



# Society, Place, and Power: Introduction to Human Geography SU-GEOG070



*3 Credit Hours; no pre-requisites; Gen-Ed: meets 'Sustainability' requirement*

Spring 2020 Tues/Thurs 10:05-11:20am Harris 115

Instructor: Dr. Meghan Cope [mcope@uvm.edu](mailto:mcope@uvm.edu) (she/her/hers)

Office: Old Mill 211 Office Hours: Mon., 9-10am; Wed., 2-3pm or by appt.

Teaching Assistant: Sofie Schmidt [sofia.schmidt@uvm.edu](mailto:sofia.schmidt@uvm.edu) (she/her/hers)

## Course Description – An introduction to Human Geography

Everything happens somewhere... but why *there*? And how do combinations of events and processes come together to create unique *places*? How do the actions and decisions of human societies construct meaningful social spaces? And how can we use a geographic approach to understand (and improve) human society and our interactions with the earth?

One of the core tasks of this course is recognizing and analyzing the ways that **human societies create places and - in turn - live in and through those places**. We will identify the main tools geographers use to understand the relations between space, place, and society, including maps, place-based case studies, narratives, and quantitative data. Students will employ these tools to do their own analytic work.

We examine tensions between **globalization, sustainability, social justice, and cultural identities** in places around the globe, but with a particular focus on the US. We will pay special attention to **spatial patterns** and discovering the **processes** that generate them. Geographic **concepts** we'll explore include diffusion, mobility and migration, scale, construction of place, and the powerful intersections of economic, political, and social processes with natural environments.

GEOG070 is a "Sustainability" course, meeting the SU requirement. Using a **critical social justice lens**, we will engage with three dimensions of interactions between nature and society (the "three E's"): **equity** (social justice), **economic** growth, and **environmental** issues.

*Society, Place, and Power* is supported during class time by lectures, group discussions, in-class exercises, and films. You are expected to spend approximately 5-6 hours/week on preparation outside of class, which will involve reading assigned texts, creative mapping projects, short writing assignments, and studying for tests.

## Learning Goals

- Adopt spatial perspectives on fundamental human processes/phenomena
- Understand fundamental vocabulary and concepts appropriate to the field
- Identify sources of geographic data and the production of knowledge
- Explore methods used in geography (quantitative, qualitative, mapping) and consider them critically
- Examine conceptual and empirical approaches to social justice and the intersection of social justice with notions of 'sustainability'

## Sustainability Learning Outcomes... by the end of this course you should be able to:

- 1: Have an informed conversation about the multiple dimensions and complexity of sustainability
- 2: Evaluate sustainability using an evidence-based disciplinary approach and integrate economic, ecological, and social perspectives
- 3: Think critically about sustainability across a diversity of cultural values and across multiple scales of relevance from local to global
- 4: Recognize and assess how sustainability impacts your life and how your actions impact sustainability

### Required Course Materials:

**Rubenstein, J.** 2019. *Contemporary Human Geography 4th Ed*, New York: Pearson. ISBN 10: 0-134-74622-8; ISBN 13: 978-0-134-74622-7. Available at UVM bookstore or check your favorite online seller (Amazon, Chegg, etc.) to rent a hardcopy or e-book. There is also hard-copy on 2-hr reserve at Howe library. **Please do not buy/rent anything except the 4<sup>th</sup> edition!**

Other assigned readings will be available as PDFs or weblinks posted on Blackboard.

### Blackboard:

We will use Blackboard in several ways in this class:

- All syllabus and schedule materials, including updates and announcements are available
- We will be experimenting with using Blackboard for attendance – make sure you can access it readily on your phone through a browser or the app. (More info in class)
- All non-textbook readings will be provided as PDFs or web links here
- All assignments and study guides will be available here (Social Explorer exercises, film reviews, short written assignments, etc.)
- All lecture notes, links to online videos, and other content will be posted here
- Additional information re: events, public talks, internship opportunities, etc. will be posted for your convenience

