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GEOG 140: Human Geography—A Peer Review of Teaching Project Inquiry Portfolio—"Music and the Geography of Place: Engaging the Geographical Imagination"

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*Music and the
Geography of
Place:
Engaging the
Geographical
Imagination*

2016

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Geography 140:
Human Geography

Abstract:

The present project uses cooperative learning strategies that requires students in large classes to collaborate in applying intellectually challenging articles on place, space, sacred spaces, tourist places, and commodification of place to the development of a video project linking music to place and landscape. As an extension of their group activity, students are teaching each other how to apply concepts from the assigned articles to their projects in creative ways while engaging in critical thinking and exercising their geographical imagination.

Keywords: *Large Classes, Visualization, Music, Student-generated videos, Concept learning*

Table of Contents

Objectives of the Peer Review Course Portfolio	4
Course Description	5
<i>Course Goals</i>	5
<i>Context</i>	6
<i>Enrollment/Demographics</i>	6
Teaching Methods, Materials, and Activities	8
<i>Music and the Geography of Place</i>	11
The Video/PowerPoint	12
Written Analysis	13
Discussion Board Evaluations	14
Analysis of Student Learning	14
<i>Collaboration</i>	14
<i>Experiential Learning & Creativity</i>	15
<i>Critical Thinking & Application of Articles</i>	16
<i>Analysis of Grades & Grade Trends</i>	16
<i>Creativity & Synergy</i>	18
Planned Changes	19
Summary and Overall Assessment of the Portfolio Process.	21
Appendices	24
<i>Appendix 1: Course Planner: Spring 2016</i>	25
<i>Appendix 2: Syllabus: Spring 2016</i>	26
<i>Appendix 3: Project Instructions and Rubric</i>	33
<i>Appendix 4: Example of Discussion Board Question</i>	35
<i>Appendix 5: Student Responses: Collaboration</i>	36
<i>Appendix 6: Student Responses: Experiential Learning & Creativity</i>	40
<i>Appendix 7: Student Responses: Critical Thinking and Application of Readings</i>	41
<i>Appendix 8: What Students Learned, From Their Perspectives</i>	44
References	45

Objectives of the Current Course Portfolio

The size and number of large lecture classes are growing. As budgets are cut or priorities shift, large classes are becoming a model for the future for many undergraduate, general education courses. The method of instruction, by default, is often lecture commonly accompanied by Power Points, with little interaction with students ... often called the “sage on the stage” format. Added to this, the very size of these classes make it difficult for students to connect with the subject; they often feel anonymous; do not feel the same sense of responsibility for the material in the class as in smaller classes; and are used to being generally disengaged and intellectually unchallenged. However, research indicates that active student engagement can be very helpful in providing more interest in and application of the concepts of the course (Scheyvens *et al.* 2008, Healey and Roberts 2004), opening up student thinking to new ideas, increasing longer-term motivation and emotion, and aiding in student retention. A correlated factor inspiring the current research project comes from a request from my students for more group work. In the past, they reported they enjoyed interacting with their groups during in-class and online discussions, and they have recommended more opportunities to work together. Generating such student engagement, whether on an individual or group basis, has been a recurring theme for me in all of my Peer Review of Teaching projects, especially as applied to teaching large classes.

As an underlying theme, Human Geography deals with some fairly basic yet sophisticated concepts of place and space early on in the semester and we apply them consistently as we move throughout the course; but how do I get students to actually *experience* place and space? The current project not only sets students up to work in groups, but it directs student groups to create a music video representing place and landscape. The project provides students with the opportunity not only to conceptualize *their* understanding of place and space, but to dig deeper, applying assigned articles to the development of their video project linking music to place and landscape. Associating music with place and/or landscape images requires students to locate photos that either express what they *feel* when they listen to the song or else locate photos depicting what they believe the song is describing. This project is designed such that students will be able to use their experiential engagement not only to achieve a more solid foundation of knowledge but will provide a means to enable them to integrate

more of the course material into their personal paradigms. In so doing, students can practice some of the skills so critical for the twenty-first century citizen, according to the National Research Council, 2012: communication, presentation, and literacy skills, organization and team working skills, as well as higher-order thinking, metacognitive, and affective skills (in Gold *et al.* 2015).

Finally, I want to provide my students with a project with which they can be as creative as they want to be, helping them exercise their *geographic imaginations* (Norton 1989; Daniels 1992, 2011; Massey 2006) by allowing them to design a sort of virtual field trip of the music they selected. According to Swartz and Ryan (2003), the geographical imagination can be broadly interpreted to identify “the mechanism by which people come to know the world and situate themselves in space and time. It consists, in essence, of a chain of practices and processes by which geographical information is gathered, geographical facts are ordered and imaginative geographies are constructed”, and they continue, “Photography is one of these practices” (Swartz and Ryan, 2003:6). I want to give my students the opportunity to “play” with some intellectual “clay” to see what they can do with it in order to raise the creative engagement level of the course as well as encourage them to think critically, apply cooperative learning strategies through group work and collaborate with each other. The question is, is it possible to successfully implement such a project that requires creativity, critical thinking, and exercises a geographic imagination for classes of 100 to 200 students?

Course Description

Course Goals

Introduction to Human Geography is a course that surveys ways human beings make their place on the surface of the earth, how they move, interact with each other, build cities, develop economies, develop and maintain culture, and build landscapes. It includes topics on population and migration patterns, world languages, and religion. We talk about concepts of race, ethnicity, and nationalism, the geography of political space, concepts of economic development, agricultural sustainability, manufacturing and transnationalism, urbanization and the structure of cities. We consider theories, models, misconceptions, paradigms, and stereotypes. All of these concepts and topics are organized around five themes: region, mobility, globalization, human-environment interaction, and landscapes. It is a sweeping course that is designed not to minimize the complexities of the world, but to help

students understand them; students are encouraged to engage complexities from a local to a global scale by learning to analyze their various factors and interactions. It is a demanding course ([Appendix 1](#)), but as a result, it is hoped that the world around them becomes more coherent as students begin understanding events going on around them at a more engaged level. My goal is to help students feel more a part of the world, to actually *feel* the world around them. This course is one that could change students' lives and perspectives and I need to answer the question of how to develop more meaningful learning experiences in large classes of 100 students or more; I do not want students to be shortchanged in their most fundamental learning experiences by virtue of being in a large class. Geography has the potential to help students connect to the world in myriad of meaningful ways, bringing global concerns into their everyday lives and increasing their capacity to become citizens of the world; in short, students *need* what this course offers. ([Appendix 2](#)).

Context

I have been teaching this course for over 10 years, and mine are two of the four Human Geography classes offered, taught by three instructors each of whom select their own textbooks, and have their own teaching styles. In terms of institutional and departmental goals for the course, GEOG 140 is certified as an ACE 9 (Achievement Centered Education) course, meeting requirements for general education. The ACE 9 goals are to: “Exercise individual and social responsibilities through the study of ethical principles and reasoning, application of civic knowledge, interaction with diverse cultures, and engagement with global issues.... Demonstrate knowledge of human or global diversity through analysis of an issue”.¹ The course has no prerequisites and 67 percent are taking it simply because it fulfills an ACE requirement; there is little linking this course sequentially to other undergraduate courses; however, it is a required course for majors (9 percent) and is a prerequisite for Agronomy 305.

Enrollment/Demographics

My Introduction to Human Geography (Geography 140) course has an enrollment of about 190 students in one class and 120 in the smaller one, and they are both taught in large lecture

¹ <http://ace.unl.edu/about/outcomes> (accessed 5/13/16).

auditoriums. Combined with my Quality of the Environment class, I teach nearly 400 students per semester. The class demographics are fairly similar from semester to semester (Fig. 1). Based on the number of students who responded to the course survey (n=212), the majority of students (Fig. 2) are typically freshmen (50 percent) and sophomores (28 percent) with the rest composed of juniors and seniors (16 percent and six percent, respectively). Students are almost exclusively non-

Geography majors (Fig. 2). The major represented by the largest number of students (17 percent) come from Accounting and Finance; Business and Management is second with 16 percent; and undeclared majors are 13 percent. Education comes next with 12 percent; and Geography constitutes only two percent of the student population in the two human geography courses I teach. For many of these

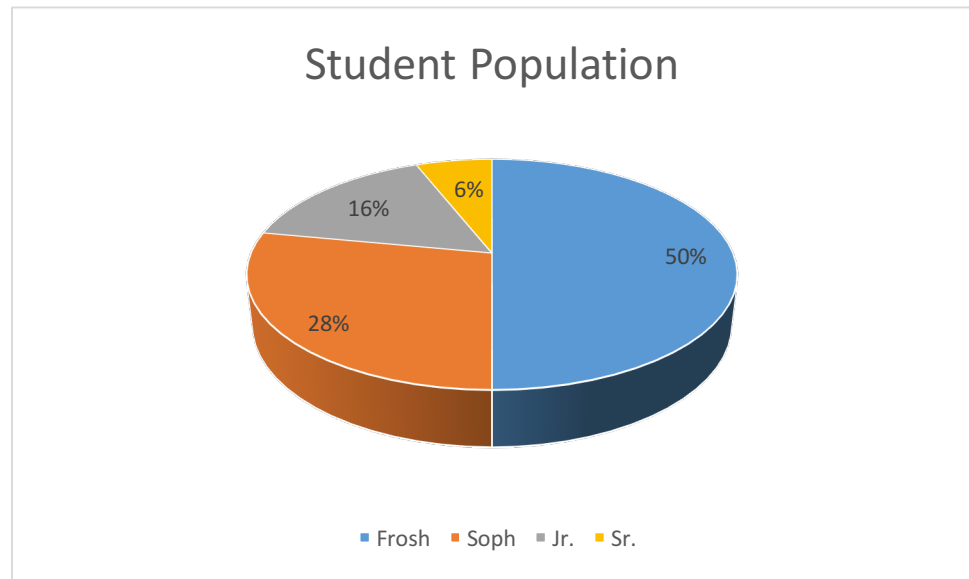


Fig. 1

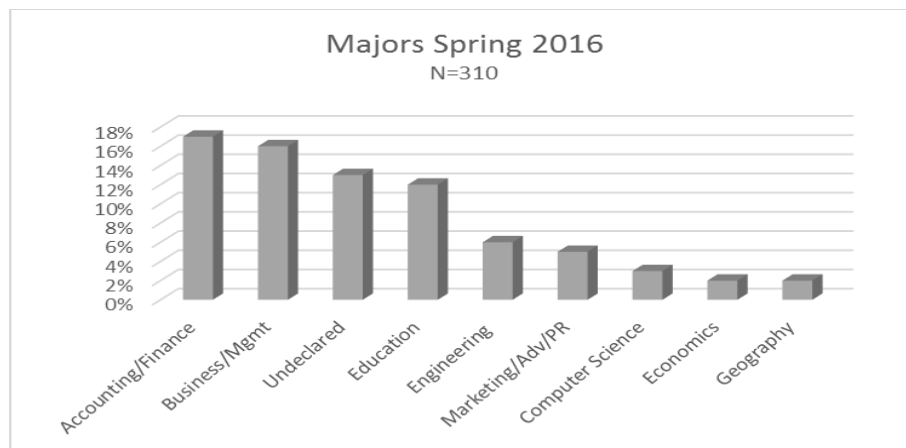


Fig. 2

students, Human Geography is their first course in university-level geography; 87 percent have had no previous college geography courses, nine percent have had some college geography, and 37.7 percent reported they had geography in high

school. Thirty-three percent are first-generation university students. Across both classes, 36 percent

are not native English speakers, although when divided by section, 48 percent of one course is composed of non-native English speakers.

Teaching Methods/Course Materials/Course Activities

When I first began my undergraduate college career, I took a course in World Regional Geography. Frankly, geography sounded boring to me, but it was being taught in the summer, and it satisfied a social science requirement for my teaching certification. I sat there throughout the summer using, what I later came to understand was my geographical imagination, trying to put myself in the films that were shown, asking what it must be like to live *there*, did the air smell differently *there*, what would I feel and what would it be like to walk down the street *there*, to go about my daily life *there*... what if *that* place was my home? Would I view it differently if I was not a tourist? By the time I had finished the course, I felt like I had taken a trip around the world. Geography touched on *everything*, and geographers were responsible for developing a comprehensive, multi-dimensional view of the world. Everything I saw around me started making more sense; I started understanding and caring more about world news and local events, and I never felt more alive in my life. I thought if this was geography, then I had to have it. It was life-changing for me, and it completely reset how I saw the world and myself in it. That summer I switched my major to geography and I have never looked back.

Fast forward several decades, and as faculty members, we move through our careers sometimes forgetting the initial wonder and inspiration that led us to our home disciplines while we focus more on the responsibility of covering the material required... or at least, I did. I not only have been dedicated to making sure students have well-rounded exposure to the major dimensions of Human Geography as covered by some very excellent textbooks, I also keep in mind the standards that governs the Advanced Placement Human Geography Programs taught in high schools across the United States and elsewhere that are to approximate a college level course. If students have any preconceptions or assumptions about the course going in, I also want ensure that they are clearly disabused of the notion that geography is all about coloring maps and learning capitals and countries as they might have in elementary or high school classes or that, since this is a general education course, they can assume the course is not going to touch them or impact their lives in any way.

The question is, however, how do I entice my students to *engage*? In previous Peer Review of Teaching research, I have tried answering this question in a number of ways, from no-stakes quizzing to the use of clickers. However, my analyses consistently indicated that I still needed a more effective way to engage students with the material. I needed to make the material more relevant to student lives by providing examples through which they could see geography at work in the real world. After all, that is what brought me into the discipline so many years ago. So, in 2014, I published a *Human Geography Reader* to address exactly this issue, and I have been using it for

Topic	Reading topic
Population: migration	Displaced Livelihoods (the experiences of refugees)
World religions	Women, Islam, and the New Iraq (women working within Sharia law to improve their status and accord them more rights).
Geography of Political Space	Cell phones and Senegalese Émigrés; how local village social structures were changed when cell phones were introduced and how technology collapsed space as well as time.
Agriculture	Regional specialty coffee-growing in Indonesia and ways its embeddedness in geographic place preserved its name-brand purity.
Economic Development	The shift from rice growing to manufacturing in rural Malaysia and how that changed the character of the rural villages.
Urban geography	Firm linkages and the development of transnational cities through the growth of subsidiaries

Fig. 3

about two years. The articles it contains showcase studies of real-life situations in a way I have hoped would capture student interest as well as reinforce some of the main conceptual themes of the course I felt students were missing (Fig. 3).

I developed objective questions for each article assigned from the reader that became weekly online quizzes students were to complete along with terms quizzes. Students typically did well on the study guide questions on the exam but, unfortunately, a disappointingly large number of students still could not perform well on the comprehensive portion of the exam; scores were unremarkable with some brighter outliers of higher scores. It did not seem like we were achieving the meaningfulness with the content I intended; these quizzes appeared to be stored in short-term memory with little *experiential* context to make them more meaningful. I needed to make spatial concepts more transparent

throughout the semester, and encourage students to think in this new way as well as practice using it. With such large class sizes without a consistent TA, I have been apprehensive of assigning activities other than those that could be scored objectively and quickly; but clearly, this has been to the detriment of my students. I need to design at least some activities that result in the experience of students in a large, introductory, general education course becoming more *personal*, that invite students to engage with the material in deeper ways as they relate to the real world ... to *their* world. I need to find a way to fire their geographic imaginations; that is, I need to find a way to help students envision their world, experience it in new ways, and reshape it (Daniels 2011).

I also want to address that aspect of student experience of being in a large class and the sense of anonymity it engenders, helping to make the large class seem smaller (Cooper and Robinson 2000, Cooper *et al.* 2000, Smith 2000, Smith and MacGregor 2000) and making it possible for students to engage in more interactive and creative activities. Students are randomly assigned to study groups of not more than 4-5 students within the first week of class. Once group assignments are made, students are expected to sit with their group for the rest of the semester. I take part of one class period for students to participate in what I call a large-scale student migration based on relocation diffusion. These groups are also designed to mix up the class demographics. For example, some students may have enrolled in the class because friends or sorority/fraternity members are enrolled and they sit together in groups or simply sit with others that they know in a sea of unfamiliar faces; many international students also tend to group together and not interact much with American students; while still others tend to retreat inside themselves. Assigning students to groups so they can get to know each other and sit together for the entire semester seems to address a number of these pitfalls and encourages students to talk with each other across a variety of demographic barriers. I ask each group to sit in two rows in the auditorium so that the two or three below can turn and face the two or three above making conversation within the groups a bit easier. There are in-class group discussions and class discussions on Blackboard; absent students are encouraged to contact group members to find out what was covered in class that day; and group membership generally seems to encourage attendance throughout the semester although I have no consistent method of comparing attendance to previous semesters. Visually, however, classes seem fuller over the entire course of the semester and the in-class study groups could well be part of the reason. This connection would be interesting to investigate in a future Peer Review of Teaching project. All of these changes, however, still only

address basic class dynamics, content recall, and selected measurable outcomes based on test scores and final grades.

Music and the Geography of Place

So, why did I choose a project that highlights music, and what does this have to do with geography? First of all, music is a form of entertainment students are already familiar with – they all have their favorite songs and bands, and it is a medium that spans all nationalities and ethnic groups. It is a medium that is easily accessible to students; music is something they already understand and are open to. In addition, there can be an element of intrigue encouraging students to apply challenging concepts they are learning to something they already understand and enjoy. At a deeper, personal level, music is the *place* where “emotional dimensions of social relations are deliberately and routinely enhanced (Wood and Smith 2004:553). This is an experiential project, a way of getting students emotionally involved in the course. Music also is a very rich topic for geographers to explore from culture hearths and diffusion of sounds and styles, to commodification of place. One of the ways music can be studied geographically, is to look at how the psychological and symbolic elements of music pertain to shaping the character of a place, the image of place, the sense of place, and place as in the surfer rock that emanated from southern California in the 1960s (Carney 1998:3), or ways music “follows the regional tradition in which the character and identity of places are gleaned from lyrics, melody, instrumentation and the general ‘feel’ or sensory impact of the music ...” (Kong 1995:185).

Student-Selected Songs

New York, New York (Sinatra)
 Real Life
 Take Me Home, Country Roads
 Nocturne op. 9 No. 2 (Chopin)
 Maps
 Born in the USA
 Peking Opera
 Under the Bridge
 Waka Waka (World Cup)
 Buddhist Traditional Music
 So Good (B.O.B.)
 Carolina
 Beverly Hills
 Flyover States
 Hawaiian Roller Coaster Ride
 New York (Jay Z)
 Chinese Kongfu
 Home
 Small Town USA
 Sweet Home Alabama
 Time
 American Saturday Night
 Paradise
 Tunnel Walk Song
 Hotel California
 There's No Place Like Nebraska
 Tibetan Throat Singing
 America the Beautiful
 This Land is Your Land
 California Dreamin'
 Drunken Lullabies
 Colors of the Wind (Pocahontas)
 God Bless the USA
 Give Me Back My Hometown
 Heal the World
 Wavin' Flag
 The Star Spangled Banner
 Peace of Mind
 Every Reason I Go Back
 Viva Las Vegas
 Kanding Love Song (Chinese)
 Tales of India
 Three Little Birds
 Circle of Life (Lion King)
 The House that Built Me

Fig. 4

The current project requires students to use their geographical imaginations and creativity in the selection of music negotiated first within their group and then through their individual selection of images that correspond with that music (Fig. 4). They are to then evaluate their project based on concepts presented in class and readings addressing place and space, sacred space, tourism, and commodification of place. The project consists of three parts. First is a video or Power Point presentation in which each group negotiates a single song that everyone will work with. Then, each member is to select place and/or landscape images that they connect with the music and explain why they choose the images they do. They then edit these images to correspond to the music they have selected either in a short video or sequence of Power Point slides they upload to the Class Discussion Board on Blackboard. This project, the use of the music and the pictures, falls under the “fair use” guideline for educational purposes, uploaded onto Blackboard, as long as the projects are taken down within 30 days of course completion. Second, is a written analysis of the project based on a set of criteria that is posted as a rubric ([Appendix 3](#)) that also includes a rubric for the video/Power Point portion of the project. Students are to evaluate their project based on three articles I have assigned that discuss representations of place and space in various contexts. Third, once the project has been posted on the Class Discussion Board in Blackboard, each individual is to select the projects of two other groups to critically review.

The Video/ Power Point (20 points) is designed to be completed in a series of steps. The first step requires a negotiation within each group. Once the music has been selected, the group needs to decide if each member will take certain verses of the song to illustrate or if they each will respond to the whole song. If the song is in a foreign language, they will need to find a translation of the words. They need to set up a timeline for completion, and choose the order of the pictures: will they be blended together to reflect the whole song as a single piece, or will each student be responsible for a section of the final presentation. Each project should be timed to run no longer than two minutes. The groups choose whether to design their project such that the music plays throughout the presentation of the images, or plays either before or after the images. Most groups chose the former and in future projects I will make this a requirement since it provides for a richer viewing experience. As far as programs are concerned, I have found it best to limit PC users to Movie Maker and MAC users to iMovie. In both cases, these can be saved as an .mp4 and either uploaded directly onto Blackboard, or students can save their projects as a YouTube video using the “restricted” setting

either providing the URL in Blackboard, or actually creating a URL link to their projects on YouTube. Publishing on YouTube, even with restricted status, requires that students take down these videos as soon as the class is over.

By the time the video project, Music and the Geography of Place, is assigned, students will have already had some experience with creating videos or Power Points (some with music or voice-overs) for posting on Blackboard due to an earlier project they completed within the first week of class called The World as I See It: A Personal Geography. For students to conceptualize and execute this first project, I bring in an Instructional Design Specialist who demonstrates techniques and possibilities for producing videos or Power Points at the second class meeting. We made sure his contact information is also listed on Blackboard along with mine if students should have technical questions or problems. He gives an approximate 20-minute presentation/workshop for the students and then time is provided in class for students to start working on their projects. Students are encouraged to bring their laptops or tablets to class for this purpose. So, in this way, by the time the music project is assigned, most students have had some experience blending images and music together. Most groups also independently create a google.docs page so that everyone has access to the project and is able to contribute asynchronously, thereby avoiding some schedule conflicts.

Written Analysis (20 points): Besides collaborating on the creative video or Power Point itself, each group member is required to write an analysis of the project applying concepts discussed in three readings from the *Human Geography Reader*: Place or Space; Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places; and Screaming at the Moptops. The first two articles have been assigned previously in the semester, so students should be very familiar with them. These are challenging readings, so I scaffold them with several objective and subjective layers. First, students are to read the articles in question, answering study-guide questions designed to draw out important concepts earlier in the semester. Second, students practice these questions as non-graded quizzes in Blackboard in preparation for the unit exam which includes the questions. This layer of engagement is designed to help students practice concrete understanding of the material. Third, students answer a class-wide discussion question in Blackboard meant to personalize the material and relate it to the student's own experience and application ([Appendix 4](#)). Finally, students use these articles to evaluate their project, applying the concepts in a deeper, more synergistic way (Conway-Gomez *et al.* 2011). The third article,

Screaming at the Moptops, is assigned specifically for this project. Students are also to discuss what they learned from the project, and they are to evaluate their group's dynamics, providing an assessment of those group members who contributed to the project. This written analysis is a confidential document uploaded onto SafeAssign through Blackboard.

Discussion Board Evaluations (10 points): Finally, after the group's project has been posted on Blackboard, each student member is to evaluate two other projects that have not received feedback by posting substantive comments. They have posted such comments before in relation to the numerous class discussion questions throughout the semester and are aware of the criteria defining substantive posts.

Analysis of Student Learning

Collaboration

Overall, the Study Group concept is a good one. Students have reported that being a member of a study group did make our large class seem smaller and more personal. In some cases, students even made new friends and many got to meet and interact with international students; some students mentioning this was the first time they had the courage to approach someone of another ethnic culture and/or race. International students were required to leave their comfort zone of grouping with other students from their same country of origin, and mix with the general student population. This necessitated that they stretch their use of English and exchange ideas hopefully helping them to become more confident in their new cultural surroundings. One student reported, "Overall my group worked great together. We managed to get all of our work done in class and actually had a fun time with this project. ... We planned ahead which kept us from having any unforeseen issues. We even managed to have a group viewing party before class on the Friday the assignment was due. After reading the comments that were left for group nineteen on the class discussion board I felt a sense of pride and joy in our project and how the final product turned out. I actually enjoyed this project and would recommend that you assign it during future semesters. It really helped me to grasp the concepts that were introduced in the readings. (Rosewicz) (see [Appendix 5](#) for additional comments from other students). Some students also joined together to go to a local ethnic restaurant or to a religious service in town together for their extra credit projects. This was not a requirement, but I think it speaks to the success of the group dynamics concept.

Experiential Learning & Creativity

What about this project was experiential? Although experiential learning is most often associated with community projects and internships, I am using the word in a much more immediate and emotional way. First of all, students were able to experience music in a new way, by connecting it to place, and they were able to look at place as it was portrayed in music. It also provided for an application of somewhat challenging concepts from the course. Each student needed to listen carefully to the music, maybe even listening to a familiar song in a new way (for some, actually listening to the words for the first time). Each student had creative freedom to choose images and landscapes that they believed fit the emotions and the pictures in their heads that were evoked by the music:

I feel that geographical sense of place contributes to music because due to peoples [sic] geography different forms of music have come about. This can be seen in Kentucky Blue Grass music that formed in the Appalachian Mountains, or in the case of our project the ... Peking Opera that originated in China. This is due to the concept of embedded knowledge discussed in “Place or Space” similar to if someone were to mention Omaha, Nebraska to someone who has never been in the state more often than not they think of the college world series (this has happened to me multiple times when visiting relatives in Colorado and Texas). By this same concept, when someone mentions China I think of the oriental sounds that are included in Peking Opera. In this project we chose a variety of pictures ranging from mountains and hurricanes to famous Chinese landscapes. The biggest similarity within all of these pictures is that many of them represent active movement and something that is constantly changing. I specifically chose the mountains and cherry blossoms picture due to the fact that it represents the movie *The Last Samurai* that has many scenes of intense action and fighting which is highly representative in Peking Opera. The next picture I chose was *The Great Wall of China*. I chose this because it reminded me of the movie *Mulan* in which Genghis Khan crosses the great wall to invade China. This is a prime example of how in “Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places” it talks about how travel practices make places possible to begin with, particularly along the lines of military deployments. The great wall was built during the Qin to keep out the military raiding tribes of the Mongols. ...I felt it was really cool to see the pictures chosen by my group members native to China because it helped me to immerse a little more into their culture since I know nothing about it. (Mason)

See [Appendix 6](#) for additional student comments.

Critical Thinking & Application of Readings

Although many students chose music that objectively were about places (see [Appendix 3](#)), some students were able to see their music as symbolic of a culture:

The pictures that the group chose had meaning to us as individuals and we actually had so many pictures that we had to sit down and pick our favorites. I cannot speak for my group members on why they chose their pictures but my pictures have meaning to me and speak not just about New York City, but the American mentality as I see it. For instance, the picture of the man on the steel girder to me represents the US's long history and future of doing whatever it takes to provide for our families, take pride in our work, and to build America. The picture of the World Trade Center buildings is a reminder of a tragedy that changed life in the United as we knew it forever and also brought the entire nation together regardless of race, social class, or heritage. The picture of Wall Street's Raging Bull, to me, represents the power of the United States economy and its influence on the world. The song portrayed the feel of the city and the urban lifestyle. I actually enjoyed this project and would recommend that you assign it during future semesters. It really helped me to grasp the concepts that were introduced in the readings. (Rosewicz)

Students also had to dig into the articles to find ways in which these applied to the project. For example, one student wrote:

When our group was discussing the project it became clear that everyone had slightly different feelings about Nebraska and what exactly constituted "home". Our group is made up of a variety of students, with two native Nebraskans, two Chinese students, and one Japanese student. Therefore, when we were compiling images Dan, the other Nebraskan, and I were able to give pictures of physical places that held meaning for us, but the other members had more picture of locations they thought were beautiful. It was like experiencing Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places in real life. Since Dan and I grew up here in Nebraska we can attach a deeper meaning to some of the places here. However, the others in our group are international students, so they haven't had the opportunity to spend as much time here, therefore, they appreciate the physical beauty of location more. They haven't been here long enough for places to become time thickened (Speich).

See [Appendix 7](#) for more student examples

Analysis of Grades and Grade Trends

There is also value in looking at quantitative data, and although I did not emphasize the quantitative aspect of this project, I do have some means for comparing current student performance with the previous semester using quantitative scores. Because one of my concerns in Past Peer Review of

Teaching projects has been exam scores, Fig. 5 compares the grades on the four exams of the course between Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. In all cases, the number of failing scores were significantly

higher for the Fall exams than the Spring exams and they were significantly higher than other grades for the Fall 2015 exams altogether. My exams are composed of questions from three areas: terms from the textbook and study guide questions from the *Human Geography*

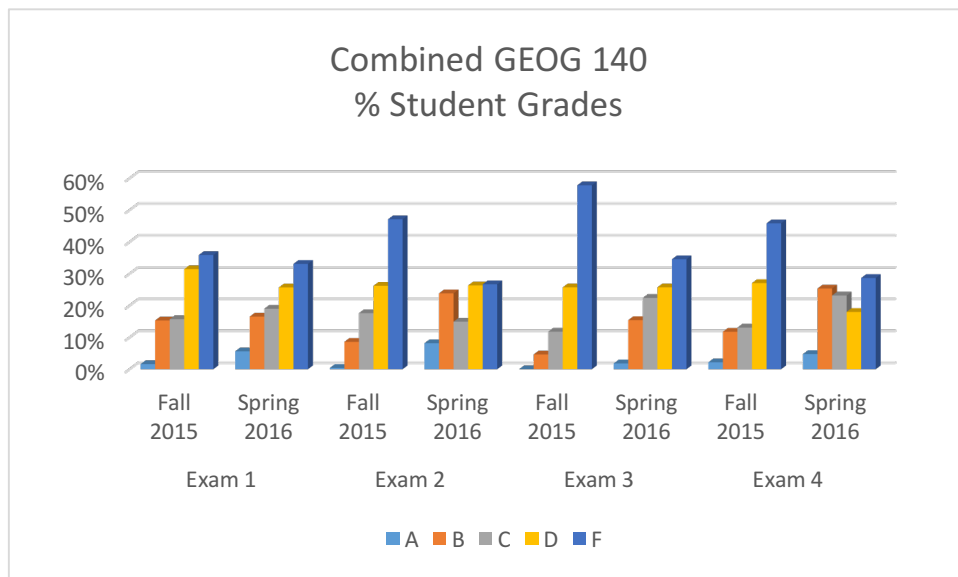


Fig. 5

Reader, which students can

practice ahead of time, and questions from the lecture and/or readings from the textbook that students haven't seen before. Ideally, students can walk into my exams knowing virtually two-thirds of the questions before they sit down to the exam. It is that last one third of the questions they have to concentrate on if they want a score above a C-. What jumps out in Fig. 4 first of all, is how high the failing exam grades are during the Fall 2015 semester especially for exams 2 through 4.

Although an analysis of Fall 2015 lies outside the focus of this project, its comparative value to Spring 2016 and the possible impact of the Music Video project is valid. So, first of all, I evaluated whether there were more assignments required especially for Exam 3, but according to Fig. 6, this is not the case. The first exam covers only two chapters in the textbook and two readings from the *Human Geography Reader*. In addition, students are responsible for one discussion board question, completing a Blackboard Orientation Quiz, and creating their first video, *The World as I See It*. From the second exam forward, however, each exam covers three chapters of the textbook as well as one to two articles from the *Human Geography Reader* with other assignments, either for credit, extra credit, or no credit. The credit assignments are extra readings that clarify or expand a topic we have been talking about such as *The New Population Bob* from *Foreign Policy*, or *Welcome to the Anthropocene* from *The Economist*, designed to pique student interest. Furthermore, I evaluated whether we covered more topics for Exam 3 than for any of the other Exams (Fig. 7), but that is

Number and Type of Assignments per Exam

Exam	Chpts.	Articles	Disc Bd	Essays	Other (Credit, Extra Credit & No Credit) Assignments
1	2	2	1	1 Film Evaluation.	Credit: Orientation Quiz; Credit: Video: Wld As I See It
2	3	3	3	1 Film Evaluation	Xtra Article; Xtra Credit: Worship Service
3	3	2	2	2 Film Evaluations	Xtra Article; Xtra Credit: Ethnic Restaurant
4	3	2	2	In-class Inventory; Final Essay	2 Xtra Articles; Xtra Credit: Heuermann Lecture

Fig. 6

is not the case either. The second thing that jumps out in Fig. 4 is that the exam scores for Spring 2016 remain relatively constant across the exams. Two things did change between Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 that might account for the difference in exam scores between Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. First of all, in Fall 2015, the discussion board activities took place on GooglePlus rather than Blackboard (which really confused and stressed many students), and secondly, not only were the

Exam	Wk	Topics (by week)	Reader/Discussion Board	Films
1	1	Orientation	The Four Traditions of Geography	
	2	Human Geography, An Introduction	Place or Space?	
	3	Geography of Cultural Difference		The Gods Must be Crazy
2	4	Population: Natural Increase	Displaced Livelihoods	
	5	Population: Migration		
	6	Language		The Linguists
	7	Religion 1	Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places	
	8	Religion 2	Woman and Islam	
3	9	Geography of Race and Ethnicity		A Stranger Among Us
	10	Organization of Political Space	Senegalese Emigres	
	11	Geography of Agriculture	Politics of Place	Tossed Out: Food Waste in America
4	13	Geography of Economic Development	From Farm to Factory	
	14	Geography of Urbanization	Firm Linkages	
	15	One World or Many		

Fig. 7

discussion board assignments returned to Blackboard, the music video was added by week seven of Spring 2016, about the time we started talking about religion.

Creativity & Synergy

But what could the music video have to do with the change in exam grades from Fall of 2015 to Spring of 2016? This would make an excellent question for a future Peer Review of Practice study, but I might suggest two preliminary possibilities. It might suggest that as students become grounded in a way of seeing, they are better able to see commonalities and patterns throughout the course. Fouberg 2000 explains, “Students structure their prior knowledge in schemata and conceptual networks. If a student is to gain understanding of a concept, the student must apply and personalize

that concept so that it enters her/his schemata and becomes meaningful to her/him. Educators know that ‘one does not understand a concept adequately until it becomes clear how it is used and how it relates to other concepts’ (Stanley and Mathews 1985:70 in Fouberg 2000:198). That is, there is a “carryover” effect as, in the case of this project, concepts of place and space are integrated and applied to other topics in the course. In fact, I selected most of the articles for the *Human Geography Reader* to not only advance a particular concept beyond the course textbook, but they also underscore the importance of place and space. In essence, place and space become “threshold” concepts that enable students to process new information more effectively (Fouberg 2013). Another way to answer this question is to consider the act of creating a music video a type of experiential learning through visualization. The preponderance of the literature on experiential learning usually addresses educational programs that take students into the community but I contend that experiential learning is above all an internal, subjective process by which the student finds his or her own meaning and application and is ultimately transformed by the experience which, in turn, affects the student’s experience in the rest of the course. Both of these possibilities are intriguing and merit further study.

Planned Changes

Initially, I thought grouping students would reduce my workload in that, for example, I could be grading 39 groups rather than 190 students. But the grading dynamics really do not lend themselves to that. Practically every student *as well as* this instructor has had challenges with being in groups that never meshed, members who never showed up, and other members only doing the minimum (often at the last minute) in order to get by regardless of the impact on the quality of the group as a whole. So I did not want to leave my students at the mercy of rather unpredictable and sometimes merciless group dynamics whereby some students were penalized for the poor showing of others. I gave my students permission to vote members “off the island” if these were pulling the group down. They were to communicate their concerns to me, and I would address the student in question. I made this policy clear at the beginning of the semester and that the individual who was “voted off” would then be required to complete the entire project on his or her own. This option was not exercised very often. However, students were worried about members who never showed up or handed in work at the end without having participated in the group dynamics. With the size of the classes and numbers of groups I was overseeing, I could not know of the more intimate dynamics of each group therefore,

I needed to design an assessment such that only students who actually worked on the project would be graded for it. This meant requiring students to write group evaluations that would be graded individually and it required the cooperation of the students themselves. Instead of asking students to report on students who did not work well with the group, creating hesitancy among some members, I asked students to talk only about those students who contributed to the group. Then, by omission across the group as a whole, I could get a sense of the dynamic of who was an active group member and who was not. This meant, however, I not only needed to grade the project itself and the written student evaluation, I needed to create a master spreadsheet of groups, noting comments made by individual members regarding the dynamics of the group. This was an unanticipated step in the assessment process but I felt it was a necessary one. As I mentioned earlier, an easier way to accomplish the same thing is to ask groups to list only those members who actually work on the project on the title page of the project. I will also explain the “fair use” of materials for this project and that the project is protected only as it exists on Blackboard and that all projects will be taken down within 30 days of the end of class. I will also require students create a “credits” slide or frame at the end with sources of all music and visuals.

There were also issues with group attrition in some cases and in others with student “migration” from one group to another without either asking me or informing me of the shift. Usually, groups that face attrition will inform me and we can come to some agreement either that they feel they can continue with reduced numbers, or I can combine them with another group that has also decreased in size. That often works well, although it creates more of an administrative task for me in switching members around and providing access to the new combined group on Blackboard. In the future, I will bring a small notebook dedicated to group dynamics with me to class to help keep the unfolding group dynamics in hand. However, the issue of students migrating from one group to another is a more serious challenge. This only happened in the class in which at least 48 percent of the class was composed of international students – and many of these were students who were participating in a University program that allowed them to “try” a university level credit course before they passed their English proficiency exam. These students simply did not have enough command of the English language to understand simple directions either spoken or written and they relied on their friends to help them through the class. They did not understand the importance of remaining in the group to which they were assigned even though I was clear that if students migrated without authorization,

they would receive no credit for the project. I hope that the loading of my class with students who do not have the facility with English yet to be a successful university student was just a fluke and that it will not happen again. It made the class very difficult to teach. In this case, I believe I should contact the office in charge of this program and suggest that they spread these students out a little more equitably, but in all fairness, I cannot treat them any differently than any other student in the class. There were some issues of plagiarism with every assignment, as well as papers that were substantially below even a very basic level of grammatical and structural clarity. I cannot single out international students and require them to submit their essays to the Writing Center before the essays are submitted, and requiring all students to submit their papers to the Writing Center before submitting them to me would probably overload the Writing Center and would be an administrative nightmare for me. However, I can make it clear in my syllabus and on the instructions for each assignment that grammar and structure will be counted and that I will assume they have done everything they can to make each essay grammatically and structurally sound, including taking their essays to the Writing Center before submission. I have recommended to individual students that they need to take their essays to the Writing Center before submission if they want higher grades, and I will continue this practice. I can talk to the office in charge of the CEAP program that places international students in academic classes prematurely, and I can be much clearer and specific as to the quality of the writing I require in my courses, bearing in mind this is an entry-level course and many students may not have had an English Composition course yet.

Summary and Overall Assessment of the Portfolio Process

One of the questions I asked going into this project was if it was possible to successfully implement a project that requires creativity, critical thinking, and invited a geographic imagination in classes of 100 to 200 students. Could I create and implement a project in which I could give my students a level of creative independence to take some intellectual “clay” and mold it into a meaningful project of place and space? The answer is a resounding yes. Could I create an atmosphere in such a large classroom such that students could take the initiative to personalize course material for themselves? Again, the answer is yes. One of the challenges that has plagued me since the inception of my work with the Peer Review of Teaching Project (PRTTP) has had to do with student test scores. There has been a consistent pattern over the course of my PRTTP semesters of too many students not doing well

on the exams, depending on extra credit activities to pull their grades up thereby also creating a discrepancy between test scores and final grades. Throughout several PRT projects, I have addressed this issue in a number of ways all centering on some measure of delivery system of the material or activities that promote student engagement. I have made consistent strides in these areas, but with the current project I seem to be getting much closer to a solution. The project I launched this semester seems to be positively affecting the outcome on routine exams and I believe I am finding ways in which I can motivate students to take greater responsibility for their learning even as I am becoming a more effective and accountable teacher.

The Peer Review of Teaching Project (PRTP) is an incredibly rich and always a surprising and fruitful process. I often start with a simple question or project, and upon reflection and analysis find its deeper roots and pedagogical meanings. The rigor and self-reflection that is required for these projects have made me a better teacher and have gone a long way toward restoring the inspiration and deep enthusiasm I was used to with smaller classes. My work with the PRTP has given me hope that large classes can be fulfilling and exciting both for students and teacher, and I have rededicated myself to the unique pedagogy of large classes. I have gotten closer to my students and they with me such that I have been privileged to be able to share in their lives in a way previously unprecedented for me in large classes. I have assigned projects that enable me to see my classes as sets of unique individuals creating a rich tapestry of perspectives and experiences rather than looking at classes of 100-200 students as an impersonal monolith to be managed.

The PRT program has also enabled me to engage in a level of self-evaluation and evaluation of my courses in ways I probably, honestly, would not have taken the time to do, were it not for this opportunity. In so doing, I have uncovered holes and weaknesses I did not know were there, and these have become foundational for some of the most valuable PRTP projects I have done. As such, this program has made me a better, more effective, and more responsible teacher. I have discovered strengths and pedagogical soundness in many of my practices that have given me encouragement and validation, and it has given me the courage to try new projects and approaches that have added great variety to my teaching.

Geography can be deeply transformative and essential to a student's undergraduate education in ways other disciplines cannot provide. This year I have found a way to open the course and, to some extent, the world for students and I can think of nothing better than to continue being able to provide this level of experience for my students:

...I also think that music also has the ability to take you to the place where you first heard the song or where you listened to the song most frequently. I know this is true for a fact because I have experienced it in my own life, but I had never really thought about why this is. Because of this, I think that people use songs to ensure that they feel a sense of place and nostalgia even when they are in an area of meaningless space. When I first moved to Lincoln a few months ago, I didn't really have a sense of place established. One thing that really helped me to get through this feeling of placelessness was listening to music that reminded me of home or of the many fond memories I associated with the sense of place that I was longing (for). Without knowing it at the time, I was using music to develop a sense of place (Bignell).

See additional student comments about what they have learned in [Appendix 8](#).

