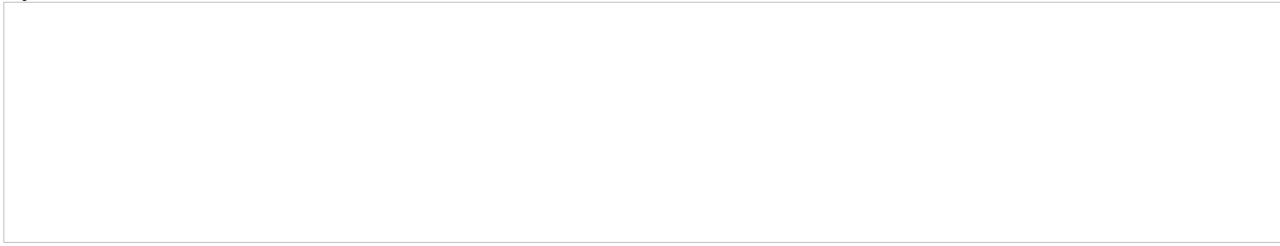


# GEOG 2630: Geography of Culture and Environment Syllabus



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Welcome!

You are about to begin a course that is both intellectually interesting and challenging and also environmentally and socially relevant. In general terms, this course is about helping you to understand the world we live in, and how we live in that world. You will enjoy the many and varied challenges that this course offers you and also benefit from learning about cultural geographic perspectives on some of the most important issues that humans face in the opening decades of the twenty-first century.

The academic discipline of geography has a long history, with origins in early Greek and Chinese societies. It is a history peppered with distinguished practitioners, numerous controversies, and a long list of achievements. The subdiscipline of cultural geography also has a long history although the key ideas that inform your work in this course were most fully articulated as recently as the 1920s. There are close links between the cultural geography studied in this course and some other academic disciplines, especially anthropology and history.

One interesting feature of this course is that it tries very hard not to form opinions prior to considering the facts. This may seem to be a rather trite observation but, especially where matters of human relationships with environment are concerned, many observers arrive at conclusions based not so much on the facts, as they are currently understood, but rather on their *a priori* ideological perspectives.

Work hard on this course and become involved in what you are doing. The harder you work and the more involved you become, the greater the rewards both in terms of your intellectual growth and, more practically perhaps, in terms of the grade that you earn at the end of the course.

Enjoy!

Contacting your instructor

For information on contacting your instructor as well as other important information from your instructor see the Instructor Letter link in this course website.

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## Course description

The University of Manitoba Calendar description of this course is as follows.

An introduction to the cultural geographic study of environment, focusing on the evolution of landscape, the creation of regions, and human relationships with nature. May not be held with the former 053.260. Prerequisite: one of GEOG 1200 or GEOG 1201 (or 053.120) (C) or GEOG 1280 or GEOG 1281 (or 053.128) (C), or written consent of department head.

As you work through the three units of this course, you will:

- explore the many and varied ways that cultural geographers have conceived of the relationship between humans and nature;
- identify the complexities inherent in any attempt to discuss human and land relationships and also appreciate the uncertain character of many of our understandings;
- recognize the need to incorporate a time perspective in many geographic analyses; and
- discover that the seemingly innocent geographic strategy of defining regions on the surface of the earth is really a contentious

activity.

This three credit hour course is one of two Geography courses that address aspects of the subdiscipline of cultural geography. The other course is GEOG 2640; It is also available through Distance and Online Education.

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## Course goals

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- analyze and discuss topics within the area of cultural geography, with special reference to human and land relationships, landscape change, and the making and remaking of regional landscapes;
- employ your knowledge from this course in more advanced courses in human geography;
- read critically and to be prepared to question and evaluate geographic and other writings; and
- think and write logically and effectively.

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## Course Materials

### Required

The following required textbook is available for purchase from the [University of Manitoba Bookstore](#). Please order this textbook immediately, if you have not already done so. See your *Distance and Online Education Student Handbook* for instructions on how to order the textbook.

Norton, William, and Margaret Walton-Roberts. 2013. *Cultural Geography: Environments, Landscapes, Identities, Inequalities* 3rd ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

This textbook provides you with a comprehensive overview of the subdiscipline of cultural geography. The subtitle, *Environments, Landscapes, Identities, Inequalities*, highlights the emphasis placed on cultural geography as a practical, environmentally and socially relevant, area of study. Although you are only responsible for some, not all, of the chapters in this book it is helpful to have a sense of the book as a whole.

Following chapter 1, which is an introduction to the book, chapter 2 discusses traditional approaches to cultural geography; especially those concerned with human and land relationships, ecology, and the landscape school. Chapter 3 addresses newer approaches, notably Marxisms, feminisms, and various strategies associated with the cultural turn. Together, these two chapters inform accounts of the practice of cultural geography contained in chapters 4 through 9.

