

**San José State University**  
**Department of Urban & Regional Planning**  
**Course # 10341, GEOG 140 The United States, Section 01, Winter 2023**

Instructor: Dr. Kerry Rohrmeier, AICP  
Office Location: WSQ-113A  
Telephone: (408) 924-5882  
Email: [kerry.rohrmeier@sjsu.edu](mailto:kerry.rohrmeier@sjsu.edu)  
Class Days/Time: Online asynchronous (no assigned course meetings)  
Classroom: Canvas  
Prerequisites: Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better, completion of Core General Education, and upper division standing (60 units). Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended  
GE/SJSU Studies: Area S: Self, Society & Equality in the U.S.

### **Course Description**

Geography of the U.S. emphasizing the continuing changes of America's places and regions. Themes include environmental, culture, economic, and social geographies at community, regional and national scales (3-units).

### **Course Format**

This course is taught entirely online in an asynchronous format which means there are no scheduled meetings on Zoom. Students are required to have an electronic device (laptop, desktop, or tablet) with internet access. SJSU has a free equipment loan program available for students. New course modules can be found on the Canvas Learning Management System at <http://sjsu.instructure.com> each Monday morning. Students are responsible for regularly checking the website for announcements and updates.

### **Course Goals**

The United States is experiencing some of its most important challenges, changes, and debates in many decades. A geographic perspective is crucial to better comprehending and contributing to such pressing challenges as climate change, health and health care, xenophobia, and socio-economic inequalities. In this course, students will learn approaches to comprehending the geographic diversity, patterns, and connections of the United States and its subregions. The class will address these at phenomena at different scales (from local, regional, national, and to international), and across different themes (including environment, history, politics, race, gender, and economics). The class materials show the complex environment-society interrelationships of place. By critically studying the diverse geography of the United States, this course examines how space is not inevitable or pre-determined, but rather the product(s) of active choices, connections, and changing contexts.

### **GE Learning Outcomes (GELO) (Delete if not applicable)**

SJSU Studies Area S students will study the interrelationship of individuals, racial groups, and cultural groups to understand and appreciate issues of diversity, equality, and structured inequality in the U.S., its institutions, and its cultures.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- *GELO 1: describe how identities (i.e., religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age) are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts of equality and inequality;*
- *GELO 2: describe historical, social, political, and economic processes producing diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S.*
- *GELO 3: describe social actions which have led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S. (i.e., religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age).; and*
- *GELO 4: recognize and appreciate constructive interactions between people from different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups within the U.S.*

## Required Readings

### Textbook (less than \$20 for an e-book)

Hardwick, Susan, Fred Shelley, and Don Holtgrieve (2012) *Geography of North America, The: Environment, Culture, Economy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Pearson.

### Other

In addition, the course will utilize ESRI's online maps at <https://arcgisonline.com> frequently. Also, students will watch multimedia and documentaries using Kanopy, a free streaming service accessed using your SJSU One login. <https://www.kanopy.com>

## Course Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that to be successful, it is expected students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Students in this course will be assessed through various weekly assignments. Several 500-word current events essay prompts, review articles, and discussion forums will demonstrate comprehension of assigned readings and films on the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the term.

## Final Paper

For your final paper, you will research and write 1,500 words (about 5 double-spaced pages) discussing any culture or subculture you find interesting. This culture must be present in the United States today (though it might have a small population). Do you have a personal connection to this culture? Discuss the geography of where people who identify with this culture historically settled (if an immigrant or diaspora), where they live today, what cultural practices and creations are achieved through their customs, traditions, religion and/or beliefs? What is the culture's relationship to place? If the land there is meaningful then what issues are threatening or protecting it?

Assignments	Points	Learning Objectives
Assignments 1-11	180	GELO 1-4
Final Paper	40	GELO 1-3

## SCALE:

A plus = greater than 97%

A = 94-96%

A minus = 90-93%

B plus = 87-89%

C plus = 77-79%

D plus = 67-69%

B = 84-86%

C = 74-76%

D = 60-66%

B minus = 80-83%

C minus = 70-73%

D minus = 51-59%

All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades. In keeping with this policy, and to making grading responsive. All assignments are due as stated on the Course Schedule and Canvas. Please save all your work until after you have checked your final course grade.

### **Grading Information for GE**

Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students. Area S courses have a minimum of 3,000 words of writing in a language and style appropriate for the discipline.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and will merit a 0 for the assignment. Students who are suspected of cheating during an exam will be referred to the Student Conduct and Ethical Development office and depending on the severity of the conduct, will receive a zero on the assignment or a grade of F in the course. Grade Forgiveness does not apply to courses for which the original grade was the result of a finding of academic dishonesty.

### **University Policies**

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](#) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## **GEOG 140 The United States Course Schedule**

Refer to Canvas Modules for all readings and assignments in these topics:

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
1/3-1/4	GETTIG STARTED – WHY GEOGRAPHY MATTERS?
1/5-1/6	U.S. PHYSICAL & CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY
1/7-1/8	ISLANDS
1/9-1/10	CALIFORNIA
1/11-1/12	THE CONTINENTAL REACHES (SOUTH & PACIFIC NORTHWEST
1/13-1/14	THE NORTHEAST & ATLANTIC COAST
1/15-1/16	THE MIDDLE
1/17-1/18	THE WEST (SOUTHWEST & MOUNTAIN WEST)
1/19-1/20	FINAL