

Geography 500-001: Seminar in Cultural Geography
Course Syllabus - Spring 2008

Instructor:	Dr. Gillian Acheson	Time:	T 5:30-8:20 pm
Phone:	650-5281	Classroom:	AH 1312
E-mail:	gacheso@siue.edu	Office:	AH 1412
Office Hours:	W 11:00-12:00; R 12:30-1:30, and by appointment		

Course Materials @ www.siue.edu/~gacheso/500.htm & <http://bb.siue.edu/>

Course Objectives: This course considers the geographical aspects of social justice. Social justice is concerned with the distribution of society's advantages and disadvantages. Its study is inherently geographic because social justice issues are shaped in and by the real places in which they occur. In this course, theories of social justice will be considered, followed by a consideration of specific issues, including environmental quality, poverty and hunger, race and ethnicity, gender, education, and urban issues. These issues occur at a number of different, interconnected scales (local, regional, state, and international), and a number of examples will be used to illustrate this idea. This course is meant to provide a broad understanding of social justice from a geographic perspective, as well as develop your ability to critically evaluate opinions, theories, and research about social justice specifically and geography in particular.

Readings: There is no text book for this course. Instead, a series of readings will be used. In most cases, these readings will be available via Blackboard (<http://bb.siue.edu>). Occasionally, copies will be made available in class.

Course Mechanics: Your final grade will be comprised of the following:

Discussion of readings	
Weekly papers	25%
Class discussion	20%
Project	
Presentation	10%
Paper	25%
Final exam	20%

Discussion of readings: A true graduate seminar involves in-depth discussion of ideas, concepts, and theories pertinent to the subject at hand. To that end, you must come to class prepared to discuss the readings. To ensure that you are prepared, you will write short papers on a weekly basis reacting to the readings. Weekly papers should be typed, proof-read, and include appropriate citations (please see note about proofreading below). Grades will be based on your understanding and critical evaluation of the readings, as well as your writing style. By writing these papers, you should be prepared to participate in class discussions. Throughout the semester, you will take turns leading the class discussion - this task requires you to summarize (present) the readings, develop some questions for discussion, and consult additional sources of information on your topic.

Project: Over the course of the semester, you will develop, research, and write a paper dealing with a social justice topic from a geographic perspective. The paper will be due toward the end of the semester, and you will make a presentation of your research in class. A proposal and list of sources will be due mid-way through the semester to ensure that you are on track. A detailed description of the project and a grading rubric will be handed out to provide more information.

Final exam: The final exam will be essay format: short answer questions and long(er) essay questions. It is meant to demonstrate your ability to synthesize information discussed over the course of the semester. Please note: make-up exams will only be granted if you contact me within 24 hours of the scheduled exam time, and have a university-sanctioned excuse.

Discussing your grades: Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I cannot discuss your grades with anyone other than you. Grades will not be given via e-mail or the phone, but you are always welcome to stop by my office to discuss any of your work in this course.

Schedule and Readings: The schedule listed below is flexible and can be modified over the course of the semester based on class interests.

DATE	TOPIC AND READINGS
1/15	Introduction
1/22	Theories of social justice
1/29	Environmental justice
2/5	Race and ethnicity
2/12	Wealth & poverty: United States
2/19	Wealth & poverty: Worldwide
2/26	Hunger
3/4	Gender
3/11	Spring Break - No Class!
3/18	Crime
3/25	Marginalized peoples: sexual orientation, disabilities
4/1	Education
4/8	Urban issues
4/15	Political geography & social justice
4/22	Project presentations
4/29	Project presentations
TBA	Final Exam (during scheduled final exam period).

Proofreading Papers: Writing is an important part of your graduate program, and it should be treated as such. You are expected to approach any and all writing in this class carefully — that means that you will proofread your work for grammar, typos and clarity. Please note: entries that contain 5 or more grammatical/proofreading errors will be returned, ungraded, for corrections. Corrected papers, along with the original paper, must be re-submitted within one week after being returned in class. Papers will be graded after corrections are made; five points will be deducted from your score each time a paper fails to meet basic standards. If you need help with writing, visit SIUE's Writing Center (www.siu.edu/IS/WRITING) for help.

Attendance: As a graduate student you are expected to attend all classes. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your final grade. *You are responsible for all course material regardless of attendance.*

Class Courtesy: It is important for each person enrolled in this course to be treated with, and to treat others, with respect and courtesy. To that end:

- (1) come to class by 5:30 pm and stay until 8:20 pm. If you must arrive late or depart early, do so quickly and quietly;
- (2) turn your cell phone off (no calls, no text messaging);
- (3) come to class prepared to listen and participate (in other words do not do other work, read the newspaper, sleep, or have private conversations while in this class - if you must do these things, then do not come to class);
- (4) listen to each other's comments and opinions with an open mind; and,
- (5) avoid using offensive speech. Inflammatory comments which provoke or insult anyone in this class will not be tolerated.

Scholastic Honesty: Each student enrolled is expected to earn her/his grade honestly, without cheating. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses; they will not be tolerated. Cheating of any kind will be dealt with according to the *Student Code of Conduct*.

ADA Statement: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: Disability Support Services at 650-3726.