GEOG 303 Syllabus
Geography of the United States and Canada
Fall 2014  MWF 11:45-12:45  REIC 203  3 Credits

Professor Contact Info
Cary de Wit, Ph.D.
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Office Hrs: Mon & Wed 3:00-4:30 pm, and by appointment
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Course Description
Why a course on the United States and Canada at an American university? We live here (assuming you’re not a foreign exchange student), and must know all about where we live already, right? Wouldn’t we learn more by studying some other, more exotic part of the world?

If those questions make sense to you, you’ll probably be surprised in this course to learn what a complex, exotic, and diverse place Anglo America really is. For instance, the differences between the U.S. and Canada are not as obvious as those between, say, India and China, but can be even more fascinating in their subtlety: It’s easy to find good reasons that India and China are different, but it’s much more of a mystery why the U.S. and Canada, with nearly identical origins and circumstances, went in such different directions. This is among the questions we’ll consider. We’ll also explore contrasts in Canadian and American national culture, economic development, political culture, sources of national identity, and interactions with their respective aboriginal populations.

We will also examine the regional characteristics of Anglo America, meaning that we will break down Canada and the U.S. into discrete regions, and examine the physical, cultural, historical, economic, and political geography of each region, and how these elements interact to give each region a distinct character. We will consider interactions among regions, states, provinces, and territories, interactions between the two countries, and the roles each has played in current and historical world affairs. You are expected to already be familiar with basic geographical concepts and approaches.

Prerequisites
Required: An introductory geography course, or background in U.S. or Canadian history, social science, or cultures.
Recommended: GEOG 101 or GEOG 111X (formerly 211X).

Required Textbooks
Turabian, Kate. Handbook for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 8th edition.

Other required readings will be assigned during the course of the semester.

Disabilities
If you have a (medical/cognitive/sensory/mobility) disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your potential in this course, arrange as soon as possible to have a UAF representative from Disability Services provide me a letter that explains any special accommodations you may need.

Getting Help
Have any problems or questions? Feel free to see me during my office hours, call, email, or set up an appointment. I’m happy to help you any way I can to achieve your potential in this course.

Course Objectives
- To learn to appreciate the diversity of cultures and landscapes within the U.S. and Canada.
- To gain a grasp of the importance and complexity of the U.S.-Canada relationship.
- To understand the historical and geographical underpinnings of Anglo-American culture, economic and political systems, and cultural, social, political, economic, and political trends.
- To improve your understanding of the roles that the U.S. and Canada (especially the U.S.) play in global economic, political, environmental, and security developments.
- To take a broad, geographical perspective, incorporating information from multiple disciplines, on events in North America and throughout the world.
Course Expectations

➢ **Come to class.** I do not take attendance, but my experience has been that students who miss more than a few classes do poorly on the exams. The Lectures **do not** cover the same material as the readings, so if you miss class, get a copy of notes from a classmate.

➢ **Pay Attention.** This point has two main components:
   • **DO:** Listen, watch, think, and take notes.
   • **DON’T:** Send or read text messages, check email, surf the web, or engage in other activities that have nothing to do with the course.

➢ **Actively participate.** There are a number of ways to participate:
   • We will have scheduled discussions on some readings, but may also at any time have spontaneous discussions on the day’s material, or on current events. All these discussions are an important part of how you earn credit, and important to how much you learn from this course.
   • Read assigned material, give it some thought, and come to class prepared to ask questions, offer observations, converse with other students.
   • Offer insights to the class based on your personal experience of living or traveling in North America.

➢ **Email Etiquette.** Please follow these guidelines when communicating with me through email:
   • In the Subject Line, indicate which class you’re in, and what the email’s about (e.g. Geog 312 Exam question).
   • Refrain from simply replying to an email you’ve previously received from me without changing the subject line (e.g. If you’re concerned about your grade, a subject line such as “RE: Fall Welcome Picnic” is not likely to get quick attention).
   • Please write carefully and properly; my effort to address your concerns will be in proportion to your effort to communicate clearly.

Electronic Device Policy

Please turn off your cell phones, tablets, laptops, iPods, etc. for the duration of class. Use of a laptop to take notes in class is allowed by special permission only.

Grading and Course Credit

Grades are based on three exams, class participation, and an annotated bibliography (described below). Discussions will cover lectures, maps, readings, films, and current events, so it’s important to keep up with assigned readings and news concerning the U.S. and Canada. Exams may cover any course material, including readings, lectures, maps, slides, films, student presentations, and class discussions. Exams will test for both conceptual understanding and factual knowledge. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting notes from another student.

**Final grades are based on your point total as a percentage of possible points. NO EXTRA CREDIT.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>A = 90% - 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>B = 80% - 89.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>C = 70% - 79.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bibliography Assignment</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>D = 60% - 69.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation (Readings, discussion, current events)</td>
<td>20</td>
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**Total Points Possible:** 180

Missed Exams, Late Assignments

If you miss an exam due to military duty, jury duty, UAF athletics, a family emergency, grave illness, or other unavoidable circumstance, you are eligible to make up the exam ONLY upon producing formal documentation (court notice, funeral program, doctor’s note, etc.). Contact me as soon as possible if this is the case. If you know you will miss an exam ahead of time, make arrangements with me as early as possible prior to the exam.

Written work will not be accepted late, except under extraordinary circumstances.
ANOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENT
A bibliography of at least 20 items on a subregion of Anglo-America of your choice. The region should be smaller scale than, for example, the American South or the Great Plains, but larger scale than, for example, San Francisco or the Grand Canyon. Acceptable examples of areas between these two scales would be the Nebraska Sand Hills, French Louisiana, or Baffin Island.