I am deeply indebted to Jordan Soliz, Eve Branch, Jody Keller, and Jamie Reimer for their time and dedication to this program and to making themselves available to me throughout my pedagogical journey. They have been so generous with their time and expertise, and are the backbone of this program, providing valuable feedback and guidance; I truly feel as if I have the most amazing team supporting me. It has also been wonderful to work with a different group of faculty members every year who also are dedicated to quality teaching. I have looked forward to our periodic meetings and annual retreat where we can share with each other what we are working on, challenges we are facing, and we can solicit each other's feedback that always provides a way of seeing I had not considered before. The Peer Review of Teaching Program is invaluable and I hope to participate for many years to come.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Semester Planner

Geography 140: Human Geography

Semester Planner: Spring 2016

	Week	Ch.	Topic (Lecture)	Maple TA/Bb	Readings	Activities/Bb
1	01/11-15	R	Orientation Nature and Perspectives of Geography Student demographic 3x5 cards (in class)	Reader Questions Orientation Quiz	<u>Reader</u> : The Four Traditions of Geography	INTRO VIDEO/MONTAGE/PPT (OUTSIDE OF CLASS BY 2 ND WK 01/24 @ 11:59 PM) Discussion Board posts regarding cartoon (01/17 @11:59 PM)
2	01/18	MLK Day		Reader Questions Discussion Question	Ch. 1 Text; <u>Reader</u> : Place or Space?	THE WORLD AS I SEE IT: A PERSONAL GEOGRAPHY – 20 points (due 01/22 &1/24 for comments)
	01/20-22	1, R	Human Geography: An Introduction			
3	01/25-29	2	Geography of Cultural Difference (Students are formed into their Learning Community Groups)	Reader Questions Discussion Question	Ch. 2 Text	Film: The Gods Must Be Crazy – Students view in class – discuss in class/in their groups 20 pts. (due 01/31 @ 11:59 pm)
4	02/01-05	Testing Center: Unit Exam 1 (02/01-07): Chs. 1, 2, & Readings				
		3	Population Geography-Natural Increase		The New Population Bomb (Bb)	
5	02/08-12	3, R	Population Geography-Migration	Reader Questions Discussion Question	Ch. 3 Text; <u>Reader</u> : Displaced Livelihoods	Discussion Question – Blackboard (02/12 post; 02/14 comments)
6	02/15-19	4,	Language		Ch. 4 Text	Film: The Linguists – ONLINE-discuss in class/online 20 pts (02/19 for in- class discussion; 02/21 for paper)
7	02/22-26	7, R	Geography of Religion	Reader Questions Discussion Question	Ch. 7 Text; <u>Reader</u> : Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places	Discussion Question -- Blackboard (02/26 post; 02/28 comments)
			Music and a Geographic Sense of Place		<u>Reader</u> : Screaming at the Moptops	Discuss Music Project in Groups
8	02/29-03/04	7, R	Geography of Religion	Reader Questions Discussion Question	Ch. 7 Text <u>Reader</u> : Women and Islam	Extra credit: Unfamiliar Worship Service, 15 pts. (due 03/06)
						Discussion Question – Blackboard (03/04 post; 03/06 comments)
9	03/07-11	Testing Center: Unit Exam 2 (03/07-13): Chs 3 4, 7 & Readings				
		5	Geography of Race and Ethnicity		Ch. 5 Text Article: Racial Inequality After Racism	Film: A Stranger Among Us –ONLINE 20 pts. (paper due 03/13) Extra credit: Ethnic foods, 15 pts. (due 03/13) Video Music Project due 03/11 on Class Discussion Board Comment on two other projects due 03/13
10	03/14-18	6, R	Organization of Political Space	Reader Questions Discussion Question	Ch. 6 Text; <u>Reader</u> : Senegalese Emigrés	Discussion Question – Blackboard (03/18 post; 03/20 comments)
11	03/21-25	SPRING BREAK!!				Written Music project due 03/20 (20 pts) on SafeAssign
12	03/28-04/01	8, R	Geography of Agriculture	Reader Questions Discussion Question	Ch. 8 Text; <u>Reader</u> : Politics of Place	Discussion Question – Blackboard (04/01 post; 04/03 comments) Film: Tossed Out students view in class 20 pts. (Due 04/03)
13	04/04-08	Testing Center: Unit Exam 3 (04/04-10): Chs. 5, 6, 8 & Readings				
		9, R	Geography of Economic Development	Reader Questions Discussion Question	Ch. 9 Text; <u>Reader</u> : From Farm to Factory	Discussion Question -- Blackboard (04/08 post; 04/10 comments) Personal Inventory (20 points, in class)
14	04/11-15	10, R	Geography of Urbanization	Reader Questions Discussion Question	Ch. 10 Text; <u>Reader</u> : Firm Linkages	Discussion Question – Blackboard (04/15 post; 04/17 comments) Extra credit: Heuermann Lecture Series, 15 pts.
15	04/18-22	11	One World or Many		Ch. 11 Text Welcome to the Anthropocene (04/20) Success of Global Development (04/20)	Final Essay: The World as I See It – 40 points Summary of course (05/01)
16	04/25-29		Dead Week	Final Exam will be up as of Friday, 04/29 and run throughout Finals Week to Friday05/06		
	05/02-06	FINALS WEEK (04/29-05/06): Chs. 9, 10, 11 & Readings				

Appendix 2: Semester Syllabus Spring 2016

Geography 140: Human Geography
University of Nebraska
Spring 2016



Instructor: Dr. Katherine Nashleanas (Dr. K.) Main Campus
317 Hardin Hall (East Campus) Office Hours: M-W-F 11:35-12:20 **830 Oldfather Hall** (472-2671)
Phone: 472-7905 Other times & locations by arrangement
Email: knashleanas2@unl.edu
Testing Center: http://scimath.unl.edu/wba/testingcenter_home.php

Purpose of the Course

This is an active learning course. Its purpose is to introduce students to the systematic study of patterns and processes that have shaped human understanding, use, and alteration of Earth's surface. Students will learn to employ spatial concepts and landscape analysis to examine human social organization and its environmental consequences. Students will also learn about the methods and tools geographers use in their science and practice.

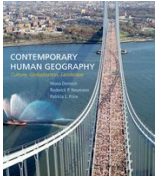
This course satisfies ACE 9: Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of human populations, cultures, and landscapes, with particular attention to human-environment relations and global interconnections.

Course Goals

1. Use and think about maps and spatial data.
 - Geography is concerned with the ways in which patterns on Earth's surface reflect and influence physical and human processes.
 - You will learn to use maps and spatial data to pose and solve problems. You also will learn to think critically about what is revealed and what is hidden in different maps and spatial arrays.
2. Understand and interpret the implications of associations among phenomena (things, people, processes, and events) *in* places.
 - Geography looks at the world from a spatial perspective seeking to understand the changing spatial organizations and seeking to understand the changing spatial organization and material character of Earth's surface.
 - One of the critical advantages of a spatial perspective is the attention it focuses on how phenomena are related to one another *in* particular places.
 - You will learn not just to recognize and interpret patterns but to assess the nature and significance of the relationships among phenomena that occur in the same place. You will learn how tastes and values, political regulations, and economic constraints work together to create particular types of cultural landscapes.
3. Recognize and interpret the relationships among patterns and processes *at different scales*.
 - Geographical *analysis* requires a sensitivity to scale, not just as a spatial category but as a framework for understanding how events and processes from local to global influence one another.

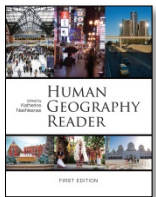
- You will learn that the phenomena you are studying at one scale (e.g. local) may be influenced by developments at other scales (e.g. regional, national, or global). You will learn to look at processes operating at multiple scales when seeking explanations of geographic patterns and arrangements.
4. Define regions and evaluate the regionalization process.
 - Geography is concerned not simply with describing patterns but with analyzing how they came about and what they mean.
 - You will learn to see regions as objects of analysis and exploration and move beyond simply locating and describing regions to considering how and why they come into being and what they reveal about the changing character of the world in which we live.
 5. Characterize and analyze changing interconnections among places.
 - At the heart of a geographical perspective is a concern with the ways in which events and processes operating in one place can influence those operating *at other places*.
 - You will learn to view places and patterns not in isolation but in terms of their spatial and functional relationship with other places and patterns. Moreover, you will be able to analyze how those relationships can constantly change and understand how and why such change occurs.

Required Materials



Domosh, Neumann, and Price. 2015. *Contemporary Human Geography: Culture, Globalization, Landscape* with Blackboard Card. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.

www.macmillanhighered.com/launchpad/domoshchg1e/



Nashleanas, Katherine. 2014. *Human Geography Reader First Edition*. Toronto Ontario, Canada: Cognella Press. Available through the University Bookstore and also see Blackboard (Course Documents) for ordering instructions directly from the publisher.

In addition, please purchase and bring with you to class:

- 8 ½" x 11" notebook for class (and be willing to use it)

Basic Course Information

This is an undergraduate 100 level survey course and it will require adult-level responsibility to complete all assignments on time. Our approach will cover a broad sweep of topics related to human culture from the micro- to the macro-scale with a focus on environmental quality. In order to prepare properly for lecture, you will need to:

1. Read the text and come to class prepared for the topic.
2. Attend class regularly and get your assignments done on time. **Make sure you know when assignments, quizzes, and exams are due; check your semester planner on Blackboard frequently—better yet, print it out and post it on your wall.**
3. Be a productive and supportive class member, be willing to participate. Class is so much more interesting for everyone when class members participate. I'm sure you all have experiences and insights that can add a great deal to our discussions, and I would love to hear from you.
4. Concentrate on learning specifics about the aspects of the human cultural environment we are studying bearing in mind all the elements of scale that are interacting.
5. Be willing to ask questions, investigate new ideas, identify and challenge your assumptions.

Learning Module Tab in Blackboard

- Your assignments in this course consist of:

- Reading textbook chapters and articles in *The Human Geography Reader*
 - Discussion Board activities
 - Video/montage/PowerPoint presentation (two)
 - Film evaluations
 - Any additional reading assignments as posted
 - In-class or online activities
 - Unit exams
- **Orientation Exercise:** Designed to help you navigate through Blackboard (don't forget this one!).
 - **Unit Exams**
 - These will cover several chapters of the textbook, lecture, and readings; you will have a week within which to take them, and you will take them at the Testing Center, 127 Burnett Hall any time during the week they are up, when you feel most ready.
 - **Film Evaluations:** Reflective evaluation responses to films you will view and will review evaluation of other students' reflections using a scoring rubric.
 - **Reader Questions:** (Ungraded) These will help guide you through the readings and I will select some of these questions to be on the unit exams.
 - **Reader Discussions (online):** Short evaluation responses to readings and response to two other students' evaluations online on the discussion board.
 - **Video/Montage/Power Point:** This is where you get to be creative! Responding to an assigned topic, you will learn to create a video, photograph montage, or short Power Point presentation.
 - **Reflective Essay:** To serve as a summary of the course and a reflection of ways in which your worldview has changed as a result of what you have learned this semester
 - **ConceptMap:** (In-class only) Allows you to inventory what you already know about a topic at the beginning of a unit; then you will edit, add to, or otherwise change your ConceptMap at the end of the unit to indicate what you have learned. This completed ConceptMap will be turned in for credit.

