

GEOG3414 Cultures, Social Justice and Urban Space (6 credits)

Course Teacher: Dr J J Zhang

Objectives

Students will be familiarized with the foundation of Cultural Geography, and learn to make sense of the mutually constitutive relationship between people and their environments.

Course Synopsis

This course interrogates the cultural, social and urban aspects of our everyday life through a Cultural Geography perspective. More specifically, it will utilise the concept of 'landscape' as lens through which to explore contemporary debates on people and their lived urban environment. Students will explore how cultures are geographically expressed and how geography is a basic element in the making of culture. Furthermore, attention will be paid to the power relations amongst various stakeholders in the creation of urban spaces and social systems. The course thus plots a thematic learning journey, which spans from urban injustice, struggles over public spaces, and identity politics to culture and heritage as tourism resources. As such, students will be familiarised with the basics of Cultural Geography, and learn to make sense of the mutually constitutive relationship between people and their environments.

Lecture Topics

- Definitions and approaches
- Power and imagination
- Moral geographies of urban landscape
- Public space and urban social movements
- Urban mobilities
- Identity at a variety of different scales
- Multiculturalism and post-nationalism
- Neoliberalisation of Urban Governance
- Culture and heritage as economic resource

Assessment

Examination (two hours) 40%; Coursework 60% (consists of individual essay 20%; project presentation 10%; project report 25% and class participation 5%).

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge:

- Major theories and debates in Cultural Geography
- Critical perspective in understanding 'culture'
- Understand landscape as an expression of socio-cultural forces
- Culture in the age of globalisation

Skills:

- Analytical skills for interpreting place, space, and political-economic processes from a cultural geographical perspective
- Critical reading, writing and presentation skills
- Qualitative research methods

Recommended Reading List

There is no set text for this course but there are a few introductory texts that are useful:

1. Crang, M. (1998) *Cultural Geography*. London: Routledge.
2. Oakes, T.S. and Price, P.L. (eds.) (2008) *The Cultural Geography Reader*, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.
3. Valentine, G. (2001) *Social Geographies: Space and Society*, Harlow, England; New York, N.Y.: Prentice Hall.