Geography 701:  
Development of Geographic Thought  
Fall 2013  
(Tuesdays, 4:00 to 6:40 pm)

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Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30 to 3:30 pm (other times by prior appointment).

Seminar Description and Rationale  
Geography 701 “Development of Geographic Thought” is a weekly seminar focused on issues of theory in geography. The seminar examines the key concepts and theories that define what the discipline of geography has been in the past, what it is today, and what it might become in the future. It is a required seminar for all graduate students in the department, regardless of specialization. When you receive an advanced degree from Department of Geography at SDSU, you will be identified as a geographer. As such, it is important that you leave with an understanding of the theoretical traditions and contemporary lines of thought of the discipline.

The seminar centers on informed discussion of readings that have been specifically assigned to illustrate, explain and offer a critical perspective on the evolution of geographic thought over time. The seminar covers different overlapping and interconnected themes. In this seminar:

- You will learn about the different ways in which geography has been defined over time and positioned uniquely among the physical sciences, the social sciences and the humanities. The goal is to obtain a clear sense of what the discipline has been in the past, what it is now (and how it is debated and contested) and the issues that will play an important role in its future development.

- You will learn about the different theories, philosophies and key concepts that inform geographic thought, both in the past and today. You will confront complex theoretical ideas, with the goal of understanding how different conceptual approaches create new possibilities for thinking geographically about a range of phenomena. Another goal is to emphasize the unity of a diverse discipline despite different approaches.

- You will have opportunities to meet some of the faculty and graduate students currently in the department (some will be invited to the seminar to briefly discuss their research approaches and engage in seminar discussions). The goal is to create a sense of community among graduate students and faculty members as a group of intellectual peers with shared interests and goals.

Required Reading  

The book is available in both print version or as an e-book. The print version can be found at the SDSU bookstore or an on-line retailer. The e-book version is available for Apple iOS devices at the iTunes store or for Kindle devices through Amazon. The e-book version is also available as a “rental” for a year and it is a bit less expensive. The following link takes you to a discounted e-book rental directly from the publisher:  
http://www.coursesmart.com/IR/2299538/9781405169394?__hdv=6.8

Additional required reading is available through Blackboard (see weekly class schedule for details).
Additional Suggested Reading
The following is a list of some books that you might find worth consulting on an occasional basis, such as when writing synthesis papers.


Seminar Assessment
Your final grade will be determined based on a series of written assignments and your participation in the seminar:

A) Three synthesis papers (each 20% of the final grade):
   In each of these short papers, you will synthesize concepts, theories and/or philosophies discussed throughout the semester, drawing on the readings assigned and on additional articles or book chapters that you will select. You will receive a prompt for each paper. You will be evaluated in terms of your own critical thinking, understanding of the material, capacity for synthesizing diverse ideas, and quality of writing. See “Seminar Procedures, Policies and Instructions” below for further instructions.

B) Seminar attendance, preparation and participation (20% of the final grade):
   Besides regular attendance and participation, you will be asked to lead class discussions and to submit questions or thoughts for discussion prior to class via Blackboard. On occasion, you will also work in groups to generate questions and themes that synthesize ideas from the readings and prepare them for class discussion.

C) Friday colloquia and Blackboard blog reports (20% of the final grade)
   After you attend each individual Friday’s colloquium, you will write a concise and critical reflection on the presentation you heard. Your emphasis should be on making connections between what was presented relative to what you are learning about geographic thought in the seminar. The following questions can be used as inspiration to write your short blog entries:
   • What theories and schools of thought inspired the presentation?
   • What areas, sub-disciplines and geographic concepts were key to the presentation?
   • What were the strengths and weakness of the presentation in relation to geographic thinking?
   • In what ways was the presentation explicitly or implicitly geographical?
   • What did you learn and how did it help you expand your understanding of geographic thinking?

Academic misconduct
Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Academic misconduct includes conduct which is aimed at falsely representing a student's academic performance such as cheating, plagiarizing, unauthorized collaboration on course work, falsifying records or data, or intentionally assisting another individual in
any of the above. Students who cheat will receive an "F" and the SDSU’s Judicial Coordinator will be notified. You are responsible for learning about SDSU’s policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct.