Assignment	Week	Worth		Overall Course Value
Understanding		Pts.	%	Total %
Orientation Quiz (MTA)	1	15	03%	
Exams (4 @ 35 pts. ea.) (MTA)	4, 9, 13, 16	140	30%	33%
Analysis				
Film Evaluations (4 @ 20 pts. ea.)	3, 6, 9, 12	80	17%	
Reading Discussions (8 @ 10 pts. ea.)	Semi-Weekly	80	17%	38%
Essay: (Music & Geography)	10	20	04%	
Reflection				
Cartoon Reflection	1	10	02%	
Video/PowerPoint (The World As I See It)	3	20	04%	
Video/PowerPoint (Music & Geography)	9, 10	30	06%	29%
Report (Inventory in-class)	13	20	04%	
Essay (The World As I See It)	15	40	08%	
Concept Maps (in-class) (11 @ 2 pts. ea.)	Weekly	22	05%	
Total Points	Semester	477	100%	100%

97% +	A+
92%-96%	A
90%-91%	A-
87%-89%	B+
83%-86%	B
80%-82%	B-
77%-79%	C+
72%-76%	C
70%-71%	C-
67%-69%	D+
62%-66%	D
60%-61%	D-

Regarding email:

- Students are responsible to make sure they are getting emails from me. I depend on email to communicate important information to the class. I will send out a test email at the beginning of the semester so students can be sure they have registered their correct email address with MyRed.
- Students must identify themselves by NAME, IDENTIFY THEIR CLASS, AND SECTION NUMBER if they want me to respond to their email.
- If you are copying an old email to send me a new email, it is **very important** to change the subject line. I rely on the subject line to prioritize my messages so I believe the subject line you send. If you don't change the subject line, I might think it is in reference to old emails and I might not get to it until later.
- So, the beginning of your email subject line should look like this (including your section number):

Subject:

Geog. 140:001 RE: Your subject heading
Geog. 140:101 RE: Your subject heading

- I will make every effort to respond to an email within 24 hours. If it takes a little longer, have patience. If you do not provide your name, class identification, or relevant subject line, I may mistake your email for spam and not respond at all.
- **Be sure to identify yourself by name in your email.** Some of you have very creative email addresses that suggest hobbies, interests, or even private jokes. To avoid receiving an email from me asking who you are, please make sure you identify yourself by first and last name.
- One way to get some of your questions answered more quickly is to check the Syllabus to see if I have already answered your question. I know it will take a little time to become familiar with the Blackboard tool for this course, but the sooner you know how to use it and where to go for answers, the easier the semester will go.
- I will have a link on Blackboard, "Internet Cafe" where I will post questions students have sent me that I believe the rest of the class would also benefit from. As the semester progresses, it might be helpful to check this link, too, before emailing me ... someone may have already asked the same question you have. You can also use this link to communicate with other members of the class. If you want to check your notes with someone, if you are an international student and would like to arrange for a study partner, or even if you would like to simply make a comment about something we covered in class and would like to talk about it more, you can use the Internet Cafe. Everyone is welcome!!

Course Policies**•Academic Dishonesty**

- Any academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.
- Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following:
 - Cheating on a quiz, examination, paper, or other required work
 - Handing in any assignment or project that is not your own work and/or duplicates another student's assignments, papers, and so on.
 - Plagiarism is using any material without giving credit to the source. This is the equivalent of academic theft and it is taken very seriously.
- Students caught plagiarizing or cheating will
 - be required to meet with the instructor

- automatically receive a zero for the assignment
- At the discretion of the instructor, according to UNL's Student Conduct Policy, the student(s) will be reported to the school administration.
- The student may be required to take an "Academic Integrity" course for which the student will pay \$100.00.
- Any further incidents of academic dishonesty will result in the student failing the course.
- **Accommodation**
 - Reasonable accommodations are available to students with special needs, as long as they have submitted proper documentation to support the request through the Students with Disabilities Office.
 - Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.
- **Assignments**
 - All assignments are to be completed on time. No late assignments will be accepted unless you have sufficiently explained to me *beforehand* why your assignment will be late and I have granted you an extension. Otherwise, when the assignment date has passed, you will no longer have the opportunity to complete the assignment.
 - Any assignment duplicated by two or more students will be graded as 0 (F)
 - Maple TA assignments, quizzes, and exams **will only be available for the days indicated**. Please check the Class Schedule to make sure you are aware of deadlines.
- **Attendance**
 - In-class exercises, and occasional sign-up sheets will be ways I will be taking attendance.
 - You are also expected to participate in class, which includes taking lecture notes. Some of the in-class quizzes will be taken directly from class lecture notes. You are responsible for making a record each class period of what we covered that day.
 - You are expected to be in class each class period
 - **CAUTION!!! If you just quit attending, you will receive an "F" for the course. To remove this F, you will have to re-take the course and pay for it a second time. In order to avoid this financial burden, if you are going to stop coming to class, please be sure to officially drop the course. If you are receiving financial aid, your lack of attendance will be reported to Registration and Records.**
- **Exams**
 - Dates of quizzes and examinations are listed on the Class Schedule and I will make every attempt to honor the dates published. Some of these dates may slip depending on how the class proceeds. If you miss any class meetings, you are responsible for making sure you find out about any announcements.
 - If you need to use a foreign language dictionary, permission will be granted as long as there are no marks or notes in the dictionary or notes stored on an electronic device pertaining to this class.
 - Unit Exams will be computer-based (Maple TA) and will be administered at the Testing Center, 127 Burnett Hall, and you will need to bring a picture ID with you. The exams will usually be open for at least 3 days, and you can take the test any time the Testing Center is open, when you are most ready for it. Be sure you know the days and times the Testing Center is open. Questions will be

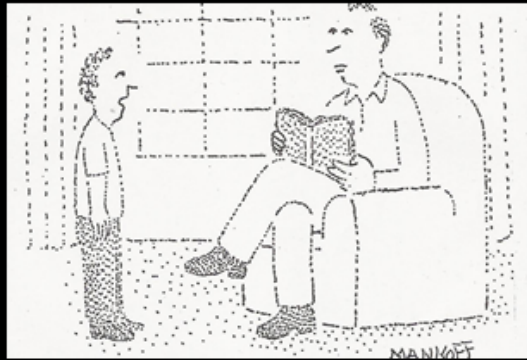
taken from text readings, handouts, class discussions, student presentations, and any media shared in class.

- **If you are going to miss an exam** the following procedure **must** be followed:
 1. Contact me by email before the exam and explain why you must miss the class. Only excused absences warrant make-ups. If you just don't show up for the exam, you will forfeit your option of making it up. It also depends on the reason – illness and family emergencies are the general rule. It's difficult to make a case for missing the exam when it is available for an entire week.
 2. It is expected that you will take the exam before the next exam is given.
 3. Missed, unexcused exams count as an F (0). Exceptions are made rarely and only in very special circumstances. Simply telling me you are going to miss an exam does not constitute an excused absence.
- **Professionalism**
 - It is important to maintain a proper learning environment where everyone is free to express an opinion based in thoughtful consideration and backed by readings in the course. I hope my students will feel comfortable and relaxed; they will choose to participate, to have fun, and to learn.
 - **PLEASE DO NOT:**
 1. Use your laptops or other electronic devices for anything other than in-class work. There will be a lot going on in class and if you divide your attention, you are likely to miss significant information or announcements (besides the fact that it is incredibly rude). In addition, you will distract the attention of students next to you and behind you, doing them a disservice. Please be a responsible peer and colleague.
 2. Read newspapers or other material that does not pertain to the class after class has started. This also is very rude. If I see this happening, I will stop the class and ask you to put the material away.
 3. Eat or snack in class unless you can do it very discretely.
 4. Distract others by whispering loudly or holding private conversations during class, taking up class time for personal issues, or by “packing up” early to leave class (this last one really bugs me).
 5. Sleep in class. I know many of you have work schedules and challenging schedules, but it is your responsibility to remain alert in class and motivate yourself to learn.
 6. Allow cell phones or pagers to go off during class. Cell phones and pagers must be **turned off** (not to vibrate) and NOT used in class. If a cell phone should go off during class, I will stop lecture and we will all stare at YOU.
 7. Leave the classroom during lecture or class activity in order to make a call, answer a cell phone or pager, to go to the restroom, or get snacks. This causes undue disruption and breaks the concentration of the other students. Be sure you are prepared to remain for the entire period once the class begins.
 8. Behave in an obnoxious manner, display an intolerant attitude toward the views of others, or display a disruptively negative attitude in/toward the class. Negative attitudes only reduce your own ability to learn and they negatively affect the learning environment for your peers.

I believe in fair and not necessarily always equal treatment for all students. I will treat my students with respect and expect respectful treatment in return. I look forward to sharing the world with you this semester!

**First Online Discussion:****What does this cartoon mean and what is its relevance to our course?**

Please think about the significance of this boy's question and post your observations on the class discussion board in Blackboard (what do you think the significance of the boy's question is and how does it relate to our class?). Then respond substantively to at least two other students' observations. Let's get a good discussion going (8 points for your post, 2 points for responding to two other posts = 10 points).



Dad, if a tree falls in the forest ...
and the *media* aren't there to cover it ... *has the tree really fallen?*

Appendix 3: Instructions and Rubric for Music and the Geography of Place

Geography 140 Video/PowerPoint Project Music and a Geographic Sense of Place

Readings to use:

Space or Place?
Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places
Screaming at the Moptops

Project Goals and Objectives:

This project is both a group project and an individual project. It is designed to enable you to explore the concept of place, extending our discussion of two previous articles, *Space or Place* and *Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places*. Furthermore, you will be able to apply some of the conditions or ideas you might find in *Screaming at the Moptops* and be able to make your own meaningful connection between music and a geographic sense of place.

Project Question: How does music contribute to a geographic sense of place or how does a geographic sense of place contribute to music? Please think about this question and create an expressive video or PowerPoint as a group, write an individual paper regarding this project (see rubric below) then individually and thoughtfully comment on at least two other groups' projects.

Assignment Instructions:

As a group, together you will negotiate and choose a piece of music and then each member will contribute an image or images of places that relate in some way to the music. Perhaps the artist is singing about a specific place, the music comes from a certain region of the world, or the music reminds you of certain feelings you get when you look at images of landscapes. ***Please be respectful of the class in the music (words) and images you choose to share.*** Create a program of not more than one minute where you are linking the music and the images of place and upload it into the class discussion board, providing text for the class explaining why you chose the images you did and how you related the articles to the project.

- Either the music is about a specific place and you find several images of that place as they relate to the music;
- Perhaps the music itself makes you think of specific kinds of landscapes and places
- Or, there are certain places you are drawn to and you want to find music that represents what you feel about that place

As individuals, you will contribute pictures to the project and then **evaluate** in what ways *you* were able to make the connection between a geographic sense of place based on the images you chose and the music your group chose.

So, as a group, you will prepare a video or PowerPoint presentation that **explores** the relationship between the piece of music you all chose together, and you each will contribute a picture or pictures that **demonstrates** how the images you chose are reflective of the music, and you will upload this project onto the Class Discussion Board.

As an individual, you will write a paper, which you will upload on SafeAssign, providing a detailed explanation of why your group chose the images it did and evaluate the overall project in relation to the three articles we have read: *Space or Place*, *Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places*, and/or *Screaming at the Moptops*. What did you learn from the other pictures, how did finding images to express the music enable you to experience either the music or the place differently? Finally, you will also include a paragraph about what you learned by doing this project overall as well as how well your group worked together.