The conceptual material in chapter 2 especially informs chapters 4, 5, and 6. There is an account of ecology and environmental ethics in chapter 4, while chapters 5 and 6 are discussions of, respectively, the historical cultural geography tradition and the regional cultural geography tradition. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 are especially informed by concepts presented in chapter 3. Discussions of racist, ethnic, and national landscapes and inequalities in chapter 7 relate particularly to Marxist concepts; accounts of discourse, power, and identity in chapter 8, especially gendered and sexual identities, relate to feminist concepts; accounts of landscape, place, and identity in chapter 9 relate principally to a variety of postmodern ideas. Chapter 10 is a conclusion.

You will find the inclusion of multiple perspectives on critical issues provides you with many opportunities to question and debate rather than simply learn.

### Optional

The only materials that you are required to use are the online course material and the textbook. However, because much of the content of this course involves an appreciation of basic geography and of links between that geography and current issues, there are six other categories of source material that you will find helpful.

**First:** as is the case with any geography course, it is always sensible to have a good atlas at hand. This will help you locate and put into context places mentioned in the textbook, and will also help you complete one component of each assignment (described below).

**Second:** other geography books, such as introductory physical, human, and regional texts, will often serve to complement the required text. There are many of these available in university and other libraries.

**Third:** if used with caution and common sense, the internet is a source of much useful information and is often able to replace texts as a source of basic factual material.

**Fourth:** the annotated list of readings at the end of each text chapter provides you with a wealth of options if you choose to follow up on some specific text content.

**Fifth:** there is often much useful material in good quality newspapers and magazines. Bear in mind that, unlike academic writings, many of these are aimed at a mass popular readership and may sensationalize material. Further, many of these outlets have a specific political agenda and may not attempt to provide the balanced perspective that is the hallmark of good academic work.

**Sixth:** use of a dictionary and thesaurus will help you both with text reading and essay writing.

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## Course Overview

This course is structured into three units, each of which is organized along similar lines. The aim here is to identify some of the features that all three units share. More precise details on how to work through a unit are included at the beginning of that unit under the heading “How to proceed.”

**First:** each unit focuses on a particular theme, involves unit and text reading, includes some learning activities, and requires submission of an assignment.

**Second:** each unit requires that you study one complete text chapter.

- Unit 1 relates to text chapter 4.
- Unit 2 relates to text chapter 5.
- Unit 3 relates to text chapter 6.

**Third:** all three units also require that you study parts of other chapters. Details of this reading are provided at the beginning of each unit.

**Fourth:** a number of learning objectives are listed at the beginning of each unit. These encourage you to identify essential content and focus on key themes as you work through each unit.

**Fifth:** towards the end of each unit there is a list of study questions that are designed to assist your Final Examination preparation.

**Sixth:** the substantive content for each unit comprises:

- two case studies that are intended to complement the text chapter material;
- a brief activity related to the need to be media literate;
- a brief activity focussing on a country or region.

Please note that these three categories of content relate to at least one of the learning objectives and/or at least one of the study questions. Working carefully through and being actively involved in this content helps you prepare for the Final Examination.

**Seventh,** this online material does not include many references and there is no glossary of terms. This is because the textbook has a lengthy and annotated list of references at the end of each chapter and also an extensive glossary. Indeed, this online material was written explicitly with the textbook in mind so there is a close integration between the two. This should be of great value to you as you work through the course.

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## Evaluation and Grading

### Distribution of marks

Assignment 1	20%
Assignment 2	20%
Assignment 3	20%
Final Examination	40%
Total	100%

## Assignments

There are three assignments, one for each of the three units. The three assignments are similarly structured. In each assignment you are to complete three activities, namely:

- write an essay (about 1,200 to 1,500 words) that is worth 15 of the 20 marks available for the assignment;
- write an opinion piece (about 300 words) that is worth 3 marks; and
- provide an about one-page factual statement that is worth 2 marks.

## Assignment due dates

Assignment	Sept.-Dec.	Jan.-Apr.	May-Aug.
1	September 30	January 31	May 24
2	October 21	February 21	June 14
3	November 10	March 10	July 5

**Note:** If the assignment due date falls during the Mid-term Break in February, it will be due on the Monday following the Mid-term Break. If you are unable to submit an assignment on time, contact your instructor well in advance of the due date, for we cannot guarantee that the instructor will accept late assignments.

#### Examination

The final exam will be written at the University of Manitoba (UM), Fort Garry campus or at an approved off-campus location. **Students needing to write at an off-campus location must declare a location by the specified deadline date** (see off-campus declaration and policy under Student Resources on course homepage). **Students writing at the UM Fort Garry campus do not need to declare an exam location.**

The Registrar's Office is responsible for the [final exam schedule](#) which is available approximately one month after the start of the course.