Seminar Procedures, Policies and Other Instructions
Weekly attendance and participation is required. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss all assigned readings. The seminar meets once a week at 4pm. There will be a 20-minute break each class period, at about 5:10pm. We will reconvene at about 5:30pm for the second half of the seminar. Make every effort to be in the classroom at the scheduled beginning times (including after the break) and plan on staying until the seminar ends. Repeated late arrivals or early departure from the seminar are highly discouraged and will negatively affect your final grade.

Attendance to the Department of Geography Colloquia Series (Friday afternoons) is a required part of the seminar and it is connected to your seminar’s assessment via the Blackboard blog reports. There are typically 8 to 10 colloquia presentations during the semester.

Synthesis papers should be between 3 to 5 pages (no more, no less, no exceptions). Use the following formatting guidelines: Times or Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, 1” margins on letter size paper (8.5” by 11”) paper. This formatting yields about 300 words per page. Papers should include a bibliography of all articles and sources read for the development of the paper (bibliography does not count towards paper length requirement). Papers should be of publishable quality (i.e., they must be proofread for spelling, grammar and clarity, and they should be properly formatted). Your references should match the style used in the flagship journal for geographers in the United States: the Annals of the Association of American Geographers (APA style). If English is not your first language or if you are experiencing writing problems, you should be proactive and seek help in advance, either from on campus resources, an editor or a friend, classmate or other person who is willing to read your work and help you edit and proofread.

Synthesis papers should be submitted electronically via Blackboard by their due date. You will find the paper prompts and instructions under the “Assignments” tab in Blackboard. Late submissions are not accepted by the system. Please talk to me if you are having difficulties completing an assignment, but do not wait until it is too late.

Seminar schedule (weekly topics and readings)

Week 1 - August 27th Introduction to the seminar
Discussion of seminar goals, procedures, assessment and expectations.
Introduction to Blackboard, SDSU library and other research resources at SDSU.
Citing sources and other writing advice important for the seminar and beyond.

Week 2 - September 3rd What is Geography?
Required reading:
Chapter 1 in Geographic Thought


Week 3 - September 10th **Geography graduate students “lightning talks”**
A group of current geography graduate students (Masters and PhD) will give short presentations about their current research so that new students can make acquaintances and connect with people working on research topics of common interest.

Week 4 - September 17th **Geography up to the first half of the 20th century**
*Required reading:*
Chapter 3 and 4 in *Geographic Thought* (skim Chapter 2 if you have time)


Week 5 - September 24th **Spatial Science and the Quantitative Revolution**
*Required reading:*
Chapter 5 in *Geographic Thought*


Week 6 - October 1st **Theory and Physical Geography.** **Guest faculty:** Professor Allen Hope
*Required reading:*


**Week 7 - October 8th** **Humanistic and Cultural Geographies**

*Required reading*

Chapters 6 in *Geographic Thought*


**Week 8 - October 15th** **Marxism and Critical Geographies**

*Required reading*

Chapters 7 in *Geographic Thought*


**Week 9 - October 22nd** **Economy, Citizenship, Politics.** **Guest Faculty: Professor Pascale J. Marcelli**

*Required reading*


Week 10 - October 29th **Feminist Geographies: Difference, Power, Resistance**

*Required reading:*

Chapter 8 in *Geographic Thought*


Week 11 - November 5th **Human environment relations.** Guest faculty: Professor Kathleen Farley

*Required reading:*


Week 12 - November 12th **GIScience**

*Required reading:*


Week 13 - November 19th **Postmodernism and Postructuralism in Geography - NO CLASS**

*Required reading*

Chapters 9 and 10 in *Geographic Thought*
Week 14, November 26th  **Modeling Human Environment Relations** –  **Guest Faculty: Professor Li An**

**Required reading**


Week 15, December 3rd**Relational Geographies**

**Required reading:**

Chapter 11 and 12 in *Geographic Thought*
