



# Geography of the United States & Canada

geog 105, CRN 10168  
with Drew Kapp, and *you*

University of Hawai'i at Hilo  
Waiākea, Hilo, Moku O Keawe, Ka Pae 'Āina O Hawai'i  
'Spring' 2009

Tu/Th at 12:30-1:45pm  
Kanaka'ole Hall 126

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Edith Kanaka'ole Hall 258B

Mon/Wed 10am-12pm + 1-3pm; Tues/Thurs 10am-12pm + 2-4pm

*Course website: <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~dkapp>*

## Geography of the United States and Canada (North America)

This course surveys **regional landscapes of the United States and Canada**, an area sometimes referred to as **North America**. This subcontinent is composed of two of the world's largest countries hosting diverse and dynamic societies whose cultures, economies and politics have had an enormous global impact, including on Hawai'i, with which the US currently maintains a special relationship. We will enhance our overall knowledge of North America, paying attention to both the larger landscape and our communities of familiarity.

We will increase our appreciation of the **diversity** of North America's environmental and cultural landscapes, and examine the spatial dimensions of human activities and issues including environmental problems, land use, urbanization, ethnic diversity, etc. We will apply essential geographic concepts, seeking **patterns**, while being sure not to miss those forces and examples that *defy* such patterns, and finally developing a body of critical knowledge of North America.

The course is structured so that we investigate North America by regions – such as Québec, MexAmerica, and the Pacific Northwest - which, it is important to note, have no inherent order and are of arbitrary design.



## Our Kuleana

In this course we work **collaboratively**, so that we **all** have an important role in sharing knowledge of the North America – knowledge we have acquired from our exposure to information and from personal experience.

## My contributions

I introduce each region of North America through electronic slideshow lectures (also posted on our class website) synchronized with our textbook. I supplement these lectures with audio-visual presentations, in-class exercises, and short readings. In a sense, this course should be a bit like an academic look at this fascinating and complex region, in which the *uniqueness* of different **places** is the emphasis.

I would also like to facilitate the following processes for each of you:

- Elevate geographic literacy;
- Develop and perpetuate an appreciation and respect for places;
- Create relationships with other classmates;
- Enhance your own personal style of communication;
- Conceptualize connections between North America and Hawai'i;
- Contribute to environmental well-being through your actions.

## Course Enhancement through Uluākea

This course is influenced and enhanced by my involvement in the Uluākea project administered by the Kīpuka Native Hawaiian Student Center. The project's primary goal is to develop the University of Hawai'i at Hilo into a Hawaiian place of learning. As a part of this project, this course will incorporate experiences and resources for the development of Hawai'i learning processes at UH-Hilo.

## Student Learning Outcomes for Geography of North America

- Identify and describe environmental-cultural characteristics of North America;
- Attain competency in geography's key disciplinary concepts;
- Develop an understanding of the diversity of North American society, cultural traditions and cross-cultural interactions;
- Improve critical reading and writing skills through close readings of textbook material, test-taking and producing short written assignments;
- Analyze geographic information and develop research competency through written work, and group discussions;

## Textbook & Supplemental Readings

Please read each chapter of our textbook, *The Geography of North America* by Susan Hardwick and her colleagues (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008) suggested in our class schedule. There is no need to bring the text to class, *except* on those occasions when I've requested that you do so in advance. There is a copy of the textbook on Reserve at the Library, too, that you can use if you choose not to purchase the book. **Supplemental Readings:** Please read these **short stories and poems** from and about different regions of North America, as I hand them out. Many of them describe the landscapes and experiences of people on the margins of North American society, including Native Americans/First Nations people, recent immigrants, and folks from the 'ghetto' as well as the 'boonies.'

## GeoProjects

Please complete four (4) GeoProjects for this course. Each taps your personal and newly-acquired knowledge about places, as well as your critical abilities, creativity and organization. Each GeoProject will require some research, focus on different issues and places within North America, and have different formats. Check out the last page of the syllabus for more details.

## Tests

Please take three (3) non-cumulative Chapter Tests\* for this class. Questions on them will relate to class lectures, information offered in our textbook, and audio-visual presentations. The Tests will be comprised of questions posed in a variety of short answer formats, and will include landscape and map identification. I will post study guides on our class website one week in advance.

\* You must arrive at a Test no more than 15 minutes after it has begun. If you miss a Test you may make it up *only* if you fulfill the following conditions: a) Contact me by phone, e-mail or in person *before* the Test takes place, b) Provide documented evidence of the emergency or problem, and c) Make up the Test *before* it is returned.

## Participation

Please commit to our class by attending it always, except when very important personal issues prevent you from doing so. Participate in ways that are appropriate to your cultural and individual background, take part in in-class exercises and discussions about our readings.

## Huaka'i/Excursion

Please participate in a class excursion to explore American influences on the landscape. This is a special activity, and represents one of the most valuable components of our course!

## Honua Ola Environmental Community Service Project

Please devote 4 hours any time during the semester to participation in a community service project aimed at restoring or improving **environmental** well-being within a given community. I will arrange different opportunities in which you can participate. Likely projects I can offer include native vegetation outplanting, coastal clean-ups, and trail maintenance, in Hilo, Puna, Kohala, and Ka'ū. You may instead opt to find or create your own environmental community service project, and you may work with other students or individually. I would like for each group or individual to create a **visual record** (photos, short films) that we will post on the class website as a positive example for others.

## Evaluation

GeoProjects = 40%, Tests = 35%, Participation = 15%, Huaka'i = 5%, Honua Ola = 5%  
Course Grade: (incl. +/-) A=90-100% B=80-89% C=70-79% D=60-69% F<60%

## Special Student Services

Any student with a documented disability who would like to request accommodations should contact the University Disability Services Office (933-0816 (voice), or 933-3334 (TTY), [shirachi@hawaii.edu](mailto:shirachi@hawaii.edu), Hale Kauano'e A Wing Lounge), as early in the term as possible.



