitate effective communication between the instructor and students, course materials are posted on Blackboard. You are encouraged to visit the site regularly to check on announcements and deadlines. Course outline and assignments are also posted on the site. You need to contact me during the first week of class if you are unable to use Blackboard.

Policy

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and participate actively during class discussions. To participate actively in class, students are required to read assigned materials prior to class. Attendance will be recorded and failure to attend classes will result in the loss of marks. Your attendance grade will be based on the total number of days present over the expected number of days multiplied by 20. For example, if you were required to be in class for 34 days in the semester, and you were present for 24 days, your attendance grade will be $(24/34) \times 20 = 14$ points. Students are responsible for informing the instructor of their presence if they arrive after attendance has been taken.

Class assignments and term essay are to be submitted promptly on the due day. Late submission of term essays carries a penalty of 20 points per day for a maximum of 5 days. No essays will be accepted after the 5th day without a reasonable cause. A reasonable cause is defined as serious illness (doctor's report required) or tragedy within the family (a note from family member required).

Cell phones and pagers

Cell phones and pagers should be turned off when you come to class. Answering cell phones or checking text messages in class is disrespectful to me and your fellow students. Exception is given to a certified EMT or fire responder. Please inform me ahead of time if you need to have your beeper active all the time because of your profession or special circumstances.

Grading

All texts including the final examination will consist of multiple choice, short questions and answers and essays. Prior approval is required for missing an examination. No make-up examination will be granted if you fail to seek prior approval.

The final grade will consist of the following (Please note that except the final exams, the dates are tentative and subject to change)

Class attendance	= 20 points
Map quiz (September 10 th)	= 40 points
Three unannounced quizzes	= 75 points
Class assignment – September 22 nd	= 50 points
Paper Review (October 13 th)	= 50 points
Group project and presentation (November 10 th , November 12 th)	= 50 points
Research project (December 3 rd at 3:00 p.m.)	= 100 points
Class test 1 (to be announced)	= 100 points
Class test 2 (to be announced)	= 100 points
Final examination (Monday Dec. 14 th , 8:00-10:30 a.m.)	= 100 points

Your final grade will be determined based on the total points accumulated over 685. The scale is as follows:

A =	90-100%
B =	80-89%
C =	70-79%
D =	60-69%
F <	60%

Quiz:

There will be three unannounced quizzes. You need to read daily before class to prepare for quizzes. You will lose points for a quiz if you did not seek prior approval of being absent in class on the day a quiz is conducted.

Class Assignment:

All students are required to review and provide critical comments on the following reading. The reading is in your book. Personal comments on the reading are strongly recommended. Award of points for the review will be determined by the quality of the review.

The details of the assignment are posted on Blackboard and hard copies will be given out in class.

New York City, globalization and the attacks of September 11, 2001. (page 162)

Term Paper

Each student is required to select an essay topic related to The Regional Geography of North America. Consult with the instructor if you are in doubt of your essay topic. Essays should be limited to 10 pages (typed doubled space). You are encouraged to build a strong bibliography from journals, periodicals and the Internet for your research essay. Examples of journals include Annals of the Association of American Geographers and The Canadian Geographer. These journals and other journals are available in the library and online.

Headings and sub-headings are strongly recommended. You will lose points if you do not use sub-headings. Students are encouraged to examine comparative issues dealing with Canada, Mexico and the United States.

The purpose of the project is threefold:

- a. Provide students an opportunity to apply geographic concepts to the economic, social and physical issues in Canada, Mexico and the United States.
- b. Familiarize students with current issues confronting Canada, Mexico and the US.
- c. Experience in data collection and writing of research essays.

Grading of term paper

- a. Paper Organization - **15 points**

clear, concise and logical, use of heading and sub-heading, logical flow of material from one section to another.

- b. Content quantity and quality? **50 points**

total number of pages of material, background of your work, references to existing literature, use of data, charts and maps, relevance of content to the course,

- c. Errors and typos? **15 points**

grammar and typos, sentence construction

- d. Creativity and innovation? **10 points**

how unique is the topic, how challenging it is to deal with the topic

- e. use of scholarly references **10 points**

excessive reliance on non-refereed materials will be penalized. Use of refereed journals and periodicals will attract high points.

Group project and presentation

All students are required to participate in a group research project. Students will be assigned to a group for a class project and presentation. Students have the right to join any of the groups. However, the instructor may assign students to one of the groups in order to maintain a balance in the total number of students in each group.

Students are strongly advised to meet promptly to familiarize themselves with each other and to start their research projects early. Students are required to undertake a detail research and present their findings to the class. **Presentations must be in PowerPoint.** One individual, selected by the group will present the findings of their research to the class. Group members are expected to join in the discussion during question time.

As part of the project, students can submit maps, graphs, figures and visual aids in support of issues they raise in their presentation. The class presentation will take about 15 minutes. It is important that each student participates in the preparation and presentation. The purpose of this project is to foster group work and promote critical thinking. Copy of the project should be submitted to the instructor on the day of the presentation. The paper will be graded.

Titles of Group Projects

- a. Native Americans in Canada, Mexico and the United States
- b. Tourism in Canada and the United States
- c. The North American Free Trade Agreement
- d. The Alaskan Native Land Claim Agreement
- e. Health care management in Canada and the United States
- f. Nunavut: A New Territory in Canada?

