Introduction & Course Overview:
This Course examines some of the contours and consequences of contemporary geographic thought, as practiced by physical and human geographers. The course adopts a critical analysis of geographical knowledge—meaning that our goal is not to answer the question: “what is geography” (perhaps an unanswerable and certainly frustrating question) but to consider how geographical knowledge is and has been practiced and to what ends. In the first part of the course we consider some of the historical trajectories of geography as a discipline, focusing particularly on the correspondence between geographical knowledge and projects of Empire, white supremacy and Colonialism. The second part of the course contours the development of contemporary geography through a series of important interventions (including those made by feminist, Marxist and post-structuralist geographers) and highlights in particular the ways in which “critical geographies” have come to shape the discipline. In the third and final part of the course we will engage some of the analytical concepts used by geographers to understand and interrogate environment-society relations.

Course Aims & Learning Objectives

• To develop an understanding of the historical trajectories of geographical knowledge, including its complicity in projects of empire and colonialism,
• To develop the ability to critically evaluate the “imaginative geographies” that have shaped and continue to shape the trajectory of the discipline.
• To gain an understanding of the current contours of geographical knowledge, with a focus on understanding critical approaches and their contributions to understanding environment-society relations.
• To encourage a critical intellectual engagement with significant recent interventions in the discipline (including from feminist, Marxist, post-structuralist, and anti-racist geography)
• To develop a critical understanding of geography as a practice shaped by intellectual, social and political contexts
• To develop research, reading, writing and critical thinking skills
• To demonstrate mastery of skills in written and oral presentation

Course Structure & Format:

This course is conceived of as a forum for facilitating critical enquiry into the historical and contemporary dynamics of geographical knowledge. The course sessions will be participatory, combining lectures with small group discussions, targeted seminar activities, in class workshops and exercises and student led seminars. Students are expected to keep up with the readings and come to class prepared to engage and with their colleagues. The success of the course rests on the level of quality and effort that students bring to the session.

We meet twice a week for three hours in total and will typically move between lecture and seminar formats. We will therefore spend a significant amount of our time in seminar-style discussion of course materials. The purpose of seminar exercises will be to discuss, share, and develop our understandings of the readings, as well as to distil, and together build an understanding of course themes and concepts. This format requires close reading and significant preparation of texts before coming to class—work for which you will be evaluated on and rewarded for.

The third part of the course will be dedicated to student led examination and discussion of analytical concepts in geography. All students are expected to have completed the assigned readings before the class meetings, to attend class, and to come prepared with observations, reflections, and questions from the readings. Attendance will be taken during these sessions, poor attendance may affect your overall grade.

Student participation throughout the course will be assessed through multiple means, including written reflections, class participation, and the completion of class activities. The assignments will assume knowledge gained from both the texts, lectures and seminars, so class attendance is highly recommended. We will be using Course link as an electronic resource for announcements, accessing course materials, and submitting assignments.

A note on seminar participation:

This is your class and I want you to get as much out of these meetings as possible. Please feel free to raise questions and topics for discussion, and contribute your understanding of course
themes, arguments, concepts and connections during the discussion. But participation also involves listening to other people’s comments, thoughtfully engaging with their views, not interrupting, and letting other people express themselves. This does not mean that it is out of bounds to challenge a classmate on her/his views or to disagree about how to interpret an argument, but rather that you do so respectfully and politely and in a manner that helps us all learn. There is a distinction between contributing to discussion (where your comments build off of others’ comments, generate further discussion, and contribute overall to the class achieving a more comprehensive understanding of the topics) and making self serving or arrogant comments that embarrass others and shut down lines of communication. The purpose of these discussions is that we learn from each other and come to a deeper understanding of the readings by reading and discussing together.

In these meetings you have a responsibility to your classmates to be prepared, to actively contribute to discussions and to be courteous and respectful; you also have a right to expect the same of them.

Assessment:

1. Cover Letter (10%) due February 8, course link by 5pm
   This assignment focuses on career planning and preparation and will have you identify a relevant professional opportunity and craft a cover letter for it. Please download the full assignment form course link.