# Geography of North America

'Spring' 2009

Tuesday	Thursday
We begin this semester during the month of <b>Makali'i</b> (Dec 27-Jan 26) for the Island of Hawai'i: a wet time of year, with Kona winds; turtles come ashore and whales continue to arrive; land is prepared for cultivation	
Jan 13: Introduction to the course	Jan 15: Geography (what is it anyway?)
Jan 20: Introduction to our Textbook (ch1)	Jan 22: Environment of North America (ch2)
Month of <b>Kā'elo</b> (Jan 27-Feb 23): a month of thunder, lightning, rain and wind; new leaves sprout	
Jan 27: Human Geography of N Amer (ch3)	Jan 29: Human Geography of N Amer (ch4)
<b>Feb 3: Atlantic Periphery (ch5)</b> <b>GeoSurvey due</b>	Feb 5: Québec (ch6)
Feb 10: Megalopolis (ch7)	Feb 12: Megalopolis (ch7)
<b>Feb 17: Test 1</b>	Feb 19: Great Lakes (ch8)
Month of <b>Kaulua</b> (Feb 24-March 25): cool and warm winds alternate; lehua blossom profusely; limu is gathered	
Feb 24: Inland South (ch9)	Feb 26: Coastal South (ch10)
<b>Mar 3: Great Plains; (ch11)</b> <b>GeoEssay due</b>	Mar 5: Rocky Mountains (ch12)
Mar 10: Intermontane West (ch13)	Mar 12: Intermontane West (ch13)
<b>Mar 17: Test 2</b>	<b>Mar 19: no class</b>
<i>Week of Mar 23</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>
Month of <b>Nana</b> (Mar 26-Apr 23): sunny but showery month of 'animation'	
Mar 31: MexAmerica (ch14)	Apr 2: MexAmerica (ch14)
<b>Apr 7: California; (ch15)</b> <b>GeoStory due</b>	Apr 9: California (ch15)
Apr 14: Pacific Northwest (ch16)	Apr 16: Pacific Northwest (ch16)
Apr 21: Hawaiian Islands (ch17)	Apr 23: Hawaiian Islands (ch17)
Month of <b>Welo</b> (beginning around Apr 24): the last month of the wet season, a time of continuing plant growth	
Apr 28: Far North (ch18)	Apr 30: Far North (ch18)
<b>May 5: GeoScape Exhibition/Hō'ike</b> <b>GeoScape due</b>	
	<b>May 14: Test 3 @ 11:50am</b>

## GeoProject general guidelines (I'll distribute a checklist for each GeoProject)

- Focus on a state, province, territory, cultural homeland, ecoregion, or city in one of North America's Regions you'll be randomly assigned: a *different* region & place for each
- Focus on a theme or associated issue/s from the chart below: a *different* theme for each
- Address current issues and circumstances – from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Conduct research into this theme as expressed in the place, using 3+ up-to-date sources
- Cite your sources properly in your own preferred style & include a list of sources
- Title your work, and specify the theme you're exploring
- Be sure there are strong references to PLACE/S throughout your project

### 1. GeoSurvey – due February 3

After conducting research on an issue or topic that is of interest and importance today in one of the Regions of North America that you are randomly assigned, conduct a survey to find out what people know and think about the issue or topic, and in a double-spaced minimum-500 word (2-page) report, carefully analyze your findings and draw conclusions about the knowledge and perspectives of people you surveyed.

### 2. GeoEssay - due March 3

After conducting research on an issue or topic that is of interest and importance today in another one of your randomly-assigned Regions of North America, in a double-spaced minimum-500 word (2-page) essay with citations and sources, write an organized, articulate and personalized essay on that issue in that place.

### 3. GeoStory - due April 7

After conducting research on an issue or topic that is of interest and importance today in yet another one of your randomly-assigned Regions of North America, in a double-spaced minimum-500 word (2-page) work of fiction, write an original and creative short story about that issue in that place.

### 4. GeoScape - due May 5

After conducting research on an issue or topic that is of interest and importance today in another of your randomly-assigned Regions of North America, create a poster that relies heavily on visual imagery, a collage or any other type of visual artwork. Allow the images or artwork you create or select to clearly and even provocatively convey pertinent information about your chosen issue in that place.

<b>Regions (choose a place – such as a state, province, city, etc. - <i>within</i> one of these for each Project)</b>
Atlantic Periphery, Québec, Megalopolis, Great Lakes, Inland South, Coastal South, Great Plains, Rockies, Intermontane West, MexAmerica, California, Pacific Northwest, Hawai'i, Far North
+
<b>Some 21<sup>st</sup> C Themes &amp; Issues (choose a different theme for each project)</b>
<b>Natural Features:</b> Associated hazards; cultural significance; legends; use and/or abuse...
<b>Changing Ecosystems:</b> Ecosystem status; climate/biotic change; water/land issues; human impact...
<b>Historical Features:</b> Cultural significance; associated legends/histories; use and/or abuse...
<b>Population &amp; Settlement:</b> Pop'n location, distribution, density; growth/decline; migration; ethnicity...
<b>Language, Religion, Culture/Customs:</b> Diversity; status; cultural landscape; issues or conflicts...
<b>Urban-Rural Contrasts:</b> Urbanization, landscapes; land use; lifestyles; cultural change...
<b>Political Landscape:</b> Electoral geography; sovereignty movement, colonization, disputes...
<b>Economy:</b> Industries; agriculture; tourism; military; globalization; sustainable development...
<b>Social Geographies:</b> Health, \$\$ indicators/disparities, well-being; ethnic/gender inequalities...

Paul!