The bibliography should include the BEST 20 books/articles on the region, in your opinion. These should include works in scholarly journals, but may also include more popular (but still substantial and high-quality) works that convey the flavor of the place. Your goal is assemble a list of sources that give an authoritative, thorough, well-rounded portrait of a region: its physical, economic, political, and cultural geography.

Finding Sources: The UAF library subscribes to electronic versions of many journals and popular periodicals; this is a good place to start.

You may NOT use the following as one of your sources (if you’re not sure about a source, please ask):
- Web sites (except as a source of electronic versions of books, academic journals, etc.).
- Travel guides (Lonely Planet, Frommer’s, brochures, trail guides, etc.).
- Single maps (a thorough atlas is ok).
- Books of photographs.
- Encyclopedia entries.
- Newspaper articles.
- Magazine articles, unless you find one that is very substantial AND is recognized as a seminal piece on the region in question.
- National Geographic articles or whole issues.
- Textbooks from this or any other course.
- Documents published by government agencies (USDA, BLM, DOT, city govt, state agencies, etc.).
- Booster literature (promotional documents put out by state, city, or regional organizations).

Purpose of this assignment:
1. To learn how to effectively track down good source material on a given topic.
2. To learn how to critically evaluate a given book or article, and decide which ones are the best.
3. To develop an expertise about the geography of your chosen region.

Your grade on the bibliography will be based on:
1. Quality of your selection of sources.
2. Quality of annotations. Note that annotations are not simply summaries; they include critical evaluation of the source’s usefulness for the purpose at hand: it’s tone, intended audience, limitations, etc. The best annotations give the reader a thorough sense of what the work is about, and whether they would want to read it themselves. Annotations should be at least a paragraph in length.
3. Correct reference format. Follow EXACTLY the “Bibliography” format described in Turabian’s Handbook for Writers (or The Chicago Manual of Style). Explicit examples are in Chapter 11. Use the format with the “B” (for Bibliography) next to it. The “bibliography” format has specific conventions for author arrangement, punctuation, capitalization, and when to use italics or quotation marks, so pay close attention to the details. It will take more time than you think to get everything right.
4. Writing quality (clarity, spelling, punctuation, grammar). Spell-Check and Proofread your work before turning it in. I reserve the right to reject your paper, without regard for the quality of it’s content, if you have not made the effort to thoroughly check for spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.
5. Correct document format (described below).

Document Format (points deducted for incorrect formatting)**
1. Arrange entries alphabetically by author.
2. Double-space everything, including annotations.
3. Title at top of first page.
5. Stapled.

**I reserve the right to reject your paper, without regard for the quality of it’s content, if you fail to follow these formatting guidelines. If you won’t spend the effort to follow these simple guidelines, I will not spend effort on evaluating your work.
Bibliography Tips

- **Look for the BEST works, not just the easiest ones to find, and not just a random selection of what’s out there.** That means you’ll sort through a lot of works that don’t make the cut, and eventually narrow the list down to the best 20. This takes time; get an early start.

- Gather sources that give a well-rounded regional portrait. Some sources on very specific topics may be appropriate, but most sources should take a broad perspective.

- Include a balance of works on physical, cultural, economic, and political geography, environmental and social issues, etc.

- Definitely include the best scholarly books and journal articles on the region. Popular books and articles may also be appropriate, but only if they are really good ones.

- Your selection of sources should be diverse. The best works will not all be from the past few years; old classics are often some of the best. The best works will also not be from just one or two scholarly journals. Avoid using more than two works on a specific topic, such as on the geology of a given region.

- Don’t just say a work is good, explain what makes it good, so that someone could use this bibliography as a guide to what they should read if they have a specific interest.

PLAGIARISM

Any act of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course, and possible expulsion from the university. It is YOUR responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism. Pleading that you “didn’t know” you were plagiarizing will not get you off the hook. Plagiarism, simply put, is presenting ideas or words as your own, when they are not. You can use other people’s ideas and words as long as you give them credit by citing the source of the information.

Plagiarism includes (without crediting the source) cutting and pasting text from websites (even if there’s no author given), copying from printed sources, turning in an assignment that was written by someone else (even in modified form), turning in a paper that you have previously written for another class, etc. **Taking annotations from book jacket descriptions, published reviews, or online descriptions such as those found at online bookstores is plagiarism.**

The simplest essential test for plagiarism is to ask yourself: “Am I presenting something that I created through my own research, reading, thinking, or creative process, or did I save effort by plugging in what someone else had already done?” If you’re not sure, please ask.

All other forms of academic dishonesty and/or misconduct will also result in a failing grade for the course.

GEOG 303 TOPIC AND READING SCHEDULE

The topic schedule is subject to change, but exam dates will not change without advance notice. You should be reading the sections of the textbook corresponding to what we are covering in class.

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Intro, Alaska</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Yukon, Northwest Territories, &amp; Nunavut</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>British Columbia</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The Prairie Provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The Maritimes (Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Quebec</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>The American Pacific Northwest</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>California</td>
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<td>The Southwest</td>
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<td>The Great Plains</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>The South</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>The Northeast</td>
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<td>EXAM AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES</td>
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<td><strong>EXAM 1:</strong> Fri Oct 10</td>
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<td><strong>EXAM 2:</strong> Wed Nov 12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography Due:</strong> Mon Nov 17</td>
<td>(One letter grade deducted for each class period the paper is late.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EXAM 3:</strong> Wed Dec 17</td>
<td>10:15-12:15 am (During Finals)</td>
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