2. Seminar Activities & Participation (25%) ongoing
   (a) Written responses & discussion of seminar readings (20%)  
   There are five scheduled seminar discussions scattered throughout the first and second parts of the course. Please see the syllabus for seminar dates and readings. Students will be assigned to seminar groups, and within their groups will choose a “role”; this role can be different every time. Each role (e.g., discussion leader, dictionary, creative connector and so forth) requires a written reflection (see worksheets in the seminar folder) to be submitted on course link prior to the start of class and students will be expected to prepare for the seminar by completing the reading and preparing the worksheet. Assessment will be based on completion of the worksheet and quality of engagement in the discussion.

   (b) Engagement and participation in student led seminars (5%)  
   Students are expected to attend class regularly and participate. Attendance will generally be taken, and it is expected in particular that you are present, prepared for, and engage with your peers in the student lead seminars. You will be encouraged to ask informed questions, participate in the engagement activities lead by your peers, show evidence of having engaged with the readings, and attend all student lead seminars.

3. Group Seminar (35%)  
   In the third part of the course students (in groups of 3) will lead the class in a seminar on an assigned analytic concept of significance to contemporary geography. Please see the syllabus for seminar dates. Each group will be assigned a reading that explores the concept (e.g., Scale) and a case study (e.g., the Niagara escarpment) to help them illustrate and think through the
concept and its significance. Each seminar will be 60 minutes minimum, will cover the assigned reading, explore the analytical concept in some depth, and use the case study to illustrate its conceptual significance. Each seminar will include an audience participation/engagement activity. Audience attendance will be taken before the start of each activity. Please download the full assignment from course-link.

**Group members will be asked to assess themselves and their fellow group members.** At my discretion an adjustment may be applied to a student’s seminar grade for the group work (up to ± 5 points). Students who fail to fulfil their commitments to the group will lose points, those whose contribution is outstanding (above and beyond the call of duty) will have points added. This will be determined through the peer and self assessment process (to be discussed in class). Students who do not participate in the group work or otherwise fail to contribute may receive a grade of zero.

4. **Take home exam (30%) Due April 12 by 5pm on course-link**
The take home exam will cover all aspects of the course (including the student-led seminars). It will be posted on course-link during the last week of class.

**Course Textbook:**

Copies of this book are available in the University of Guelph Library, on course reserve, and for purchase in the university bookstore. The university library also has an online version of the book in its collection. The text has been used in previous years, so there should be used copies available from the Coop bookstore or from graduating students.

**Additional Required Readings:** Seminar materials and any supplementary required readings (see course syllabus and check courselink regularly) will be made available on the GEOG 4880 course link page.

**Schedule of Meetings (Provisional—Subject to Change)**

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<tr>
<th>Week 1 (January 9&amp;11)</th>
<th>Tuesday: Course Overview &amp; Introduction</th>
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<tr>
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<td>‘Geographical Imagination’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Producing Geographical Knowledge &amp; Geography as “practice”</td>
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**Thursday: Geography & Empire: I**
*Readings: Chapter 1*
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<th>Week 2 (January 16 &amp; 18)</th>
<th>Tuesday: Geography &amp; Empire II</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday</strong>: Colonialism &amp; The (Canadian) Geographical Imaginary</td>
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<th>Week 3 (January 23 &amp; 25)</th>
<th>Tuesday: A brief History of pre &amp; post-war geography</th>
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<td><strong>Readings</strong>: Chapters 3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday</strong>: Physical Geography &amp; Scientific Methods</td>
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<td><strong>Readings</strong>: Chapter 2</td>
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<th>Week 4 (January 30 &amp; February 1)</th>
<th>Tuesday: “Critical” Physical Geography</th>
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<td><strong>Seminar Discussion</strong>: Lave et al (2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday</strong>: Professional Development Workshop &amp; Cover Letter</td>
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<th>Week 5 (February 6 &amp; 8)</th>
<th>Tuesday: Group Seminar Workshop— How to approach case study research and time for group planning</th>
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<td><strong>Thursday</strong>: Marxist Geographies</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Significant interventions</strong>: Neil Smith; David Harvey; Melissa Wright &amp; Don Mitchell</td>
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**Assignment 1 due**

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<th>Week 6 (February 13 &amp; 15)</th>
<th>Tuesday: Feminist Geographies:</th>
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<td><strong>Significant Interventions</strong>: Gillian Rose; Alison Blunt; Audrey Kobayashi; Kay Anderson</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday</strong>: No Class: Time for group meeting/ work on your seminar</td>
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**READING WEEK**

### Week 7 (Feb 27 & March 1):

**Tuesday: Black Geographies & Geographies of Whiteness**  
Significant interventions: Ruth Wilson Gilmore; Katherine McKitrick  
Seminar discussion: Mahtani (2012)

**Thursday: Post-structural Geographies**  
Significant Interventions: Noel Castree; Bruce Braun; Derek Gregory  
(nature/culture; colonial vision; colonial present)  
Seminar discussion: Castree (2008)

### Week 8 (March 6 & 8):

**Tuesday: Indigenous Geographies**  
Interventions: Juanita Sunderberg; Sarah Radcliffe; Sarah DeLew  
Seminar discussion: Hunt (2014)

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Thursday: Group Seminar  
Case study: The Don Valley Ravine  
Analytical concept: Nature  
Readings: Chapter 17

### Week 9 (March 13 & 15)

**Tuesday: Group Seminar**  
Case study: Young & Dundas Square  
Analytical concept: Place  
Readings: Chapter 9

**Thursday: Group Seminar**  
Case study: The Eaton Centre  
Analytical concept: Scale
### Week 10 (March 20 & 22)

**Tuesday: Group Seminar**  
Case study: The Niagara Escarpment  
**Analytical concept:** Time  
**Readings:** Chapter 7

**Thursday: Group Seminar**  
Case study: Toronto Pearson Airport  
**Analytical concept:** Space  
**Readings:** Chapter 5

### Week 11 (March 27 & 29):

**Tuesday: Group Seminar**  
Case study: The ROM  
**Analytical concept:** Identity  
**Readings:** Chapter 13

**Thursday: Group Seminar**  
Case study: Forks of the Credit River  
**Analytical concept:** Scale  
**Readings:** Chapter 11

### Week 12 (April 3 & 5):

**Tuesday: Group Seminar**  
Case study: The Beaches  
**Analytical concept:** Landscape  

**Readings:** Chapter 16

**Thursday: Class Brunch and take home exam review**

**TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE Thursday April 12 by 5pm on courselink**

**Course/Department/University policies**
Note Taking: Students are responsible for taking their own notes during lectures. *Materials, such as powerpoint slides, provided on courselink are incomplete and are not intended to replace student notes.* I will not provide lecture material for missed lectures. Please coordinate with other students if you need notes for missed classes – a discussion board will be available on Courselink to facilitate student communication.

Communication: As per university regulations, all students are required to check their uoguelph e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students. Please also check Courselink regularly; important information will be made available here. For any individual/confidential concerns, please email your TA or instructor. I will respond to emails sent on weekdays within 24 hours; emails sent after 4pm Friday will be responded to on Monday. You are also welcome (and encouraged!) to visit the instructor during her office hours or to make an individual appointment with your TA.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement: When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise your TA in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

Late Policy: late assignments will loose 5% per day they are late including weekends.

Extensions may be granted in certain circumstances, and will usually require the student to produce valid medical (doctor’s note) or personal (note from Counseling Services) documentation. Late assignments/exams will not be accepted once graded assignments have been returned officially to the class at large unless circumstances permit and alternative arrangements have been made.

Copies of out-of-class assignments: Keep paper and/or reliable electronic back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments (including those submitted on Courselink!): you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility: The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. For
Academic Misconduct:
The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University’s policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Recording of Materials: Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Drop Date: The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is TBC. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses.