

GEOG 490 Proseminar in Geography

Course Materials:

- *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, by Jared Diamond, Penguin, 592 pages, 2005
- Selected diagrams, illustrations, and tables
- Assigned readings from the literature

Course content:

- This course will review of fundamental geographical concepts, focusing on diagrams and tables that illustrate these concepts. The enduring geographic discussion of human impacts on the environment will be used to examine geographic concepts as an underlying factor in environmental change. The research requirement of this seminar is to examine an aspect of 2008 wildfires of northern California.

Course tasks:

- Present and lead the discussion of diagrams and tables reviewing important geographic concepts. .
- Present and lead the discussion of an article from a professional journal.
- Preparation of a seminar paper; this paper will be presented as a written document, as an oral presentation, and in poster format. The paper will investigate an aspect of the geography of 2008 fires in Northern California.

Course Objectives

- a. Investigation of the nature of geographic research
- b. Gaining insights into how geographic concepts can be seen in the contemporary press

Course Grading: Attendance is not mandatory, but after the third absence, each class missed will result in a lowering you the final grade by one full grade. Course grades will be determined in the following manner:

Assignment	Value	Total
Seminar Contribution	1 @20 points	30 points
Paper,	1 @40 points	40 points
Poster,	1 @20 points	15 points
Presentation	1 @20 points	15 points
Total		100 points

Grade	Percentage
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Readings: Students will read the text, articles designated by Professor Melcon, and articles designated by students in the class.

Mansion Tour: Students will visit the Bidwell Mansion Visitor Center, tour the mansion, and discuss the geographic content of the mansion in seminar.

On the Creek Lecture: Terry Tempest Williams: Environmental advocate and author Williams will be speaking about her newest book Finding Beauty in a Broken World. Finding Beauty chronicles Williams' search to find a reason for the mindless destruction and despair that surrounds us. A two-page review of the lecture will be prepared.

Theater Performance: Students will attend and write a review of the play "The Laramie Project" by Moises Kaufman. The play will be produced at the Blue Room Theatre (above Collier's Hardware store at 1st and Broadway in downtown Chico) during the first three weeks of November. A two-page review of the play will be prepared.

Field Trip: A single field trip will take place during "dead week" preceding the final exam. The field trip will be to Lassen Park, Lake Oroville, or the Sacramento floodplain.

Course paper: Each student will designated a geographic topic concerned with the wildfires of Northern California during the summer of 2008. The paper will provide an examination and analysis of the topic; the paper will contain references to the professional literature. The paper will be in essay format, typed and double-spaced; it must be no less than ten pages in length and no more than fifteen pages in length.

Date (week of)	Topic	Activity
Aug	25	
Sept	1	Labor Day Bidwell Mansion
	8	
	15	
	22	
	29	
Oct	6	
	13	Terry Tempest Williams, Lecture 10/15
	20	
	27	
Nov	3	"The Laramie Project," Blue Room Play
	10	
	17	Paper due on Friday, November 21
	24	Thanksgiving
Dec	1	Posters and presentations in this week
	8	
	15	

Date	Article and diagram presentation <i>Collapse text, paper progress</i>
Oct 13	Stone, Dylan
15	Terry Tempest Williams, Lecture 10/15
20	Salsi, Mikah
22	Benson, Kathleen
27	Charbonnier, Anthony
29	Deen, Peter Alexander
Nov 3	MacGregor-Scott, Gavin
5	Whitehorn, Daniel
10	Miller, Michael
12	"The Laramie Project" at the Blue Room Theater
17	Martha Martinez—thesis
19	John Arnold—thesis and Shingletown