Finally, individually, you are to select projects of two other students who are in two different groups, review them, and thoughtfully comment on them according to the same criteria by which your own project is being evaluated.

Assessment: These projects will be evaluated based on the clarity and thoroughness of your explanations (10 points), how well the combination of images and music express your ideas (10 points), and how clearly you are able to draw connections to the relevant articles (10 points). I will look at the video/PowerPoint presentation your group produces and read your individual papers. You can also receive an additional 5 points each for thoughtfully commenting on the projects of two other students (be sure to pick videos from two different groups). This project is worth a total of 40 points.

Time for completion: 2 weeks.

Criteria for Video	10	8	6	4	2
Clarity and thoroughness of explanation	Very clear and thorough, interpretive and shows insight and application	Relates place to music, and is interpretive, but could have gone into more depth	Relates place to music but is more superficial and descriptive than interpretive	Relates place to music, but explanation is not clear	Very general and vague
How well images and music express ideas	Using several images, power of interpreting music in relationship to place is very strong and moving	Using several images, student put thought into relationship between music and place but explained only briefly	Using few images, student put thought into relationship between music and place but did not explain well	Link between music and place represented in images is unclear	No specific link between music and place images
Response to other videos:	Substantive comment on 2 videos: 10 points max		Substantive comment on 1 video: 5 points max		

Criteria for Essay	5	4	3	2	1
Connections drawn to relevant articles	Uses several specific details or examples from articles	Uses few details or examples from articles	Uses general reference to ideas in articles but does not go into detail	References to articles are unclear or confusing	Acknowledges articles were part of the assignment and uses titles of articles in paper
Evaluation of group and project	Thorough evaluation of group working together; selects out members who did very well or very poorly; good suggestions about project	Gives overview of how group was organized; selects out members who did very well or very poorly; some suggestions or comments about project	Gives overview of how group was organized and how members worked together; some suggestions or comments about project	General statement about group overall; limited suggestions or comments about project	General statement about group overall; no suggestions or comments about project

Appendix 4: Sample of Group Discussion Board Questions

Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places: **Based on the article, *Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places*, provide your own example of how a religious understanding of a site creates one set of places while touristic interpretations produce a different set of places ... at the same site (10 points). Please do not use any examples that have been used in class, in the Power Points, or in the textbooks.**

Then comment substantively on two other students' examples and explanations for 5 additional points. These comments must be uploaded by 11:59 pm. Try to pick students who have not received any comments yet or have only received one comment.

Appendix 5: Collaboration: Student Responses to Group Work

I was very luck(y) to be put in the group that I was. Everyone in my group did the very best to their ability and we were very proud of the final product that we made. When it came to making the project I decided to get everything organized and take the lead role. The first thing that I did was make a google doc so we all could work on the powerpoint at the same time. This was very helpful because we could check each others [sic]work as we were doing it. I believe that group 18 is one of the better groups in the class because we all strive to be the best in the class and that really motivated us. Everyone did equal work as well which made the process very smooth. (Clauson)

Overall, I really enjoyed doing this project. I feel that I learned a lot by doing it. I also think that my group and I worked very well throughout the duration of the project. Once we got the song selected, we all worked hard to get the project done, and we all did our fair share. We each did two slides with ample pictures on each one. I think that everyone did a good job on their individual slides, as well as getting it done in timely manner so that we were able to turn it in before the deadline. Overall, I feel that our project turned out very well. (Gates)

Working with my group was an excellent experience. We worked well together so it was pretty easy for us to come with ideas for our video. I wouldn't mind doing another group assignment with them. (Langford)

I have learned that place really does matter to each individual, whether it is sacred or a tourist place, or whether it's just the campus where you go to school. Everywhere you go you are making memories and experiencing different cultures and traditions, place really is sacred. Everyone in our group contributed equally and did a really good job with our presentation! Nick got the power point ready and shared the link with us to edit and put our own comments and pictures on, and Mckenna made sure everyone was included by starting a group message to let everyone know what was going on at all times. No one slacked or didn't put any effort in, everyone did their job by contributing their ideas, pictures, and comments in the project. (May)

I think the members in my group did an excellent job of finding their own meaning of the song, and relating it to them. I really like how everyone did their own thing; some analyzed specific lyrics that they felt a connection with, and some did the song as a whole to analyze and connect with. I think that both of these ways really helped get the full picture as to what people think of when they hear the song. The song as a whole evokes some feelings while some specific parts of the song evokes other feelings. Everyone worked really well together and we got our project done in a timely manner. (Sacks)

By doing this project, I learned how powerful a song could be in creating place. Everyone might think of a place differently, but a song like Every Reason I Go Back can remind everyone of the town where they grew up. This project also helped me apply ideas from the reader articles to my own life and make them personal, as I discussed in previous paragraphs. My group worked together very well on this project and I feel everyone did their part. All group members did an individual

slide in the power point and added to discussions. I enjoyed working with my group and sharing ideas about songs and how we think of place through them. (Siebert)

The project was a learning experience unlike anything I have ever done.... Our group worked together well, and everyone was respectful of my deadline for when I wanted their images and captions so that I could put the video together. I enjoyed working on this project with other people; I feel that I now have a more diversified image of America thanks to the outlooks of my fellow group members. This project has made me realize that being an American is more than just living in this country; being an American encompasses a sense of belonging and pride. (Siebrandt)

My group and I really enjoyed doing this project together.... I really enjoyed working with my group because they were all very easy to work and communicate with. We set up a google doc so that we could each add our own slides and what we thought of the song. During class time we would all discuss what we should change or add about the video. I found it neat to not only see what my group related the song to place, but to actually hear them talk about it in class and how important America is to them. I found this project to be very interesting and neat.... Through this project I really learned the impact music has on the geography of place that someone feels. A song can take you back to a place that you feel close to, or it can bring back one specific memory of a place. (Townsend)

Overall, each member of our group contributed very actively. Each of us choose different pictures and write some paragraphs or some sentences describe those pictures. We collaborated to each other very well. All of us agreed with the music through the slides because the music is extremely unique. My group and I learned how to impress our thoughts and ideas. Honestly, each member of our group is very creative and happy with any new ideas. Each member has the role to find out the most typical characteristics of the Tibetan Buddhist chanting. Thus, when Nicholas put our stuff all together, the project is very wonderful and useful materials. (Vo)

Finally, my group worked extremely well together. We relied on the all the members to complete their majority at home and no one let us down. Once we all contributed what songs we thought would work, and picked one together we were able to start. This entire project was very beneficial to me, as it showed me how well group projects can work. Not only this, but it also made me felt a bond with the entire class which is very strange for such a large lecture. I really enjoyed this project and hope you continue to do this with your other classes. (Vondracek)

Overall, I thought that this was a very thought-provoking project that allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of how music plays a role in the sense of place that people feel.... Our group worked pretty well together. It was interesting for me to see how each of us had different opinions and perspectives surrounding the same song. I did a lot of the video work. It was a bit challenging to get the pictures to be synchronized with the music that was playing in the background. Other than that, I did not have a hard time with this project and I think that it was worthwhile to experience other views on the same song. (Bignell)

In my opinion I thought that our group worked well together on this music project. We put together a plan and were able to execute our plan and accomplish the project with efficiency. We were able to quickly pick out a song that had some meaning to all of us and that we would be able to connect

with and be able to show a connection with a certain space. Overall I thought that this project brought me a lot of insight into the world of music and how it can have so much more meaning than just a couple of words with a beat. Music can change the way you feel instantly, it can give a place more meaning and make you feel comfortable in a location previously unknown. (Dobson)

This is the first group project I've done since being in college and I was very glad to be placed in a group with members that were all willing to do their share of the project. Our group was pretty easy to work with and we were able to agree on a choice of song in class and set up a time and meeting place to work on the project outside of class. Every member of the group showed up and more importantly participated in the project during our out of class meeting in some way. They did this by finding pictures, editing the PowerPoint, coming up with ideas, and offering suggestions about how to improve the presentation. In Conclusion, these projects provided our audience with a unique way to experience a sense of place that we created with the pairing of a song and images that resulted in some interesting videos. I was really pleased with how this project turned out and I think our groups was a success both in terms of final product and teamwork. This was thanks to our picture selection, how we related the project to the Space or Place and Screaming at The Moptops articles, and our improved understanding of the articles and concepts related to place. (Grint)

Cooperation is the basis of win-win in group work. In my opinion, I think our group's cooperation is successful. Firstly, we talked about our topic together and everyone provides their own suggestions for our project. Secondly, every member has clear division of labor. For instance, my responsibility was find imagines and made PowerPoint., and other members would choose specific music and combine them when I finished. Briefly, I was enjoying this group project. Because I think this was a good chance for me to familiar with cooperation and touch other country's culture. In addition, I learned so many xtra knowledge about geographical sense. (Gu)

I truly enjoyed this project for the sheer fact that looking up images to describe the places that John Denver expressed almost gave me the feeling of traveling there myself. Experiencing a place through the words of someone else is an interesting experience, and then looking at images of that place while listening almost brings you to that place itself. I can honestly say im very interested in visiting west Virginia one day and hopefully experiencing some of the many amazing things described throughout the song. From this project i learned that a song about a place can be much more than that, it can be an expression of true love and passion for a place that has provided so much for so many. The song can give a sense of belonging for anyone who has lived in this area weather it e for on or multiple generations, it grants a sense of belonging. Our group worked well together, we have a diverse and well-rounded group of individuals who come from a variety of backgrounds and that helps bring in perspectives that none of us would have considered if it weren't for that individual speaking up and sharing. (Heath)

As a whole I feel our group worked rather well together. Everyone pulled their own weight and contributed equally on all fronts from project ideas to project content. In all honesty, this surprised me because in our group, four were born and raised in china while the remaining two, including myself, were born and raised in the US. This made it a little difficult at first to overcome a slight cultural and language barrier. One of the difficulties that we encountered was just choosing a genre of music to start with. We ended up deciding on Chinese Peking Opera because it helped the rest of our group choose a song that they could relate to and connect geography and place to with ease. It

made it a little more difficult for me to decide on what pictures I wanted to choose based on what I was hearing simply due to the fact that I had absolutely no experience with Chinese music. To overcome this I was required to do a little research into Peking Opera (Mason)

Overall, our group worked really well together... and we all contributed ideas and pictures. Communication among us was really well and every time we had work time in class we were able to discuss our ideas and plan out our strategy. Dan especially did a good job of keeping the rest of the group in the loop. He had a family emergency, so he had to miss a few classes, but even then he made sure to contact us and get his portion of the project to us on time. We were all also able to learn a lot by completing this project. We learned that a song can represent an association with a specific place and the level of meaning is based on the individual's own experiences. (Speich)

I really enjoyed this group project; every one of our group member has contributed to this project; I hope we can do another project as thought provoking as this one in the future. (Tan)

