

Criselda Yee

From: Greig Guthey
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 3:57 PM
To: Criselda Yee
Subject: GE Designation for GEOG 352
Attachments: GEOG 352 C-Form.docx; Geog 352 GE form.docx; Geog 352 Env Dev Sust.docx; Email M Whittlesey.pdf

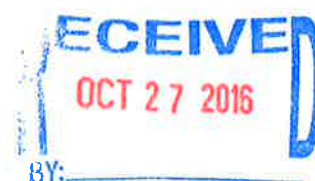
Dear GEC

I am writing in response to GEC's questions about a course proposal for which I requested GE designation in 2013. I recognize that my response is a bit late. Over the past two years, I have been HAPC co-chair and chaired a search committee with the result that my response to GEC was delayed. Nevertheless, I still want to complete this process as I think this course will serve CSUSM students in the GE program really well. It is a course about sustainability. I hope that GEC will see fit to take up discussion of this course and approve it for the GE program. It is on the schedule for Spring 2017 and I feel this will be a great upper division general education course on environment, development and sustainability. I attach to this email the original GE form, an updated syllabus, and the emails concerning this course.

As you can see from the email, upon reviewing the course, there were two questions from GEC:

1) Professor Whittlesey wrote to me: "Question 6: More specificity via examples would be helpful. Cite some specific moments in the course where the students see that 'development produces classes,' 'different genders experience development differently,' or a moment where a culture 'experiences and co-creates development processes.'" (Question 6 is "Please specify how this course explores the ways in which society and culture are affected by two or more of the following: (a) gender; (b) ethnicity; (c) class; (d) regional identities; (e) global identities.>"). I will take up each of these briefly.

First, on the issue of development producing classes. There are entire books written about what are called "national patterns of development" where the class structure of regions shapes how states, regions, and cities develop. Examples include Economic Historian David Landes's work on transitions to capitalism in Europe and Annalee Saxenian's research on Silicon Valley. Other scholars have looked at the institutions that cause some nations to be more economically dynamic, notably East Asian economies. A specific moment where we discuss how class and regional identity affect society is in relation to the wine industry in Northern California in week three on the draft syllabus. This week will include lecture and discussion about globalization and regionalization. The lecture case study will be the California wine industry. My work shows how a boutique wine-making class transformed California's wine country from a low quality bulk wine producer into a high quality wine region deeply connected to the local environment. The approach I use derives from and makes use of research from both institutional economics, regional planning, anthropology, history and political economy. The theoretical insight is that societies shape economies at different scales (for example, at the macroscale through globalization, at the mesoscale through regionalization, and at the industry level through social practices and industrial cultures. There are differences between countries and regions and one way to note these differences is to pay attention to how class shapes societies in a variety of ways.



Second, one key way in which women and girls have different experiences of development, across the entire world, is that they have less control over their material resources generally. The severity of this lack of control varies across space, time, and circumstance, but generally and among many other factors, global and regional identities and culture affect the ways in which women experience unequal access to and control over material resources at different times, in different places, and in different ways. One example from the class is that we will be discussing poverty and hunger in the world in week 7 through a reading about global malnutrition which largely affects women and their children. This week will provide opportunities for the class to discuss what social and cultural factors lead to malnutrition. In week 11, we also discuss HIV/AIDS in Africa, where the disease has historically affected women and men differently; specifically, property in some African nations does not pass to surviving wives if their husbands die, sometimes due to laws and sometimes due to custom. When women lose access to land, they lose access to their means of subsistence because in many African countries, women are the farmers. Thus HIV/AIDS has a large development impact. Then in week 13, we explore environmental governance through readings from Carolyn Merchant's book *Radical Ecology*, in which women are featured as activists in the environmental justice movement. So these are moments where students will be reading about, discussing and learning about how gender among other factors affects society and culture.

Lastly, a moment where a culture 'experiences and co-creates development processes.' I went back and looked at the original form to see where this quote is pulled from and the actual quote has a plural subject (i.e., "different cultures, classes, and places experience and co-create development processes"). This is an important distinction. Culture is a factor (but only one factor) in all of the examples I have just laid out for you. In the case of the wine industry, the class of wine producers that coalesced in the late 1960s, set out to transform American culture regarding wine consumption, and to do this, they had to build along with long-time community members and neighbors a new understanding of wine, region and environment that could be conveyed to larger audiences. But this effort was an interactive one between multiple stakeholders (That's what I meant by co-create). Finally culture is also involved in the precarious position of women in the HIV/AIDS crisis in some African countries. The culture of silence about the disease during the heights of the epidemic and the patriarchal culture that prevents women in some countries from inheriting property even in cases where the law states otherwise are part of the context. Here, the law may very well support spousal property rights, but conventional social practice does not. These are some of the ways that students are introduced to how class, gender, and culture influence environment, development, and sustainability but the discussion continues throughout the course.