### Attendance Policy and Classroom Environment Expectations:

1. **Complete all required readings and assignments by the first date listed.**
2. Attend class every day, participate in discussions, in-class exercises, and review sessions.
3. Create and maintain a civil environment for learning:
  - Arrive on time, do not leave during class unless absolutely necessary
  - Maintain a **screen-free learning environment** - no phones after attendance is taken; laptops only when directed or by special permission from the instructor (such as during small group work). If you have an accommodation for computer use, please see me.
  - Treat fellow students and instructor/guests with respect
  - All email communication to me should begin with “Dear Prof. Cope...” or “Dear Meghan...”
4. Comply with UVM’s Code of Academic Integrity, from the Center for Student Ethics and Standards (CSES): <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>. Familiarize yourself with what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, and other ethics violations. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please see a CSES staff member. You are expected to abide by the Code of Student Conduct: <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentcode.pdf>
5. Take responsibility for your education. If you miss class, find someone willing to share notes and review them carefully before coming to Dr. Cope for help. *Although I post bare-bones lecture outlines on Blackboard after class, they are not a substitute for being in class and the details of the material will not be apparent from the outlines alone, particularly because I always bring in material outside the textbook.* Taking responsibility also means making use of the resources provided – feel free to come to my office hours to introduce yourself, discuss a class topic further, or learn more about the Geography Department. You should check your UVM email regularly for all course-related communications, Blackboard announcements, etc.
6. If you receive **Accessibility Services**, I will make every effort to accommodate necessary arrangements. I need SAS letters as soon as possible in order to make accommodations. If you feel you may be eligible for accessibility services, please make an appointment to see them: Contact Student Accessibility Services: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; [access@uvm.edu](mailto:access@uvm.edu) [www.uvm.edu/access](http://www.uvm.edu/access)
7. Students who foresee an absence for **religious** reasons or who are participating in **inter-collegiate athletics** should submit in writing their documented schedules and/or anticipated absences for the

semester by the end of the **second week of classes**. I will make every effort to accommodate appropriately. Students should meet with me to arrange make up work to be done within a mutually agreed-upon time. <https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/religious-holidays>

- In the case of absences due to extreme illness, family issues, or other causes, your first point of contact should be **your Dean's office**. They will document legitimate absences and contact all your professors centrally. If you are experiencing an emergency and will miss an exam, contact me directly and immediately, before the exam begins, to make alternate arrangements.

What you can expect from me:

- Rigorous but fair instruction: Clear grading expectations and fair evaluation of your work
- Two-week turn-around (maximum) on tests, 1-week turnaround on smaller assignments
- Responsive, open communication

### Assessments (Graded Work):

- Tests: Mid-term and Final, each worth 20%. **20+20 = 40%**
  - Class attendance and participation based on in-class work, small homework assignments, on-line reflections on guest lectures, etc. = 10%
  - Larger, more structured in-class exercises (ICE) – 2 pts each (there are 6 of these in the semester, you must do 5, no extra credit for doing all 6) = 10%
  - One 1½ - 2 page Film review, 10 pts. (choose from the two films listed below) = 10%
  - *Social Explorer* Exercises 2 @ 15 pts. (both required; see description, below) = 30%
- 100%**

#### Grade Scale

A	94.0 – 100	C	74.0 – 76.9
A-	90.0 – 93.9	C-	70.0 – 73.9
B+	87.0 – 89.9	D+	67.0 – 69.9
B	84.0 – 86.9	D	64.0 – 66.9
B-	80.0 – 83.9	D-	60.0 – 63.9
C+	77.0 – 79.9	F	<60.0

For more info on UVM's grade policies, see:

<https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/grades>

#### Tests:

These are a combination of multiple choice and short-answer questions to test your comprehension of material, including lectures, guest lectures, films, readings, etc.. The mid-term covers the first half of the course and the final emphasizes material from the second half of the course and over-arching themes that we'll be exploring all semester. To do well on tests: do the readings, attend class, take good notes and check them with the posted outlines, clarify anything you don't understand by visiting office hours well before the exam. If you need help with study skills or have questions about content, please see me. **No make-up exams** except in extreme circumstances for which you should have your Dean's office contact Dr. Cope directly.

#### In-Class Exercises/Homework:

There will be SIX structured in-class exercises / homework assignments to assess student engagement with the materials, to foster discussion/debate, and to gauge participation. These are not announced ahead of time and you cannot make them up later – **you need to be in class EVERY DAY**. These exercises will involve both individual and group elements and full marks will be achieved by those who are clearly caught up on readings and comprehend the material. You have one 'freebie' (e.g. for illness) but **need a total of 5** of these completed by the end of the semester. No extra credit for doing all 6.

We will also have low-stakes, frequent, often spontaneous, small-group discussions (with notes submitted), in-class responses, free-writes, etc. These provide a quick way to track participation, make the class more interactive, reinforce learning, help me check in with how students are doing with particular concepts, etc. These are marked only for completion.

### Film Reviews:

Each student will complete a 1 ½ - 2-page film review. We will see 3 films in class during the semester – one before break (no review option) and two after break during “Film Week” (April 7 & 9). You may choose **either of the later two to review**. Specific assignments will be handed out at the beginning of each film; late submissions are not accepted but extensions may be granted in extreme circumstances (please email Dr. Cope ahead of the deadline). **All 3 films are included in tests**. Please note that we’ll also see short clips of films in regular lectures – these are not included in the film review assignment. The films we’ll see together in class are:

- *The New Americans: Finding Community* (2004) ActiveVoice, Kartemquin Films.  
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/> (Early Feb. NO review option)
- *Coming to Ground* (2012) – J. Donohue & F. Johnson, Producers <http://comingtground.org/> (April 7<sup>th</sup>)
- *Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy* (2009) by Tét Ansanm Productions  
<http://www.potomitan.net/> (April 9<sup>th</sup>)

### Social Explorer Exercises:

*Social Explorer* is a tool to analyze and map US census data that is very easy to use. UVM has a full license to it so if you’re on campus or connected via the VPN client, you can get access to it. We’ll be doing two thematic exercises (each worth 15%) using this tool on relevant topics (population/migration, social/cultural geography, economic and urban geography). Specific instructions, training, and assignments will be given out at the appropriate time. Late submissions are not accepted but extensions may be granted in extreme circumstances (please email Dr. Cope *ahead* of the deadline)

### Extra Credit Opportunities:

You may apply for up to one point (1%) of extra credit by attending an event on campus or locally that has a geography and/or sustainability & social justice dimension to it and writing a 1-paragraph analysis of it, to be submitted via Blackboard. I will post information on Blackboard about some events as I learn about them but you can also email me before other events to see if they ‘count’. **Limit of 2 for the semester**. There are no other mechanisms for extra credit.

### Course Evaluation:

All students are expected to complete an evaluation of the course at its conclusion. The course evaluations will be anonymous and confidential, and the information gained, including constructive criticisms, will be used to improve the course in future years. More details to come.

### Grade Appeals:

If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures outlined in this policy:

<https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/gradeappeals.pdf>

### FERPA Rights Disclosure:

The purpose of this policy is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/ferparightsdisclosure/>

### Promoting Health & Safety:

The University of Vermont’s number one priority is to support a healthy and safe community:

Center for Health and Wellbeing: <https://www.uvm.edu/health>  
Counseling & Psychiatry Services (CAPS) Phone: (802) 656-3340

#### C.A.R.E.

If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by visiting the Dean of Students website at <https://www.uvm.edu/studentaffairs>

#### Final Exam Policy:

The University final exam policy outlines expectations during final exams and explains timing and process of examination period. <https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/final-exams>

#### Statement on Alcohol and Cannabis in the Academic Environment

As a faculty member, I want you to get the most you can out of this course. You play a crucial role in your education and in your readiness to learn and fully engage with the course material. It is important to note that **alcohol and cannabis have no place in an academic environment**. They can seriously impair your ability to learn and retain information not only in the moment you may be using, but up to 48 hours or more afterwards. In addition, alcohol and cannabis can:

- Cause issues with attention, memory and concentration
- Negatively impact the quality of how information is processed and ultimately stored
- Affect sleep patterns, which interferes with long-term memory formation

It is my expectation that you will do everything you can to optimize your learning and to fully participate in this course.

Date	Topics/Activities	Themes	Readings/Assignments
T, Jan. 14	<b>Introduction &amp; Syllabus Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Viewing the world with a spatial perspective</li> </ul>	Ch. 1 <a href="#">CHG</a>
Th, Jan. 16	<b>Thinking Geographically</b>		Draw and submit your 'geographic path' <b>Due Jan.16</b>
T, Jan. 21	(cont.) + <i>Critical approaches:</i> Sustainability and Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Social-Spatial Dialectic</li> <li>Dismantling Oppression thru Spatial Justice</li> </ul>	Young, 1990 (PDF on Bb)
Th, Jan. 23	<b>Population &amp; Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Births, Deaths, and Growth</li> <li>Why Girls' Education is Essential</li> <li>Spatial health disparities</li> </ul>	Ch. 2 <a href="#">CHG</a> Bb readings
T, Jan. 28	(cont.)	<i>Population pyramids</i>	<i>Intro to Social Explorer and Ex.. 1</i>
Th, Jan. 30	<b>Migration &amp; Displacement</b> FILM #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migrant Experiences</li> <li>Displacement &amp; Refugees</li> </ul>	Ch. 3 <a href="#">CHG</a> Bb readings
T, Feb. 4	(cont.)		<i>Social Explorer #1</i> <b>Due Feb. 4:</b> <i>Who lives where in the US?</i>
Th, Feb. 6	Guest Lecture: Prof. Cherie Morse	Vermont Roots Project and Place Attachment	Homework: one-paragraph reflection on Dr. Morse's research <b>Due on Bb Feb. 11</b>
T, Feb. 11	<b>Social, Cultural, &amp; Race Geographies</b>	<i>Reading Cultural Landscapes</i>	Ch. 4 <a href="#">CHG</a> Ch. 7 <a href="#">CHG</a> Bb readings - Shabazz
Th, Feb. 13	(cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constructions of Racialized Places</li> <li>Spatial Justice</li> </ul>	
T, Feb. 18	(cont.)		<i>Social Explorer #2</i> <b>Due Feb. 18</b> <i>Mapping the Roots of Racial Segregation - Chicago's South Side 1940-now</i>
Th, Feb. 20	<b>Political Geographies, Geopolitics &amp; Electoral Geography</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who rules the world? How?</li> <li>Gerrymandering and other electoral district shenanigans</li> </ul>	Ch. 8 <a href="#">CHG</a> Bb readings
T, Feb. 25	(cont.)	<i>Geopolitics Bingo</i>	
Th, Feb. 27	(cont.)		
T, Mar. 3	<i>No classes</i> Town Mtg Day		
Th, Mar. 5	<b>Test #1</b>	Covers all materials (classwork, film, readings, guest lecture, etc. so far)	<i>In-Class test, usual classroom and meeting time</i>
Mar 9-13	<i>Spring Break</i>		

Date	Topics/Activities	Themes	Readings/Assignments
T, Mar. 17	<b>Intro to Economic Geography/ Geography of Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographies of the global economy</li> <li>• Explaining 'uneven development'</li> </ul>	Ch. 9 <u>CHG*</u> Bb readings
Th, Mar. 19	(cont.)	<i>Clash of the "Three E's"</i>	
T, Mar. 24	(cont.)		
Th, Mar. 26	<b>Rural Geographies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable agriculture</li> <li>• Rural lives, rural futures?</li> </ul>	Ch. 10 <u>CHG*</u> Bb readings
T, Mar. 31	(cont.)		
Th, Apr. 2	<b>Industrial Geographies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where did this thing come from?</li> <li>• Who made/grew it, where, and under what conditions?</li> </ul>	Ch. 11 <u>CHG*</u> Bb readings
T, Apr. 7	Film	Film Week (Dr. Cope at AAG conference)	<i>You must see both films, but choose one to review.</i>
Th, Apr. 9	Film		
T, Apr. 14	(cont. industrial geogs)	<i>Geography of (your) stuff</i>	<b>Geography of 'Stuff' Chart Due Film Reviews Due (Hardcopy) in class April 14</b>
Th, Apr. 16	<b>Urban Economic Geographies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Cities &amp; Local Lives</li> </ul>	Ch. 12 <u>CHG*</u> Bb readings
T, Apr. 21	(cont.)		
Th, Apr. 23	<b>Cities, Sustainability, &amp; Social Justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban systems &amp; society – housing, transportation, public space, education, health, social welfare</li> </ul>	Ch. 13 <u>CHG*</u> Bb readings
T, Apr. 28	(cont.)	<i>Can there be a 'just', sustainable city?</i>	
Th, Apr. 30	(cont.)		
T, May 5	<b>Final Exam 1:30-4:15pm</b>	<b>Same classroom</b>	All material but emphasis on sections covered since break

\* CHG = *Contemporary Human Geography, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.* Read entire chapter for the 'gist' of it by the first date listed; I may ask you to 'close read' some sections (this will be announced in class). NOTE: All sections have required supplementary readings, which are posted in Blackboard as PDFs or weblinks. These are not listed here yet because they are often timely additions from popular media that I add based on current events.

**Schedule subject to change due to unforeseen events – check Bb announcements (these are also emailed to you)**

Getting to know you... Using any sketching technique you like, draw and label your geographic path in the space below, from where you were born, places you've lived (for at least a few months), and up to Jan. 2020. Take a picture of it and submit it on Blackboard (for my eyes only) by **10am Jan. 16**.

Write your name here: \_\_\_\_\_.