

Spring 2-1-2018

## GPHY 338.01: Mountains & Society

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### Recommended Citation

Caplins, Laura Bess, "GPHY 338.01: Mountains & Society" (2018). *Syllabi*. 7690.  
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## **GEOGRAPHY 338 ~ SPRING 2018**

Department of Geography and Mountain Studies Program  
University of Montana

### **MOUNTAINS & SOCIETY**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:20 p.m., Social Science

**Instructor:** Laura Caplins, Ph.D

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursday 1-2pm, or by appointment

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Mountains account for a fifth of the world's terrestrial land area and provide the direct life-support base for about a tenth of its human population. They provide indispensable elements (e.g., half of the world's fresh water) for a viable global system, and serve to support tremendous biological, social, and cultural diversity. Since antiquity, people have found spiritual inspiration, aesthetic pleasure, cultural vision, peace of mind, and even fear and loathing in and from mountains in their many forms and locations.

Many mountainous regions today face acute and worsening problems of resource scarcity, environmental degradation, and conflict. World-wide attention and concern have been allocated to a range of mountain-related problems: poverty, deforestation, water pollution, natural disasters, threats to biodiversity, population growth, environmental impacts of recreation and tourism, and so forth. How are different mountain regions dealing with these problems? Is sustainable mountain development a fallacy or a potential reality? How can geographic analysis help explain and solve these mountain-related problems? In tackling these questions, the course seeks to highlight the geographical and societal conditions that characterize the diverse mountain areas around the world.

While building this geographical perspective on mountain environments, the course will investigate and analyze the interactions between global, regional and local scales of change, influence, and experience. Following an overview of the physical processes that shape mountain environments, the course focuses on the interconnections between people and mountainous landscapes. This entails attention to cultures and cultural change, mountains as sacred spaces, mountain agriculture, water management, highland-lowland interactions, mountain hazards and disasters, economic development, war and peace, and human dimensions of environmental change. Approaches to conservation and environmental policies to protect mountain areas will be evaluated.

Coursework is designed to improve academic knowledge and to create an opportunity for students to investigate collectively and individually mountain experiences and physical and social processes that shape mountain environments. Lecture material will be supplemented and supported by readings, films, guest speakers, and class discussion. Theoretical discussions will be grounded in data, case studies, and scientific observations that draw from major ranges.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The hope is that upon completion of this course students will have acquired:

1. Geographic and integrated scientific knowledge of the complexity and diversity of historical, cultural, geopolitical, and environmental factors in mountainous regions;
2. Enhanced abilities to examine, critique, and rethink the nature and meaning of sustainable development in mountain areas using data, statistics, human and physical geography indicators, and analyses of trends;
3. A familiarity with approaches, tools, policies, and actions to proactively address the threats of socio-ecological transformations driven by loss of biodiversity, uneven development, environmental degradation, land use decisions, political crises, and climate change;
4. A grounding in the field of mountain geography scholarship and debate on key issues facing mountainous places;
5. Skills in critical thinking and in geographic analysis that are helpful in the scientific study of mountains;
6. An appreciation of what it means to be a global citizen advancing an ethic to respect, nurture, and protect mountains and all they have to offer.

## REQUIRED TEXTS & COURSE MATERIALS

Our readings provide a wealth of information, case studies, and insights towards the aim of cultivating a geographical perspective on mountain-society interactions.

- The required text is:

Price, Martin F. et al. (2013) *Mountain Geography: Physical and Human Dimensions*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Throughout the semester additional readings, resources and materials such as websites, journals, government documents, news articles, and published data will be announced in class and made available on Moodle. I may modify the readings as I learn more about your interests and as new material becomes available.

## REQUIREMENTS, POLICIES AND ASSESSMENT

***In-Class Activities and Participation:*** Your participation and preparation for class will be evaluated with short writing activities, film discussions, quizzes, mapping, and problem-solving activities during our class meeting times. Be prepared to read the assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned and to draw on the readings to make meaningful contributions to our discussions. Keep in mind that if you miss class, there are **NO MAKE-UPS**. All absences owing to family emergencies, legitimate student athlete obligations, and health emergencies must be documented in order for make-up arrangements to be made. As such, regular attendance is strongly advised!

***Exams:*** There will be two comprehensive exams and a map exam. The exam format will consist of definitions, short answer, and essay questions that deal with the fundamentals of physical geography and human geography as applied to mountain environments. The answers will be graded on the ability of students to synthesize material from the readings, lectures, films, and class discussions and to demonstrate a clear and cogent understanding of the major themes and concepts of the course. Please note: Make up exams will **ONLY** be allowed with a documented medical issue, student athlete obligation, family emergency, or with prior permission. If you cannot come to an exam, you must tell me **prior** to the day of the exam that you will be absent. Make up exams will be scheduled within one week of the exam. Exams not made up within one week will revert to a zero.

***Term Paper:*** You'll be asked to select a current issue (economic, political, environmental, etc.) in a mountain region, and assess that issue through the lens of a range of perspectives addressed in the course. You'll also be asked to make a short presentation about your issue during the last week of the course. More details on this assignment will follow in class.