2) GEC's second concern relates to Question 7 of the original GE Form. Question 7 asks "Please specify how this course helps students to recognize the value of multidisciplinary explorations." In response to my submission, Professor Whittlesey wrote: "Again, more specificity. The question is about multidisciplinary explorations – but what are the disciplines involved? When students engage in a critical evaluation, what are they going to be doing, exactly?"

I think have answered this question to some degree above but let me specify for the committee how students will recognize the value of multidisciplinary explorations. First of all, they will learn that the issue of sustainable development is multidisciplinary. To learn about sustainability and development necessarily involves consideration of multiple dimensions of the issue and the draft syllabus I submitted is structured that way. I will lecture about and students will read about globalization and the political economy of development in one week. In another week, I lecture about and students read about the division of labor in that

context and discuss “global production networks” which are the organizations, practices, and technological mechanisms of international manufacturing and service provision, which involve issues of pollution, regional development and climate impacts. Then we turn to examination of Population Growth and learn about Malthus, Neomalthusians like Biologist Paul Ehrlich, and the Demographic Transition Model. We look at Environmental Historian Carol Merchant’s work on environmental governance. We look at how diseases are changing due to globalization and climate change. And we look at the growth of cities and the transformation of the world from one in which most people lived in the countryside to the one we have now where most people live in cities. We cover a lot of territory because we are surveying the range of issues involved in sustainable development.

Now regarding the question about what specific disciplines will be considered in the course. The disciplines include but are not limited to geography (which is multidisciplinary), sociology, demography, history, economics, political science, planning and anthropology. Some of the texts we read are not discipline specific, such as the report by Save the Children about Malnutrition and some are not easily placed. Is Mike Davis a geographer? Or is he a sociologist? Or a historian? I see him as in practice a multidisciplinary scholar who writes not just about Southern California but cities the world over as he does in *Planet of Slums*. In sum, the entire course is clearly multidisciplinary and selects from a wide variety of multidisciplinary writings about environment, development and sustainability. Because of this, students taking the course will have the opportunity to recognize the value of multidisciplinary explorations through readings, lectures, discussions, and research.

Now to the last part of this question: “when students engage in a critical evaluation, what are they going to be doing, exactly?” To me, critical evaluation means exactly that students are going to read about sustainability from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, listen to what I have to say about them, discuss these perspectives in small and large groups in order to understand them, and then assess these perspectives based on their own sense of the issues at hand, what they have learned in class, and what others are saying. Assess means that they are going to decide what they think about the lectures, discussions, readings and the issues they raise concerning sustainability. They will also take exams about how sustainability involves multidisciplinary understanding and solutions in which they attempt to demonstrate their critical thinking skills concerning sustainability. In this way, students will be asked to develop their own understandings on how useful various theories and perspectives are concerning sustainability. This is exactly what students will do in this class. Outside of class, they will also write a paper about a topic that relates to environment, development and sustainability and in this paper, they will themselves be required to use sources from a variety of disciplines so that their research is multidisciplinary.

In conclusion, everything about this course is multidisciplinary. The topic itself is multidisciplinary. The readings are such. And the work students will have to do on their exams and in their research is also multidisciplinary. Through this exposure to a multidisciplinary course, it is hoped that students will see the value of multidisciplinary explorations.

I hope my comments here answer GEC’s questions. I am happy to provide additional information should that be necessary. But I think there is ample information contained here and in the syllabus for the committee to make a positive decision concerning GEOG 352 and approve it for the GE program.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Greig Tor Guthey

Associate Professor of Public Policy and Planning & Geography Coordinator

Department of Liberal Studies

homepage: http://www.csusm.edu/liberalstudies/faculty/greig_guthey.html

geography: <http://www.csusm.edu/liberalstudies/geography.html>

food project: http://www.csusm.edu/liberalstudies/Food_Project.html