This course has a two-hour Final Examination that is worth 40% of your final marks. The Examination requires you to answer two essay questions from a choice of five. The questions included in the Examination are based on the study questions that are listed near the end of each unit. A good way to prepare for this Examination is to examine and review these study questions carefully. Answers to Examination questions are expected to be between about 800 – 1,000 words. References and footnotes are not expected. There is a sample Final Examination included in the assignment section of the course site that provides you with the basic Examination format.

#### Grading scale

Letter Grade	Percentage range	Description
A+	90–100	Exceptional
A	80–89	Excellent
B+	75–79	Very good
B	70–74	Good
C+	65–69	Satisfactory
C	60–64	Adequate
D	50–59	Marginal
F	0–49	Failure

**Please note: All final grades are subject to departmental review.**

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How is studying via distance different?

This is a Distance and Online Education course, and if this is your first course taken through this format, you will soon discover that there are some possible advantages and disadvantages compared to on-campus courses. It might be helpful to consider these advantages and disadvantages as you commence this course.

While we are all different in the way that we study, many students find that Distance and Online Education courses provide opportunities that on-campus courses rarely do.

- Most notably, you can see the entire course at the outset, not simply a course outline. You have a real opportunity from the beginning to understand the structure of the course, the direction being taken, and the sequence and flow of the content. You are able to note key ideas that appear later in the course and that might help you in your study of earlier content. Of course, this is not

to suggest that you read all of the course material at the outset, which would probably be most difficult. It does mean however, that you can dip into later material if you find it helpful to do so.

- Another advantage of this format is that you are able to dictate the pace of the course (within assignment deadline and examination date constraints). This can be most beneficial if your lifestyle means that you are sometimes able to allot substantial time to the course and at other times have limited opportunities to study. Overall, you are able to impose your choice of organization on how and when you study. Of course, it is recommended that you study on a regular basis, but this is not always possible.

However, many students do find that the Distance and Online Education format has two possible disadvantages.

- You lack the prompt of regular class meetings that serve to keep you on track.
- Although you are welcome to email, you have less formal contact with your instructor.

Taking advantage of the opportunities to correspond with other students and the professor, however, can offset these disadvantages. Information concerning corresponding with other students is included in each of the three units.

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## Organize yourself and your time

With these possible advantages and disadvantages in mind, what is the best way to study, complete the assignments, and prepare for the final examination?

As far as is possible, set regular time aside for this course and stick to your schedule. You may find it helpful to read and study the text material in five relatively discrete stages (known as the SQRRR strategy):

- **Survey:** acquire an overview of the text chapter by focusing on any introductory and concluding comments and by using headings and subheadings as reference points.
- **Question:** look over the reading a second time, thinking about what you are reading in greater detail; as you read, question the content by taking notes or marking the text as you choose.
- **Read:** read in detail; you may be tempted to do this first, but it is usually a good idea to delay this stage as you acquire a more detailed understanding once you have the larger context that is provided by working through the first two stages.
- **Recite:** read the key ideas aloud, again asking questions.
- **Review:** accomplish a final reading to make sure that you have grasped both the key ideas and the needed factual content.

Note that there is a “How to proceed” section near the beginning of each unit that incorporates this SQRRR approach. Of course, the important thing as you work through this course is that you adopt studying and learning strategies that work for you.

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
## Understanding space and time

Understanding **where** places are, what other geographical places they are close to, and geographical places they are distant from, really helps in understanding the meaning of places. Therefore, do not forget to use your atlas during the course to locate places when they are mentioned in the online content or textbook.

Understanding **when** events occur, what precedes them, and what follows them, really helps in understanding the significance of events.

A useful strategy to engage in while going through the online material and the textbook is to develop a timeline to facilitate your understanding of change through time. One timeline is suggested for this course: *covering the period since about 1450*.

There will be reminders and guidance throughout the online content to help you initiate and maintain these activities.

When you see this Icon, this is your reminder to add information to your Timeline. 

When you see this Icon, this is your reminder to locate the region or area in your atlas. 

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## Writing essays

Most of the assignment marks, and all of the final examination marks are based on essays, therefore, it is important that you write these essays in an effective and relevant way. Essays provide you with an opportunity to sharpen your thinking skills and to express your thoughts by writing in a carefully reasoned manner. Recognize that essays are an opportunity to express your reasoned and well-justified opinions on the issue raised in the essay question. As such, essays include both factual content and interpretations of those facts.

The following comments refer specifically to assignment essays, which provide opportunities to write and rewrite (examination essays are necessarily less polished). Many style manuals suggest that essays are best structured as follows.

