GEOG 325: Culture and Place

This course examines the intricacies of culture, place, and how these two concepts are interwoven. The first portion of the course will consider the theoretical underpinnings of cultural geography, while the second half of the course will critically observe how these concepts play out “on the ground,” across space and in the everyday lives of those who inhabit those spaces. In addition to reading key writings on these topics, this course will also use visual, audio, and interactive media to examine how the interaction between culture and place has been represented by those experiencing and observing this interaction.

Course objectives

- To introduce and examine critically concepts of culture and place
- To understand directions in contemporary cultural geography
- To be able to connect theoretical understandings of culture and place to everyday life
- To recognize and interpret visual representations of culture and place

Required texts

Additional required readings will be made available as PDFs, or as a reader, depending on class preference.

1 Please use proper email etiquette when contacting me at this address. Also, please include GEOG 325 in the subject line. Failure to include this will result in a delayed response.
Course schedule

August 24  
**Cultural Geography**
Course introduction

August 26  
“Culture Wars”: Don Mitchell, In *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*

August 28  
“Process” (O&P): Wilbur Zelinsky
“The Word Itself” (O&P): J.B. Jackson
“California: The Beautiful and the Damned” (O&P): Don Mitchell

August 31  
**Place & Space**
“Space,” definition, Dictionary of Human Geography
“Place,” definition, Dictionary of Human Geography

September 2  
“Defining Place” (Cresswell)
“The Genealogy of Place” (Cresswell)

September 4  
“Introduction,” In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Yi-Fu Tuan.
“Reading a Global Sense of Place” (Cresswell) (and, Global Sense of Place by Dorreen Massey, included in text)

September 9  
**Culture**
“Culture” (O&P): Raymond Williams
“Culture,” definition, Dictionary of Human Geography
September 11  “The Concept(s) of culture” (O&P): William Sewell, Jr.

September 14  **Landscape**

“Ten versions of the same scene,” D.W. Meinig, In *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*.


“(What we talk about) when we talk about landscape”: Henderson in *Everyday Landscapes*

September 18  “Geography is Everywhere“ (O&P): Denis Cosgrove

“Landscape,” definition, in *Dictionary of Human Geography*

September 21  **Representation/tourism**


“Geographical Imaginations: Derek Gregory,” John Pickles, In *Key Texts in Human Geography*

September 23  “The Tourist at Home” (O&P): Lucy Lippard

“Touristed landscapes/seductions of place,” Carolyn Cartier, In *Seductions of Place*

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 28</td>
<td><strong>Public space/private space/citizenship</strong></td>
<td>“Contested Terrain: Teenagers in public space” (O&amp;P): Gill Valentine</td>
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<td>“The Stranger” (O&amp;P): Georg Simmel</td>
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<td>“The Right to the City,” David Harvey</td>
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<td>October 2</td>
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<td>“Beyond Walls &amp; Cages: Bridging Immigrant Justice and Anti-Prison Organizing in the United States,” Jenna M. Loyd, Andrew Burridge, Matthew Mitchelson</td>
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<td>October 5</td>
<td><strong>Identity/difference/belonging</strong></td>
<td>“Imaginative Geography and its Representations: Orientalizing the Oriental” (O&amp;P): Edward Said</td>
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<td>Some thoughts on Close(t) Spaces (O&amp;P) Robyn Longhurst</td>
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<td>October 9</td>
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<td>“Identity, contingency and the urban geography of ‘race,’” Stephen Holloway, In <em>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</em></td>
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<td>October 12</td>
<td><strong>Midterm</strong></td>
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<td>“Doing discourse analysis,” Gordon Waitt, In <em>Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography</em></td>
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<td>Date</td>
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| October 16 | **Visual representation**                  | “Looking at Landscape: The Uneasy Pleasures of Power” (O&P): Gillian Rose  
|            |                                            | “Reconfiguring the ‘site’ and ‘horizon’ of experience” (O&P): Michael Bull |
| October 19 | **Landscape & Suburbia**                   | “Suburbs and new towns: The search for environment,” Yi-Fu Tuan, In *Topophilia*.  
|            |                                            | “Symbolic landscapes: some idealizations of American communities.” Donald Meinig In *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*. |
| October 23 | In class: Clips from *The Hours*, *Ghost World*, *American Beauty*,  
|            |                                            | *The Truman Show*, images from the art exhibit *Worlds Away: New Suburban Landscapes*. |
| October 26 | **Nostalgia & Small Towns**                | “Mythologies of Place,” B. D. Wortham-Galvin.  
|            |                                            | “Sarah Palin's myth of America,” *Time* |
|            |                                            | “In the Wild of Wasilla,” Steve Lopez, *Los Angeles Times* |
| October 28 | “From Small Town to City,” In *People and politics in urban America*, Robert W. Kweit, Mary Grisez Kweit  
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>In class: Clips of Everwood, Gilmore Girls, Ed; Images of Normal Rockwell, Grandma Moses</td>
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<td>November 2</td>
<td><strong>Memory &amp; Los Angeles</strong></td>
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<td>“Invisible Los Angelenos” Delores Hayden, In The Power of Place.</td>
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<td>November 4</td>
<td>DeLyser, D. “Introduction,” from Ramona Memories: Tourism and the shaping of Southern California.</td>
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<td>November 6</td>
<td>Field experience: Downtown Los Angeles</td>
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<td>November 9</td>
<td><strong>Nature &amp; The West</strong></td>
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<td>“Prologue,” William Cronon, In Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West</td>
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<td>“Environmental History in the American West,” Hal Rothman, Organization of American Historians magazine</td>
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<td>November 10</td>
<td>LACMA field experience/New Topographies exhibit</td>
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<td>November 11</td>
<td>“Beyond the agrarian myth,” “New West, True West,” “Cowboy Ecology,” Donald Worster, In Under Western Skies</td>
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<td>Hole in the Sky, William Kittredge (excerpt)</td>
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<td>November 13</td>
<td>In class: Mark Klett’s Third Views rephotography, multimedia</td>
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November 16  
**Gender & The Home**

“Women and everyday spaces.” Gillian Rose, In Feminism and Geography.


November 18  

November 20  
In class: Watch *Home Economics*, documentary by Jenny Cool.

November 23  
**In conclusion: Connecting culture, place, and representation**

November 25  
**Abstract assessment**

November 30  
**Student presentations**

December 2  
**Student presentations**

December 14  
**Final Exam**

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**Assessment**

**Participation & class blog (15%)**
Students will be responsible for attending all classes. If you do not attend class without a reasonable, documented excuse, your participation grade will suffer. Students are also expected to participate in class discussion and in the online course blog. An “A” grade for participation will include attendance in all classes, participation in most class discussions, and a weekly contribution to the course blog. Sporadic attendance/participation/contributions will result in an “F” grade for this portion of course assessment.

**Midterm, October 13 (25%)**
The midterm will be made up of short, paragraph-long essay responses to the key concepts discussed in the first half of the semester.
**Final Exam, December 14 (25%)**
The final exam is comprehensive. It will ask you to respond in essay form to critical questions about the concepts and places discussed in the second half of the semester, with connections to the key terms discussed in the first half of the semester.

**Abstracts, due November 23 (5%)**
Your final projects will follow the format taken for the weekly topics in the second half of the semester. It will ask you to connect a key concept in cultural geography to a specific location, preferably one you know well. Abstracts will describe the concept, place, method for research, and possible conclusions in approximately 300 words. Please feel free to discuss your research topic/method with me before the abstract is due.

**Presentation of final project: November 30- Dec. 4 (10%)**
In the spirit of the visual nature of this course, your final project presentation should describe your research but also take advantage of Powerpoint to illustrate your topic.

**Final project, due Dec. 7 (20%)**
You have two choices for your final project. You can write a traditional paper (10-12 pages) or you can create a project using multimedia tools. While the content of the multimedia project does not have a required amount of text, it must include the content equivalent of a 10-12 page paper. This content must include an introduction, background on your topic (literature review), description of how you studied this topic (methodology), a description of what you found (analysis) and a conclusion. We will discuss the final project in further detail in early November.

We will spend some time talking about visuals, both as tools of analysis and representation. But to get you thinking about the possibilities of multimedia, here are some possible formats for your final project. Most of these tools require only basic knowledge of internet tools:

- **Vuvox**: Create a flash program that showcases images along with text and links to video and other websites. [www.vuvox.com](http://www.vuvox.com)
- **Magcloud**: Design and publish your own magazine. [http://magcloud.com](http://magcloud.com)
- **Picassa**: Create an annotated slideshow map of your own photos.
- **Google MyMaps**: Create an interactive map with video, photos, text, and links.
- **Youtube**: Post a video about your topic. [http://www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. The student guidebook contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be found at: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/.

If you unsure how to cite the work of others to avoid accusations of plagiarism, visit this website: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm and/or the student writing center. Ignorance of the rules governing original work and citation guidelines is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism.