Gross inequality in a rapidly urbanizing world is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. Most future population growth will occur in cities, and much of the new urban poor already lacks access to basic services, like sewage and electricity.

Course Description and Objectives

This course will introduce you to the field of human geography, a discipline that examines the relationships among people, places, environments, and cultures.

Over the course of the semester we will cover a range of basic concepts and terms that will enable you to engage critically with key geographic approaches to contemporary life. Among these are connectivity and global networks, human migration, citizenship, cultural identity, urbanization, economy, and politics. The class will focus attention on the unequal distribution of power, resources, and opportunity in order to highlight the challenges and struggles that these inequalities create.

Required Text:
There is no required text for this course. All course materials are available on Sakai and at http://nategabriel.com/egblog/teaching/spl
Cultural Landscapes reflect not only the cultural values of a civilization, but also the economic and political forces that shape it.

Exams

There are four exams in this course. The lowest grade of the four will be dropped. The remaining three will make up 75% of your final grade. Exams will consist of a variety of components derived from the lecture and assigned material. Because exams are designed to challenge your analytical abilities rather than your ability to recite material, you should focus on understanding concepts and trends, rather than memorizing facts. Exams will consist of questions designed to assess basic learning of concepts as well as synthetic thinking.

Final Exam

The final exam in this course is cumulative, and worth one quarter (30%) of your final grade. However, it is also “optional”, in that skipping the final would cause it to be your lowest exam grade, and thus will not be calculated into your final grade (in which case, the other two exams would both be calculated into the final grade).

Reaction Paper Assignments

Five times during the semester, you are required, as part of a group of other students, to write a reaction paper that connects lecture material and course readings. The goal of these assignments is to make connections across the readings and lecture material to broader themes of the course. Reaction papers should be 400–700 words, double-spaced, and in 12-point font (Times New Roman). Include all group-member names, a descriptive title, and word count on the first page. Please also attach a separate page that provides detail of each group member’s contributions to the paper (see assignment sheet for details). Finally, fully cite your sources using APA style for both in-text citations and your reference list/bibliography. For examples of citations in APA style, please see https://www.library.cornell.edu/research/citation/apa. References and contribution descriptions are NOT included in word count.

A rubric for reaction papers is on Sakai under Resources. Submit via Sakai no more than two days after the assignment is given.

Late Work

Makeup exams will only be given if written documentation of an excused absence is provided. Students showing up more than 15 minutes late for an exam will not be permitted to take it and no makeup opportunity will be provided.
What Kind of Student Will You Be?

In this class, many things are optional. You can come to class or not. You can attend review sessions or not. However, how you make use of the resources available to you will likely have a strong impact on your final grade. To do well in the course, you should arrive to lectures on time and prepared to engage with the material. This includes completing any reading in advance of class meetings. There are three main strategies for taking this class and engaging with the material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wading</th>
<th>Snorkeling</th>
<th>Scuba Diving</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waders want to dip their toes into the material, to get a sense of how geography helps us think about human social relationships, and see if it interests them.</td>
<td>Students who take this approach may already have a basic understanding of how spatial relationships influence human societies, and they want to look deeper. They already know that there is a conversation going on about how to think about these questions, and they are starting to figure out where they stand.</td>
<td>Divers are already deeply engaged with the questions addressed in this course. They have a strong sense about what it means to think critically about space and human activity, and have well-developed views. At the same time, they take seriously the views of others. They probably read a great deal about the subject independently, and actively seek out sources they don’t agree with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is nothing wrong with this approach. This may be the only geography course you take, or it all may be new to you.</td>
<td>Snorkelers have begun to identify issues that are being debated within human geography, and often wish to engage in those debates themselves. They are interested in understanding HOW and WHY.</td>
<td>Divers won’t take any of the course material at face value, and recognize (and fill) the gaps in the course. They are curious, passionate, and concerned about WHY HUMAN GEOGRAPHY MATTERS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waders are not likely to get very deep into the material, and may not see the contradictions between different ways of understanding the spatial patterns of human activity. For a wader, the task is to learn the “facts”; their questions are WHAT, WHEN, and WHERE.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waders typically earn between a C and a C+.</td>
<td>Snorkelers typically earn between a B and a B+.</td>
<td>Divers typically earn a B+ or an A.</td>
</tr>
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Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89.9-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84.9-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79.9-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>75.9-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69.9-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.9-60</td>
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Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Reaction Papers</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams (4 total, drop lowest grade)</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Objectives and Core Curriculum Learning Goals:

