

HISTORY CORE E-1-A Assessment (June 1, 2020)

INTL 2200 Where on Earth...? Foundations in Global History, Culture, and Society

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The course offered beginning International Studies majors an integrated approach to learn how to ‘think history globally,’ ‘consider the world ethically,’ and ‘render geography visual.’ This meant tracing how inequalities along gender, class, race, and ecological lines became deeply embedded in processes of modernity, empire, and capitalism. As a co-taught interdisciplinary course, we approached this by way of a critical geographical perspective on the spatial organization of the world at different scales, which is crucial to any understanding of what we refer to as “international” or “global.” The course was structured around four big historical questions that have shaped our world in its interconnections and divisions:

How have we come to know about space and place?

How have borders made worlds?

How have inequalities become systemic?

How have humans shaped the world’s ecological crisis?

Students learned to read, interpret, and contextualize historical maps and to make their own using ArcGIS. They used maps and a variety of online documentation as primary sources to begin and articulate links between past and present and engage with the historical roots of contemporary challenges: the kinds of metageographical assumptions that tends to color how we conceive of global relations; empire and the nation-state in the making and crossing of borders and borderlands; the social and cultural legacies of settler colonialism; and the historical processes that have led to the human epoch we now call Anthropocene.

Assessment: Secondary historical and key conceptual readings were complimented by maps and online primary materials. Weekly short writings asked students to use short readings on specific key concepts in historical geography to reflect on the secondary and primary historical materials. Labs asked students to work collaboratively to research and visualize topics developed in class in their appropriate contexts.

Midterm and final projects consisted of creating digital multimedia essays and ArcGIS storymaps using the conceptual and historical frameworks through which the course readings had made them think about systemic inequalities in global historical perspective. They were asked to

- ★ “Locate” their chosen project with respect to agency/authorship, geographical and political context of its inception, intended audience/recipient, stated goals (10 points)

- ★ Critically assess its “politics of place,” i.e. how it links the local with the global and suggest improvements if applicable (10 points)
- ★ Critically assess its sense of historical context, i.e. how it links historical with current injustices and with justice for future generations; suggest improvements if applicable (10 points)

The great majority of students was able to do this in a highly satisfactory manner, playing to their own interests and strengths, and the Storymaps they produced were very impressive. The course was meant to be broad and develop global and historical thinking rather than mastery of a particular history.