

World Peoples and Cultural Environments

Geography 4, Spring 2012
M W F 141 McCone Hall

Instructor: Joshua Jelly-Schapiro
jellyschapiro@berkeley.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12-2pm, 587 McCone

GSI: Jenni Allen (jenniferallen@berkeley.edu)
Ricardo Niño Huerta (ricardo1@berkeley.edu)

Course Description

Since the dawn of human history, people have sought to make organic sense of the world's diversity – by dividing its surface into “natural” regions; by forging nations and borders; by classifying and analyzing cultures. All the place-names and borders on the world map were created by human beings, and can be changed by them. In this course, we will attempt to absorb some of the world's human and natural diversity. But by approaching the world's peoples and nations in terms of processes rather than lines on a map, we will focus less on how the globe looks than on how it got that way – and on what's at stake in how we understand its varied inhabitants and lands. So doing, we will approach and explore a range of questions at the core of human geography as scholarly practice: the relationship between physical environment and human society; the causes and implication of once-distinct continental cultures coming into contact; capitalism as a geographical and historical phenomenon; the significance of “place,” and why it matters to human beings.

Expectations for attendance and participation

Attendance and participation are required – and an easy way to earn 20% of your grade. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each lecture and section, and all students are expected to show up on time. During discussion, I expect thoughtful and respectful engagement from everyone – our classroom should be a place to try out new ideas and learn from each other in a way where everyone feels comfortable. Readings should be completed **before** the week they're listed on the syllabus, and **brought** to section during the session they're to be discussed. As a part of your participation grade, every student is required to come see the instructor or their GSI at least once during office hours (to discuss final project, or otherwise)

Readings

Readings will be comprised largely of articles posted to bspace (and available in a reader from Vick's Copy), and drawn from the following books. We will also screen a number of films to augment course material and advance discussion.

Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel*

Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*
Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*

Assignments

Participation and reading responses (posted weekly to bspace)	20%
Map quizzes (10 quizzes, corresponding to the world's continents)	20%
Mid-term Exam (identifications, short-answer, essay)	20%
Group Final Project (in-class presentation on commodity history)	20%
Final Exam (identifications, short-answer, essay)	20%

WEEK 1: The Geographical Point of View

Jan 18: *Introductory*

Jan 20: *What is human geography?*

WEEK 2: Guns, Germs & Steel

READING: Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. Prologue (“Yali’s Question”); Chapter 1 (“Up to the Starting Line”); Chapter 3 (“Collision at Cajamarca”); Chapter 4 “Farmer power”

Jan 23: FILM: Guns, Germs & Steel, part 1

Jan 25: *Yali’s Question; the emergence of agriculture; world civilizations*

Jan 27 FILM: Guns, Germs & Steel, part 2

WEEK 3: Guns, Germs, and Steel (cont.)

READING: Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*; Chapter 5 “Historys Have and Have Nots”; Chapter 9 “Zebras, Unhappy Marriages, the Anna Karenina Principle”; Chapter 11 “Lethal Gift of Livestock”; Chapter 12 “Blueprints and Borrowed Letters”

Jan 30: *The emergence of agriculture, the importance of livestock, the invention of steel*

Feb 1: FILM: Guns, Germs, and Steel, part 3

Feb. 3: *The evolution of germs; writing and religion; the Two Worlds*

Map Quiz 1 (in section): North Africa and Southwest Asia

WEEK 3 The world to 1400 / The Colombian Exchange

Charles Mann, "1491"; Eric R. Wolf, "Europe: Prelude to Expansion"
(from *Europe and the People Without History*)

Feb 6: *The Americas before Columbus*

Feb 8: *Europe: Prelude to Expansion*

Feb 10: *A tale of two empires: Aztec and Spanish*

Map quiz 2 (in section): South America

WEEK 5 The Colonial Americas

READING: Eduardo Galeano, *The Open Veins of Latin America* (selections); David Delaney, "Territory: A Brief Introduction"

Feb 13: *Encomiendas and Missions*

Feb 15: *Interlude: the History of Territory*

Feb 17: FILM: *The Mission* (Roland Joffe, dir.)

Map quiz 3 (in section): The Caribbean and Central America

WEEK 6 The Early Modern Era in the Atlantic World (1492-1700s)

READING: Bartolome de las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies* (excerpt); Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* (excerpt); Jelly-Schapiro, "In Congo Square"

[No class 2/20: President's Day]

Feb 22: *Slavery and the Triangle Trade*

[No class 2/24: AAG]

WEEK 7: The Atlantic World cont.

READING: Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power* (Introduction; Chapters 1-3)

Feb 27: *Commodities in history: the case of sugar*

Feb 29: *Race and the Caribbean in the making of the modern world*

Mar 2: FILM: *The Price of Sugar*

Map quiz 4 (in section): Sub-Saharan Africa

WEEK 8:

READING: Mintz, cont; Wolf, “Modes of Production,” and “The Industrial Revolution,”
Europe and the People without History

Mar 5 *Review for mid-term*

Mar 7 [MIDTERM EXAM] Map quiz 5 (on midterm): Europe

[Mar 9: No class]

WEEK 9: The Birth of Capitalism

READING:; Max Weber, “the Meaning and Presuppositions of Modern Capitalism”;
Marx and Engels, “The Communist Manifesto”

Mar 12: *Modes of Production*

Mar 14: *The Industrial Revolution (and its discontents)*

Mar 16: *The Communist Manifesto*

Map quiz 6 (in section): Southeast Asia

WEEK 10 The Imperial Age

READING: Wolf, “The Movement of Commodities”; Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja,
The Congo: From Leopold to Kabila: A People’s History (selections) Leopold II, “Letter
from King Leopold”

Mar 18: *The Scramble for Africa*

Mar 21: *Rubber and Ivory: The Case of the Congo*

Mar 23: FILM: Darwin's Nightmare (Hubert Sauper, dir.)

Map quiz 7 (in section): East Asia

[SPRING BREAK]

WEEK 11: Globalization, Urbanization: A Planet of Slums?

READING: Mike Davis, "A Planet of Slums"; Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*

Apr 2: *Tourists and Natives*

Apr 4: FILM: Life and Debt

Apr 6: *A Planet of Slums?*

Map quiz 8 (in section): Russia, Central and Southern Asia

WEEK 12: Conclusions / Student Presentations

Apr 9:

Apr 11

Apr 13

[Sections meet]

WEEK 13 Student Presentations

Apr 16:

Apr 18:

Apr 20:

[No sections]

WEEK 14 Student Presentations

Apr 23:

Apr 25:

Apr 27:

[No sections]

[FINAL EXAM] [including Map quiz 9: North America]