This course fulfills 3 credits towards a major or minor in geography. Therefore, by the end of this course, we expect you to have a basic understanding of:

- The fundamental issues and debates in geography
- The spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.
- Key characteristics, distributions, and special features of human populations, cultural mosaics, economic systems, human settlement, and political units.
- How humans affect and are affected by modifications of the physical environment.
- How to use a geographic framework to view the past and analyze the present.

Further, the course also satisfies three credits towards the Social (SCL) or Historical (HST) Analysis requirement in the new SAS Core Curriculum. Upon completion of the course, students will therefore be able to meet at least one of the three following goals:

- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
- Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.
- Identify and critically assess ethical issues in social science and history.

In pursuance of credits in Historical Analysis (HST), students will be able to explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science. For credits in Social Analysis (SCL), successful completion of this course will enable you to apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

Fine Print

Academic Integrity

Cheating is grounds for failure. To that end, please become familiar with the University procedure for dealing with academic dishonesty through the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy:

- http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu

Any student in violation of the policy will be subject to disciplinary action and automatic failure in the course.

Disability Disclosure

Rutgers University does not discriminate in any of its programs on the basis of disability. In order to facilitate the documentation and accommodation processes, students are encouraged to voluntarily and confidentially disclose any disability requiring accommodations. Rutgers Disability Services provides student-centered and student-inclusive programming in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1998, and the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should:

Register with and provide documentation to the Office of Disability Services for Students at Rutgers (https://ods.rutgers.edu/)

Bring a letter to the instructor from the Office of Disability Services for Students indicating your need for academic accommodations. This should be done during the first week of class. Accommodation cannot be offered without this letter.

For more information, contact the Office of Disability Services for Students at 848-445-6800 or dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu.
# Course Outline *(Readings in Blue)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2    | Lecture: Space  
*“The Neoliberal Arts”* | Discussion - Power, Geopolitics  
*Rushkoff, Ch 1*  
Reaction Paper #1 assigned |
| 3    | Lecture - States and Nations  
*“Do Nations Need States”* podcast  
*“Is the Nation State Splintering”* podcast  
Reaction Paper #1 due | Lecture - Economy  
*Piketty*  
*Pinker and Mack*  
Reaction Paper #2 Assigned |
| 4    | Lecture - Economy  
Reaction Paper #2 Due | Lecture - Population  
*Elwell*  
*Robbins* |
| 5    | Review | Exam 1 |
| 6    | Discussion - Food diversity  
*Kautmann*  
Homework: See Sakai  
Reaction Paper #3 Assigned | Lecture - Agriculture  
Reaction Paper #3 Due |
| 7    | Lecture - Humanized environments  
*Urban Rivers* | Discussion - Development and Globalization  
*Rushkoff, Ch 2* |
| 8    | Discussion - Development.  
Watch: T-shirt travels (through RU library)  
Read: *Illich*  
Homework: See Sakai  
Reaction Paper #4 Assigned | Lecture - Production of Underdevelopment  
Reaction Paper #4 Due |
| 9    | Orientalism | Lecture catch-up; exam review |
| 10   | Exam 2 | Discussion - Culture and Commodification  
Watch: *Generation Like* |
| 11   | Lecture - Culture and space | Lecture - Identity  
*Eligon, Cobb* |
| 12   | Discussion - Migration  
*Universal Declaration on Human Rights,*  
*Freakonomics - Is Migration a Human Right?* | No Class — Thanksgiving |
| 13   | Lecture - Migration  
Reaction Paper #5 Assigned | Lecture - Urbanization  
*Ancient Cities; Manchester; NYC gentrification*  
Reaction Paper #5 Due |
| 14   | TA Lecture - Gentrification and Policing | Lecture catch-up; exam review |
| 15   | Exam 3 | |
|      | Final Exam — Dec 18, 12:00-3:00pm, usual room | |