

# **Regional Geography of the United States and Canada**

## **Instructor**

Brent Hecht  
Ph.D Student in Geography @ UCSB  
email: [bhecht@pipeline.sbcc.edu](mailto:bhecht@pipeline.sbcc.edu)

## **Course Information**

Meeting Times: Mondays, Wednesdays 2:20 - 3:40pm

Course Webpage: [www.brenthecht.com/teaching/geog105/](http://www.brenthecht.com/teaching/geog105/)

Course Location: EBS 102

Grader: Julie Powell

Office Hours: I'm available immediately following the class, as well as by appointment via instant message. Please feel free to contact me if you need to meet at a time other than after class.

## **Course Description**

This course will explore the economic geography of the United States and Canada via the tool of regional geography. Topics both directly and indirectly connected to economic geography will be discussed, and regional geography theory will also be a key subject. Important emphases will be patterns of human settlement, economic activity, and land use.

## **Class Textbook (REQUIRED)**

McKnight, Tom L. Regional Geography of the United States and Canada, 4th Edition. 2004. Prentice Hall.

## **Grading Formula**

- Map Quizzes = 15%
- Homework Assignments = 20%
- Midterm = 20%
- Final = 20%
- Project and Presentation = 20%
- Attendance = 5%

Grades will not be assigned on a strict percentage basis. At the end of the semester, I will assess grades based on overall class performance. However, I guarantee that

students with at least the following percentage scores will receive at least the following grades:

- 93 percent - A
- 90 percent - A minus
- 87 percent - B plus
- 83 percent - B
- 80 percent - B minus
- 77 percent - C plus
- 73 percent - C
- 70 percent - C minus
- 67 percent - D plus
- 63 percent - D
- 60 percent - D minus

## **Map Quizzes**

Starting in week five, we will begin each week with a Monday map quiz. You will be responsible for knowing all important geographic features in the regions that are the subject of the week. These features will include, but not be limited to, those on the map at the beginning of each chapter. *Do not worry about minor places, only ones that have a significant role in the region. Believe me, no need to freak out, I will only pick features not on the map that are VERY important.* The purpose of this exercise is familiarize you with the basic *toponym vocabulary* (place-name vocabulary) with which to discuss a region. Toponyms are to regional geography as letters and words are to literature; they're not super important in and of themselves, but are critical building blocks to the subject matter at hand. *Maps will also appear on the midterm and final, so this is a good way to practice for those tests.*

## **Midterm and Final**

The midterm and final will be a mix of multiple choice questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, map-based questions, and short answer questions. The final will not be cumulative in terms of specifics about regions, but will indirectly include more general subject matter learned during the first half of the course. This will become more clear as the semester rolls on. Both the midterm and the final will be graded by myself and the class grader.

## **Homework Assignments**

Some class sessions you will receive homework assignments. These will usually be due the following class session, but for some you may be given more time. These assignments will be graded by myself and the class grader.

## **Project and Presentation**

In a group, you will be responsible for writing a 10-page project report and making a 5-7 minute presentation. You will be asked to choose a sub-region of California (as defined by the class... more to be explained later) and write a “mini-chapter” on that sub-region. The chapter should be modeled on those in the book. More details will be made available by week six.

## **Attendance**

Roll will be taken each day in class. If it is determined that you are missing a significant number of classes (more than 4 classes), you will be penalized starting from the fifth absence unless you have extenuating circumstances. You will receive the benefit of the doubt; I just require honest communication if events in your life prevent you from making it to more than four classes.

## **Reading**

Assigned reading is to be completed *before* the class under which it is listed in the course schedule that follows. Expect to have to discuss the reading in class.

## **The Not-So-Fun Stuff**

I consider the classroom and the lab to be places of education. Education should be fun and exciting (at least some of the time), but it requires a certain level of constant respect between teacher and student and between students. For this reason, I have attached the SBCC Standards of Student Conduct to this syllabus. Please refer to this for any questions about your rights and responsibilities as a student. Additionally, I take academic honesty *very* seriously. Cheating, copying, plagiarism, etc. will not be tolerated. *Your grade is for individual effort; copied assignments/maps from other students will be considered plagiarism.* Please see <http://online.sbcc.edu/index.php?page=support&sec=49> for SBCC’s academic honesty policy, which will be strictly followed in this course.

A couple of other things

- No cell phones or text messaging in class (cell phones must be turned to silent or turned off)
- Student IDs are required for exams

## **Some Tips for Success in this Course**

- *check your pipeline e-mail every day before class!*
- take great notes during lectures (and readings)
- maintain a well-organized binder of notes and other materials
- complete assignments on time
- study for exams
- ask me questions when you don't understand

- take advantage of in-person and/or instant-message office hours
- plan on spending a lot of time in the laboratory

If you are struggling, help yourself out by studying with classmates, visiting me, and by taking advantage of tutoring and other resources. For some good general tips, see <http://4sbccfaculty.org/lessons/success> .

## Disabilities

SBCC Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should use the following SBCC procedure: contact the DSPS office (<http://www.sbcc.edu/dsps/>, SS 160, 805-965-0581x2364), submit documentation of your disability to the DSPS office, communicate with a DSPS specialist regarding options for services and accommodations, and reach written accommodation agreement with the DSPS specialist and with your instructors. SBCC requests you complete this process at least ten working days before your accommodation is needed, in order to allow DSPS staff and your instructors time to provide your accommodation.

## Schedule

Important Note: Since I was a creative in designing this course, this schedule may change slightly as we move through the semester. Each change will be announced in class and news of the change and the new syllabus will be posted on the course web page.

| Week | Class Days       | Subject   | Book Chapters        |
|------|------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1    | Jan. 28, Jan. 30 | Regions in General, North American Continent in General                   | Chapter 5, Chapter 1 |
| 2    | Feb. 4, Feb. 6   | General Human Geography of US + Canada, General Human Geography           | Chapter 3            |
| 3    | Feb. 11, Feb. 13 | North American City, General Urban Geography and Transportation Geography | Chapter 4            |

| Week | Class Days                                  | Subject  | Book Chapters          |
|------|---|--|------------------------|
| 4    | Feb. 20 (Feb. 18 = President's Day Weekend) | General Physical Geography of US + Canada        | Chapter 2              |
| 5    | Feb. 25, Feb. 27                            | Megalopolis                                      | Chapter 8              |
| 6    | Mar 3., Mar. 5                              | The Atlantic Northeast, French Canada            | Chapter 6, Chapter 7   |
| 7    | Mar. 10, Mar 12                             | The Appalachians and Ozarks                      | Chapter 9              |
| 8    | Mar. 17, Mar. 19                            | The Inland South, The Southeastern Coast         | Chapter 10, Chapter 11 |
| 9    | Mar. 24, Mar. 26                            | Midterm Review, <b>Midterm (26th)</b>            |                        |
| 10   | Mar. 31, Apr. 2                             | SPRING BREAK                                     |                        |
| 11   | Apr. 7, Apr. 9                              | Discussion of Project, The Heartland,            | Chapter 12             |
| 12   | Apr. 14, Apr. 16                            | The Great Plains and Prairies, Project Prep Time | Chapter 13             |
| 13   | Apr. 21, Apr. 23                            | The Intermontane West                            | Chapter 15             |
| 14   | Apr. 28, Apr. 30                            | The Boreal Forest, Project Prep Time             | Chapter 19             |
| 15   | May 5, May 7                                | The North Pacific Coast, Project Prep Time       | Chapter 18             |
| 16   | May 12, May 14                              | The Arctic, <b>Final (14th)</b>                  | Chapter 20             |
| 17   | Finals Week                                 | <b>Project Presentations</b>                     |                        |

*Special thanks to Dr. Laura Smith of Macalester College for her assistance preparing this syllabus and the course.*