***Grading Summary:*** Grading will be based on the following breakdown of points:

In-Class Assignments and Discussion	150 points
Mountain Map Exam	50 points
Two Exams (100 points each)	200 points
Research Project:	
-Research Paper	150 points
-Oral Presentation	50 points
<b>Total Possible</b>	<b>600 points</b>

I will be grading using the system as follows:

A	B	C	D	F
90-100	80-89.9	70-79.9	60-69.9	<60

***Disability-Related Accommodations:*** Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services (DSS). "Reasonable" means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. For more information, please consult: <http://www.umt.edu/disability>.

***Academic Honesty:*** All course activities are governed by the Student Conduct Code, which embodies the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, human rights, and responsible citizenship. All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a discipline sanction by the University. Please familiarize yourself with the UM Student Conduct Code. The Code is available online at: [www.umt.edu/SA/VP/SA/index.cfm/page1321](http://www.umt.edu/SA/VP/SA/index.cfm/page1321).

~ SEMESTER SCHEDULE ~

<b>DATES</b>	<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>READINGS</b>
<b>WEEK 1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION TO MOUNTAINS &amp; SOCIETY</b>	
Jan. 23 & 25	Introduction to the Course / Why study mountain? What are mountains? / Mapping Mountains	<i>Mtn Geog Ch. 1</i> <i>Land, Life &amp; Change (M)</i>
<b>WEEK 2</b>	<b>MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENTS</b>	
Jan. 30 & Feb. 1	Landforms Weather, Climate & Ice	<i>Mtn Geog Ch. 2, 3, 4, 5 (skim)</i> <i>Dark Peaks 1 (M)</i>
<b>WEEK 3</b>	<b>LIFE IN THE MOUNTAINS</b>	
Feb. 6 & 8	Vegetation & Wildlife Hazards	<i>Mtn Geog Ch 7 &amp; 8 (skim)</i> <i>Hazards and SES (M)</i>
<b>WEEK 4</b>	<b>MOUNTAIN CULTURES</b>	
Feb. 13 & 15	People & Culture Sacredness of Mountains	<i>Mt Geog Chap 9 &amp; 10</i> <i>Blackfeet Belong (M)</i> <i>Bernbaum (M)</i>
<b>WEEK 5</b>	<b>LIVING IN THE MOUNTAINS</b>	
Feb. 20 & 22	Social and Demographic Trends/Urbanization Livelihoods/Farming Systems	<i>Mt Geog Chap 11</i> <i>Key Issues Chap 5 (M)</i>
<b>WEEK 6</b>	<b>GEOPOLITICAL DIMENSIONS</b>	
Feb.27 & March 1	Infrastructure, Access and Marginality Mountain Warfare & Conflicts – Guest Lecture: Halvorson	<i>Key Issues Chap 3 (M)</i> <i>Key Issues Chap 8 (M)</i>
<b>WEEK 7</b>	<b>UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL CHANGE</b>	
March 6	Cordyceps Case Study	
March 8	<b><i>Map Quiz &amp; Paper Proposals Due</i></b> Written Exam Review	
<b>WEEK 8</b>	<b>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</b>	
March 13	<b><i>Written Exam I</i></b>	
March 15	Introduction to Sustainable Development	<i>Mtn Geog. Chap 12</i> <i>Key Issues Chap 1 (M)</i>

<b>WEEK 9</b>	<b>CONSERVATION</b>	
March 20 & 22	Parks & Protected Areas – Guest Lecture: Bosak Tourism & Recreation – Guest Lecture: Bosak	
<b>WEEK 10</b>	<b>Spring Break ~ March 26-30 ~ No Class Meetings</b>	
<b>WEEK 11</b>	<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>	
April 3 & 5	Dams & Hydropower – The Himalaya Mining & Extractive Industries – The Appalachians	<i>Melting Himalayas (M)</i> <i>Dark Peaks Chap 14 (M)</i>
<b>WEEK 12</b>	<b>CLIMATE CHANGE</b>	
April 10 & 12	Measurement/Monitoring/Modeling Climate Change Local Perceptions of Climate Change - The Rockies	<i>Dark Peaks Chap 7 (M)</i> <i>Climate of Anxiety (M)</i> <i>BF CC Report (M)</i>
<b>WEEK 13</b>	<b>UNDERSTANDING ENVIROMETNAL CHANGE</b>	
April 17 & 19	Darkening Peaks Case Studies	<i>Dark Peaks Chap 13, 15, 16 (M)</i>
<b>WEEK 14</b>	<b>WRAPPING UP</b>	
April 24	Wrap-up day/Written Exam Review	
April 26	<i>Written Exam II</i>	
<b>WEEK 15</b>	<b>PRESENTATIONS</b>	
May 1 & 3	Student Presentations	
<b>FINAL</b>	<b>PRESENTATIONS &amp; RESEARCH PAPERS DUE</b>	
May 7 1:10 – 3:10	Students Presentations & Research Papers Due	