Course Description

This course is the introduction into the Masters program in Geography. It is designed to provide everyone with a solid understanding of the principles, ideas, and theories that define the discipline. Specifically, we will discuss trace the evolution of geographic thought throughout the 20th century. This course assumes an approach to scientific and geographical research that is contextual. In other words, knowledge is not viewed as being independent of the existing political, social, economic, and philosophical environment, but rather wrapped up as a cultural product that is constantly contested. At the end of this course, you should (if you do not already) appreciate geography as an intellectual pursuit, rather than solely an empirical or applied one.

The course is taught in a seminar format (i.e. no lectures) and students are required to attend class prepared and ready to discuss the issues assigned for that meeting.

Course requirements

Your assessment in this seminar is derived from two main components:

1) Participation (20%). Each student is expected and required to actively participate in all discussions. Additionally, each student is required to facilitate class discussion once during the semester. As a means to furthering the discussions/debates in class, all students are required to write one to two questions for class discussion each week. These questions should be emailed to me by 9 a.m. on the morning of the seminar. Questions will be assembled and edited, if necessary, and distributed to all students in class that evening as a guide to the discussion.

2) Written Assignments (4 @ 20% each; 80%). Each student will write four short written assignments, typically no more than 4-5 pages double-spaced. These assignments are designed to elicit critical and constructive thought on your parts. The assignments will draw largely on class readings and discussion and may require some outside reading. Essays will be due one week after they are assigned.
**Schedule**

August 30: Course Overview and Introductions.

**September 6**  *Being a Geographer*


**September 13**  *Foundations of the Discipline*


**September 20**  *A Brief Historical Review*


**September 27**  *Perspectives on a Discipline*


**ONLINE**

**October 4**  *Environmental Determinism and Beyond*


**October 11**  *The Scientific Method and Systematic Studies*

**Johnston and Sidaway**, Chapter 3.


**October 18**  *Spatial Sciences*

**Johnston and Sidaway**, Chapter 4


**October 25 Humanistic Geography**

**Johnston and Sidaway**, Chapter 5


**November 1 Radical/ Marxist Geographies**

**Johnston and Sidaway**, Chapter 6


**November 8 Postmodernism**

**Johnston and Sidaway**, Chapter 7


**November 15 Feminist Geography**

**Johnston and Sidaway**, Chapter 8.


**November 22 Cultural Geography**


**November 29 GIS and Applied Geography**

**Johnston**, Chapter 9.


December 5  Final Thoughts
Johnston and Sidaway, Chapter 10


December 12
tbd