Your grade for this project is base on the following

Paper Presentation:	15 points
Paper Quality: (typos, errors, content, material coverage)	15 points
Paper Organization (how the paper flows)	15 points
<u>Power Point Slides</u>	<u>5 points</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>50 points</u>

Paper review

All students are required to review and provide critical comments on the following article. Your review should be limited to four pages. Personal comments about the article are strongly recommended. The award of marks for the review will be determined by the quality of the review.

James C. Saku and Robert M. Bone 2000. "Modern treaties in Canada: the case of Northern Quebec Agreements and the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. The Canadian Journal of Native Studies. 20:2, 283-307.

Course outline and reading (subject to change)

1. Introduction to North America: The North American continent - characteristics, historical evolution of Canada, Mexico and the United States (**Reading: Chapter 1**)
2. The Physical Environment: the nature of the land form, climate, soils and vegetation (**Reading: Chapter 2**)
3. Population Geography: The concept of melting pot or potpourri? Historical and contemporary population, race and ethnicity in the United States and Canada (African-Americans, American Indians, Hispanic Americans), political, judiciary, religious and cultural institutions: similarities and differences between Canada and the United States (**Reading: Chapter 3**)
4. Population geography of Mexico: Ethnicity and language, social structure, religion and education, political system in Mexico
5. The North American City: historical development of North America cities, Urban morphology, functions and population, Urban ills, delights, dichotomy and urban tomorrow (**Reading: Chapter 4**)
6. Regions of the United States and Canada: the regional concept, types of regions, uniform, nodal, cultural, economic and political regions, geographical regions of Canada and the United States (**Reading: Chapter 5**)
7. The Atlantic Northwest: Maritime Provinces of Canada and New England States, physical setting, settlements, economic activities -- agriculture in New England of Atlantic Northeast, coal mining in Cape Breton, pulp and paper in Newfoundland, fishing industry, decline and prospects, The Hibernia oil and gas project, tourism potentials (**Reading: Chapter 6**)
8. French Canada: French Canada as a region and concept: population geography, cultural distinctiveness, french nationalism, the language problem, primary economic activities and urban industrial activities (**Reading: Chapter 7**)

9. Megalopolis: regional extent, urban and rural activities (**Reading: Chapter 8**)
10. The Appalachian and the Ozarks: The physical environment, settlement of the Appalachian and the Ozarks, primary economic activities (agriculture, forest and mining) (**Reading: Chapter 9**)
11. The Boreal Forest and the Arctic: physical setting, population, Native culture and economy, market economy, regional economic base (economic leakage), mining, lumbering, river basin development, environmental issues, native land claims in Alaska and the Canadian North (**Reading: Chapters 19 and 20**)
12. The California Region: physical environment, agriculture, settlement, population and urbanism (**Reading: Chapter 16**).
13. A regional study of Mexico: economic base: agriculture, financial institutions, industry, energy and mining, transportation and communication
14. The North Pacific Coast: the terrain, climate, forests and wood product industries, agriculture in British Columbia, commercial fishing, hydro-power generation (**Reading: Chapter 18**).
15. Course Review

Map Quiz

One of the course requirements is knowledge of North American cultural and physical sites. The following list forms the basis of an in-class map quiz. As a preparation towards the quiz, use the attached maps to locate the land forms and settlements.

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Southeastern Coastal Plain | 26. Los Angeles | 51. Rocky Mountains |
| 2. Appalachian Uplands | 27. Kotzeblue Sound | 52. Cape Breton Island |
| 3. Interior Plains | 28. Pittsburgh | 53. Hudson River |
| 4. Hudson Bay Low Lands | 29. Oklahoma City | 54. Rio Grande |
| 5. Canadian Shield | 30. Yukon River | 55. Gila River |
| 6. Great Salt Lake | 31. Norton Sound | 56. Bay of Fundy |
| 7. Lake Michigan | 32. Philadelphia | 57. Pecos River |
| 8. Lake Superior | 33. Atlanta | 58. Sierra Nevada |
| 9. Lake Winnipeg | 34. James Bay | 59. Cascades |
| 10. Great Bear Lake | 35. Kodiak Island | 60. Platt River |
| 11. Columbia River | 36. San Antonio | 61. Lake Manitoba |
| 12. Sacramento River | 37. St. Louis | 62. Gulf of California |
| 13. Colorado River | 38. Victoria (Canada) | 63. Gulf of Mexico |
| 14. Mississippi River | 39. Winnipeg | 64. Mexico City |
| 15. St. Lawrence River | 40. Edmonton | 65. Sierra Madre Del Sur |
| 16. Missouri River | 41. Quebec City | 66. Bahia de Campeche |
| 17. Athabasca River | 42. Saskatoon | 67. Mesa Central |
| 18. Hudson Bay | 43. Nunavut | 68. Sonora |
| 19. Vancouver | 44. British Columbia | 69. Sierra Madre Oriental |
| 20. Mackenzie River | 45. Ontario | 70. Baja California Sur |
| 21. Toronto | 46. Quebec | 71. Baja California Norte |
| 22. Ellesmere Island | 47. Maine | 72. Chiapas |
| 23. Gulf of St. Lawrence | 48. Alberta | 73. Yucatan Peninsula |
| 24. Arctic Archipelago | 49. Nova Scotia | 74. Veracruz |
| 25. Salt Lake City | 50. Newfoundland | 75. Matamoros |