

Frontiers in Geography
(GRG 374)

Syllabus for Spring, 2010

Dr. Leo Zonn
Department of Geography and the Environment
Geography Building, GRG 202
232-1586 (home is 448-1146)
zonn@mail.utexas.edu

Class Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 2.00-3.15
Office Hours: Tuesday 11.00-12.00, Wednesday 1.00-2.00
Or by appointment

A. Course Purpose and Objective

This course is called *Frontiers in Geography*, which the Department of Geography and the Environment expects to be a capstone experience. Capstone can be interpreted in a variety of ways and the faculty of our department have tried many of them while teaching this course, based to a great extent upon their own respective personal and academic histories, styles, personalities, and general sense of what is important and what is not. None of them are wrong. The route I have chosen emphasizes the ‘practice of being a geographer’ as the capstone experience. What does this mean? It means that we want to think about the engagements between what we shall call your ‘daily lived practices’ and the many nature(s) of geography; my goal is to help you think about geographies of the everyday, both personal and professional, although the two can never be totally separated. The result is a mnemonic of sorts, whereby so much of what you experience reminds you of why you are a geographer, while at the same time the engagement will help you to interpret the world around you with a greater knowledge, curiosity, and appreciation. Will it make you a better citizen? That one is ultimately your choice, but let’s hope for the best. So, going back to the ‘frontiers’ part, we see that my vision of capstone is one possible frontier in which I try to ensure that what you have learned as a geographer stays with you a while.

The specific objectives of this course that are intended to contribute toward this broader practice are: 1) to use your experience in Geography to construct a substantive research project, which will be in written and presented forms (much more on this later); 2) to get a sense of the nature of the university as geography’s home, while including conversations of ethics, social justice, liberal arts, and other major issues facing the university community as it engages with the world at large; 3) to become familiar with Geography as a discipline; and 4) to talk about engagements of you, geography, and the job world.

B. Subject Itinerary

Major Subjects

- 1) Overview of the nature(s) of the discipline; “what is geography?” and how can it help me write my final paper!
- 2) Uses of Geography in understanding contemporary settings and practices, especially the case of tourism. Research subject and papers.
- 3) Geography as a discipline: associations, journals, and departments.
- 4) Where do geographers go? Graduate School, academics, and professions beyond the university
- 5) Practical matters for the Geographer: the resume, looking for a job, interviewing.
- 6) Structure and practice of the University: issues of note

C. Grading

Shorter papers	25 percent of total grade
Final paper/presentation	40 percent of total grade
Participation	25 percent of total grade
Final Examination	10 percent of total grade

D. Readings

You will be assigned articles during the semester; they are on blackboard. There is no textbook.

E. Rules—PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!!!!

- 1) This course will be taught in a seminar format, and so everyone is expected to participate fully. This means that all written work and preparation (readings, etc.) must be done on time, that you participate in our conversations, and that you attend class regularly.
- 2) So, attendance is expected; less than ideal attendance may have a negative impact on your grade. Please be on time.
- 3) Don't ask for my notes or assignments if you miss a lecture. Get to know your colleagues; share. This is not a zero-sum game.
- 4) Late assignments are not accepted.
- 5) All written assignments must be typed and proofed for spelling, typographical errors and major grammatical mistakes.

6) You are expected to complete the readings by the assigned times. There will be classroom discussions of the contents and implications of all that we read, so be prepared!

7) Please, no food, side conversations, or gum popping (argh!!) during class. Drinks (coffee etc.) are cool. And this is a cell-free, twitter-free, et al ZONE!!!! Please turn it off before you enter the room and turn it on only after you've left. And if you use your laptop, please, no irrelevant surfing during class.

8) I expect everyone to use e-mail as a form of communication for this class. I communicate regularly by that medium and I expect you to do the same. Normally, I will respond to queries and comments within 24 hours. My home phone is listed above; feel free to use it, at reasonable hours, of course.

9) Everyone is expected to know, accept, and practice the basics of honesty and integrity in all personal and professional dealings in this class.