Appendix 6: Experiential Learning & Creativity

It was very interesting to see what my other group members had as their pictures. Because mine was so clear to me and I did not have to do much, if any, thinking when I heard the music, I found it intriguing to see what others did. The way that it brought out such personal and vivid feelings was very fascinating [sic]. Music has such a way of connecting people to their emotions, so when it is centered around a certain location, the music all of a sudden isn't the only factor anymore. When I saw the pictures that my group chose, I began to hear the song differently. I felt relaxed but at the same time could completely agree with the sense of mysteriousness that was there. However, if I hadn't of seen their pictures, I doubt that I would have ever felt those connections. I learned a lot from this project. I learned that geography illuminates the relationships between music and the people who listen to it. Physical and cultural environments have a heavy influence on the music and the composers. It is a way of not just seeing the geography, but hearing it. (Reinhard)

At the time of writing this I am 30,000 feet above the southern part of the Rocky Mountains on my way home for the week and am truly experiencing the ideas put forth in the 2 articles, Space and Place and Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places. The majority of the flight has been over flat Nebraska and Colorado prairie and farmland and thus seemed like just empty space to me, much like the mountainous areas around which Tibetan Buddhism exists. However, to the farmers that own that land and to the practicing Buddhists as well as the monks that live in the highlands of Tibet that seemingly empty space has much more meaning to it than I could possibly imagine. As well, in regards to the beautiful Rocky Mountains that I am seeing move slowly through my little porthole, they are considered sacred space by many hundreds and thousands of people yet I am simply a passing tourist, only taking in its beauty for a very short amount of time and not viewing it as sacred, merely seeing it pass by through my tiny little window of the world. (Roberts)

By closely listening to the lyrics, I was able to visualize what Frank Sinatra was saying, and I could clearly picture a rustling and bustling New York. I think that this is really cool because even though I have never been to New York myself, I was able to get a feel for what it is like through this song. Songs and lyrics are really cool in that aspect- that they can shed light on a topic or a place that you have never personally experienced in your life. In the article, "Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places," it states, "On the one hand, the meaningful content of a particular place relies on the production of both subjects who inhabit the place and subjects who observe, comment on, and interpret the place, including both insiders and outsiders." This part of the article really stood out to me, as I am an outsider to New York. Through this song I was able to connect and feel what people think of New York, although I am an outsider. (Sacks)

Each one of our group members decided that picking a song that would let our imaginations run wild would create an environment where the best project could be made. In Place or Space, the concept of a place's "essence" is brought up. It is then compared to the material elements of a space or place. This essence that a place has to each one of us allows us to think back and remember them. Usually we get a certain feeling, rather than just a picture in our mind. The picture becomes more than a picture, the essence pulls at our emotions and feelings. (Molacek)

Appendix 7: Critical Thinking & Application of Readings

(Sweet Home Alabama by Lynyrd Skynyrd) The beauty of the state contributes to the tourist appeal. While it is not known to be the most luxurious of coastlines, tourists and vacationers still choose to stay along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, which leads to the commodification of the environment. Each tourist going to the south looking for beauty probably also wants their share of the southern culture and food of the area, which may change or become exaggerated to be more marketable, similar to the occurrences in the article *Screaming at the Moptops*. Popeye's is what comes to mind when I think about the commodification of the food, but the reality is that most businesses probably do the same thing to an extent. (Franzen)

The song mentions the Blue Ridge Mountains, which may not seem religious, but they can mean different things to different people. According the article "Scared Spaces and Tourist Places," religious sites of tourism can maintain a simultaneity of places. To some, they may be a special, scared space to go hiking or to just relax. To the Native Americans they were actual religious places. The Blue Ridge Mountains also see some tourists, as they have two national parks: Shenandoah National Park and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. People can come to these places to learn about the history and to enjoy the outdoors. Although these parks are free, they are still becoming commodified, with gift shops. (McCoy)

The project relates to the Space or Place article especially well with the idea of existentialism. The song describes a place, small town America, and talks about reasons for wanting to go back. These reasons and the specific place can be experienced differently for everyone. By doing this project, I learned how powerful a song could be in creating place. Everyone might think of a place differently, but a song like *Every Reason I Go Back* can remind everyone of the town where they grew up. This project also helped me apply ideas from the reader articles to my own life and make them personal... (Siebert)

Throughout our project, "Music and the Geography of Place", my eyes were opened to the stark comparisons that can be drawn between a particular type of music, and a specific place or type of place on the Earth. ...In order to truly understand this project, it is important to understand the importance of place, and how certain elements about that place, or even places like it in general, can make you think of it. This phenomenon was clearly apparent in the article "Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places" because we learned very clearly that meaningless expansions of area is just space. This is an interesting fact to look at because the song speaks of it when you really think about it. To people on the coasts, the middle is just a "meaningless expanse of area", so to them it is just space that really means nothing except where they get some of the food on their table. To others however, including us here in Lincoln, the middle represents much more than just meaningless area, because it is in this place that we find our family, friends, and many fond memories. "Screaming at the Moptops" was also a helpful tool in going deeper into the project. This was very easy to compare to our project in that in the essay, the Beatle's music was associated with a specific place, Liverpool. This is exactly what we were trying to show with our powerpoint, that certain types of music can automatically make you think of specific places on the Earth. Although Jason Aldean isn't nearly the worldwide sensation that the Beatles are, his music still definitely makes one think of the "Flyover States". (Sneed)

Ways the assigned readings were applied

Place or Space? Place or Space taught me how place is a more local and emotional term while space is a more global and unemotional term. It also said how spaces become places as they become “time-thickened”. This really helped me to understand how Lincoln and the Tunnel Walk song would not give me a sense of place, if I didn’t have the history and memories here like I do. As time went on the song gave me much more meaning than it would have if I never attended a husker football game. (Robinson)

In Place or Space we learned about how the characteristics that make up a place and distinguish it as more than a location or empty space on a map. Places have meaning to the people that inhabit them as well as the visitors. This meaning can be derived from things like cultural characteristics, personal and visual experiences, and peoples’ behaviors. People feel strong connections to places and even feel a sense of identity from inhabiting the place or simply visiting. People often share these feelings with each other to form a community which provides them with yet another connection tied to place. In order to do this project correctly we had to take into consideration what we thought the people that inhabit the places would like to have it portrayed like and in what way can the images in the video allow people to experience or at least get a feel for the identity of the places described in the song. (Grint)

Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places: Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places taught me that “‘Space’ is more abstract than ‘place’. What begins as an undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (Tuan 1977:6) It also showed me that places are social and places involve relationships between various individuals and groups of people. Lastly, it showed me that place is timeless. (Robinson)

We learned to comprehend contrasting ideas of place occupying the same space in the article Sacred Spaces and Tourist Place. This became relevant to our project as we learned how one space can have two distinct places occupying it, and it encouraged me to look at other ways space and place can overlap with one doubly occupying the other. I grasped onto this concept to help me pick out images that I felt correlated with the sense of place the song was describing while integrating the experiences of people or themes that I felt were being left out of the equation. The song clearly described what sort of a “place” the U.S. must be. The warm, proud descriptions the song provides are there to describe the U.S.A. as a whole, but each state, city, county, etc. varies greatly from the last as they all have their own distinct character. Despite having their own geographic spaces though, they still manage to conform to and fuel the American idea of place. (Wise)

Screaming at the Moptops: Screaming at the Moptops really tied in the meaning with sense of place and music. It showed the tourism side and meaningful place side. For example, many people got a sense of place from Liverpool and the Moptops music. People would make it a tradition to go see them perform and create a sense of place and some people were only there for the tourism factor. After reading that article, I fully understood how music gives you a sense of place. (Robinson)

Our project relates to the three articles in various ways. To begin, in the article Place or Space it says, “Essence is about the unique spirit of a place that extends beyond material elements of a place—there is some essence that pulls our emotions and feelings.” This idea of the essences of different places is seen throughout our project. When you look at the different images they automatically invoke a certain emotion or feeling that you can relate to even if it is of a place far away. The music along with the pictures really helps to connect that overall essence of helping those in need and giving throughout our entire project. In the article Sacred Spaces and Tourist Places it says, “What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.” This is seen in various slides of our project showing how certain pictures can help us and the viewers develop a sense of place. For example, the picture of me with the children in Nicaragua helped me to make that not just a space I traveled to, but it grew into a deep sense of place changing who I am as a person. ... It was interesting to see what the other members of my group thought of when they listened to the same song I did. I learned from the other pictures that even when a group of people listen to the same thing, it can invoke completely different emotions and mental pictures for them, as seen in our presentation. I would say that this project really helped me understand the idea of place in a different way. Now I really have a deep understanding of what place means for different people and that it is always changing for people based on your different experiences. (Friedrich)

The reading Screaming at The Moptops provided us with a great guideline since it was about how music can be used to enhance the view of a place or promote travel to a place. In the song “Flyover States” it talks about some of the great things offered by the states that people usually fly over when traveling between some of the more esteemed places in the United States. The Beatles used Liverpool, their town of origin, as lyrics in a lot of their music and Jason Aldean used the scenery and qualities of the flyover states as lyrics in his song “Flyover States”. The Beatles’ music made Liverpool into one of the most popular tourist destinations in England and allowed people that probably won’t travel to Liverpool a chance to experience by listening to the music of the Beatles. Our video allowed us to tie the song “Flyover States” to images of the places that went along with it, in our case the Midwest. This provided viewers with the opportunity to visually experience some of the great things offered by the places in the song. (Grint)

Appendix 8: What Students Learned

Overall I would say that this was an enlightening project. This project started out seeming like a quick and easy project, which it could have been. After picking the song and place that we were going to use it became more than just an easy project, it drew me in. When I started looking for pictures I found myself not only finding places in New York City that I had seen before, I also found landmarks that I had never seen before and even the places I thought I knew could take on a different light. I also found myself researching the places and their histories'. It can be strange growing up with certain pictures and ideas in your head about how a certain place is laid out or what it truly looks like and then seeing a picture from a local that is from an angle that is not the standard. It was cool to see how a space in the United States gave a sense of belonging to each of us. This made these spaces turn into places because we define them and share personal experiences with them. ... I appreciate this project because all the members in my group got the chance to take our own view on this song and come up with unique images that represented what this song meant to us. It was very cool to see the unique places that each person thought of, and the discussions we had as a group were also very interesting. (Frevert)

Overall, I thought that this was a very thought-provoking project that allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of how music plays a role in the sense of place that people feel. The first thing that I thought of when it came to this project was all of the songs that I associate to their respective places. When I hear mariachi bands performing, I automatically think of Mexico. When I hear country music, I automatically think of dirt roads, farms, and the country way of life. Song lyrics play a big part in this phenomenon, but the background music and rhythm have an equal role in taking someone to another place when they hear a song. ... I think that for me, music is something that has the power to take you to another place, even if it is to a place where you have never been. I especially like how music can be associated with a place, and place can be associated with music. Music can be a way in which people can travel the world and experience different regions and cultures without even leaving their homes. (Bignell)

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