

Proposed Revision to HGO4011

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Motivation

1. The course needs an update to include current debates in Geography
2. Needs better integration with the new MA Thesis course
3. Teaching abstract theory is not especially effective. Students need more application of theory.
4. Promote a better spread of MA thesis topics across all our specializations. Students will get a better overview of different sub-disciplines represented in our department earlier.

Suggested new format

1. A new introductory session on the geographical cross-disciplinary concepts of space, place and environment. That could help navigate the different sub-disciplines and be used as a backdrop against which to discuss different research traditions.
2. Consolidate history of geography and philosophy of science into 1 session each. Include a session on research design which will focus on **design**—how to connect the different aspects and especially how to use theory.
3. Use 1 empirical example and provide sub-disciplinary lectures that explore that example. The emphasis will be on showing how shifting the theoretical frame shifts the research questions, findings and implications drawn from a case study.
4. Schedule 10 lectures total including intro and conclusion.

Proposed lectures and seminars

Lecture/ Seminar no	Topic
1	Introduction. Space, place and environment, introduction to core philosophy of science ideas of ontology and epistemology, overview of course and program.
2	History of Geography. Brief overview of the turns, how the discipline is situated within the wider social sciences. Intro to importance of theory and theorizing.
3	Sub-Discipline 1. (see below for possible topics) Suggest starting with something other than urban geog or other specialisations that have courses running in parallel with this one to help encourage students to see geography as widely as possible.
S1	Seminar 1. Critical reading. Use sources which draw on the set reading list and help link between the ideas of space, place and environment outlined in L1 and the sub-discipline lectures.
4	Sub-Discipline 2. (see below for possible topics)
5	Sub-Discipline 3. (see below for possible topics)
6	Sub-Discipline 4. (see below for possible topics)
7	Sub-Discipline 5. (see below for possible topics)

S2	Seminar 2 (4090). MA thesis Topic development. Where to start? How to start formulating research questions
8	Sub-Discipline 6. (see below for possible topics)
9	Introduction to Research Design. How to connect theory to research questions and methods. Overall considerations in designing research projects
S3	Seminar 2. Exam prep. How to address the exam questions that will appear.
10	Conclusion. Bringing it all together. What did we learn about the overall empirical theme? How does this help us to formulate good MA thesis topics? Learning to read theory in the (non-theoretical) literature.

Empirical topics (suggestions—see below for those most promising in terms of literatures available)

- Fruit picking / Blueberries (see e.g. [last year's lecture and Tsing on radioactive blueberries](#))
- Race
- Poverty
- Borders

The topics that look most promising in terms of literature available are below. **It is important that we all agree on which overall topic to use so that there is coherence (and excitement) in the course. We should agree on how to frame the sub-disciplines, some can perhaps be combined.**

Geographies of poverty	
<i>Sub-discipline</i>	<i>Empirical focus</i>
Cultural geography	Social constructions of poverty (and how such narratives are produced through relations of race, gender, ethnicity, and class) mapped onto different geographies / Racialization of space – spatialization of race / politics of pinning poor people to place or policing poor people's spatial movement.
Economic geography	Spatial distribution of poverty – uneven access to markets and other economic infrastructure. People/places outside major commodity chains etc.
Urban geography	Ghettoization/gentrification (suburbanization of poverty). There's this excellent paper on occupation and dispossession in Chicago based on postcolonial and critical race theory in Geoforum (it sits between radical, legal and urban geography). ¹
Rural geography	How rural areas are increasingly thought of in terms of opportunity, as engines of growth in a world of economic uncertainty, lauded (but also criticized) in terms of climate change and mitigation etc. / indigenous land rights (in Scandinavia and Norway?) / Rurality and discourses of 'backwardness' / 'left behind' / uneven distribution of resources and service delivery (the fragmented welfare state)
Political ecology	The relation between poverty and environmental degradation and/or protection / conservation / social differentiation of resource access
Feminist (and decolonial?) geography	Spatial-environmental 'micropolitics' of gender and poverty

¹https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718516302949?casa_token=vVhKm9R7ahEAAAAA:psP-2SFJ73E1hK5Jmkucznu4Zo-IKlprRJypndv3GH1tE-1WdAqk5A3VbuGmlKoCy9SXmwDp42w

Political geography	Geographies of nationalism and state-building in relation to poverty, or the spatial violence of poverty / territorial bio-politics
Labor geography	Workers' spatial mobility – migration flows driven by poverty / labor migration as a way out of poverty / labor rights
Development geography	Geographies of aid – theories of development / north-south divide

Geographies of food	
<i>Sub-discipline</i>	<i>Empirical focus</i>
Cultural geography	Representations and performances of race in contexts of eating or producing food / how race changes through food – how food might enable different theorizations of race.
Economic geography	The globalization of trade in foodstuffs – political economy of food / agro-food geographies
Urban geography	Urban farming/gardening and changing relations of production / alternative food networks / rural-urban relations of food production
Rural geography (agrarian questions in the global north)	Food security and smallholder farming / deagrarianization / agro-food geographies / alternative food networks
Political ecology	Socio-natures of GMOs / food justice / food vs. biofuel conflicts / food-body encounters (FPE)
Feminist (and decolonial?) geography	How race, gender, class, caste and ethnicity is produced/challenged through food production/consumption
Political geography	Food sovereignty – e.g. how the nature of territorial state power and the juridical structures of the (neo)liberal state may mute radical aims of food sovereignty
Labor geography	Labor migration – e.g. fruit/blueberry picking and the labor market / labor rights
Development geography	Geographies of food aid / food vs. biofuel conflicts / development theory

Geographies of Borders	
<i>Sub-discipline</i>	<i>Empirical focus</i>
Cultural Geography	race as produced/challenged through border crossings
Economic Geography	the politics of economic borders (global trade)
Urban Geography	bordering cities / ghettoization / gentrification
Rural Geography	rural-urban divide / the rural as 'backward' of 'left behind'
Political Ecology	nature-society borders / fortress conservation
Feminist geography	gender borders – as per 'Bounding difference'
Political Geography	borders of the (nation-)state / spatiality of nationalism
Labor Geography	cross-border labor migration and labor rights
Development Geography	north-south divide and theories of development