- There is an **introductory** paragraph of about 100-150 words. The introduction serves one purpose - to introduce the essay. As such, the introduction **may** include any necessary definitions of terms, a statement of the structure of the essay, and reference to key content. The introduction **must** include a thesis sentence. Overall, it is often good practice to begin the introduction with general statements and to conclude it with the thesis sentence. The thesis sentence informs the reader as to the basic theme of the essay.
- The **body** of the essay comprises a series of paragraphs, probably 6 to 8, each about 150 words in length. Each of these paragraphs presents a specific argument that relates directly back to the thesis sentence. It is helpful to begin each of these paragraphs with a topic sentence and conclude each with a linking sentence to the next paragraph. The body of the essay will probably include both facts to support the argument being presented and also generalizations designed to accommodate especially complex ideas.
- There is a **concluding** paragraph that is closely linked to the introduction. Indeed, it is often helpful to reiterate your thesis sentence (the final sentence of the introduction) as the first sentence of the conclusion. The conclusion should be one paragraph of about 100-150 words. The conclusion **may** include an acknowledgment of ideas/facts that present a different view of the topic and suggestions for additional essay content. The conclusion **must** include your clearly stated decision on the topic being discussed.

Of course, a good essay is always on topic, includes a logical flow of ideas, and provides an answer to the issue raised. There needs to be evidence that you are using and understanding the textbook and online content. This does not mean repeating that content, but rather using the content in the context of the particular essay question. Good essays succeed in integrating and synthesizing content from text and other sources as appropriate. The essay also needs to reflect your views, and interpretations. These more individualistic comments must be reasoned, not simply asserted, and must relate to the other essay content.

**Note:** the essays you are to write, both for the three assignments and for the final examination are fairly general in character. This means that they do not require one correct answer; rather there are usually several different approaches that can be taken in responding to these essay questions. The essay questions are invitations, providing you with the opportunity to think critically and creatively about the topic raised in each question.

How your essays are graded

A	“A” papers “present a thorough exploration of the topic. They show depth and complexity of thought, focused and coherent organization and a superior control of vocabulary and sentence structure.” Demonstrates thorough knowledge of content. (An <b>A+</b> paper is synonymous with “scholarship” level.)
B+	“B+” papers present a logical flow of information, but at times, transitions between paragraphs are lacking. They show good use of creative expression and the body of the paper contains most of the expected elements of the topic.
B	“B” papers “present a substantial treatment of the topic, although not as thoroughly or as effectively organized [as an A paper]. They show some depth of thought, coherent organization and control of vocabulary and sentence structures.”
C+	“C+” papers “present only a moderate treatment of the topics. Similar to [B papers] they show clarity of thought, but they may lack complexity. These essays demonstrate coherent organization, although some digressions may be evident. The writing shows an overall control of vocabulary and sentence structure.”
C	“C” papers “may neglect or distort one or more of the writing tasks. They demonstrate problems with organization and analysis of the topic. They may contain recurrent mechanical errors, resulting in language that occasionally is difficult to follow.”
D	“D” essays “seriously distort one or more of the writing tasks. They demonstrate problems with organization and analysis of the topic. They may contain recurrent mechanical errors, resulting in language that occasionally is difficult to follow.”
F	An “F” paper is not a pass.

(Adapted from Bresnick, S., 1996, p. 712-13.)

A word of caution about the assignments and the final examination

Some students find that they do very well on the assignments, but they do not do nearly as well on the final examination. While your grades on the assignments will give you some idea of how well you are mastering the material they may not indicate how well you will

do on the examination, because the examination is written under very different circumstances. Because the assignments are open book, they do not require the amount of memorization that a closed-book examination requires nor are they limited to a specific time period. Some students have told us that, based on the high marks they received on the assignments, they were overconfident and underestimated the time and effort needed to prepare for the final examination.

Please keep all this in mind as you prepare for the examination. Pay careful attention to the description of the type of questions that will be on your final examination.

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#### A note on academic integrity

Acquaint yourself with the University's policy on cheating, plagiarism, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and Policy section of the *University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar*. **Note:** These policies are also located in your *Distance and Online Education Student Handbook*.

An excellent practical source on the issue of maintaining academic honesty is the handbook *Cheating, Plagiarism and Fraud*, available from the Student Advocacy Office, Room 519 University Centre, University of Manitoba; or from their website at [http://www.umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student\\_advocacy/cheating\\_plagiarism\\_fraud.shtml](http://www.umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/cheating_plagiarism_fraud.shtml)

Please make sure you understand the nature and the serious consequences of compromising academic integrity.

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#### Distance and Online Education (DE) Student Resources

In your course website there are links for the following:

- Contacting Distance and Online Education Staff
- Distance and Online Student Handbook
- Distance and Online Education Website

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#### Acknowledgements

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