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GPHY 338.01: Mountains and Society

Sarah Halvorson

University of Montana - Missoula, sarah.halvorson@umontana.edu

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MOUNTAINS & SOCIETY

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:10-12:30 p.m. in Stone Hall 304

Instructor: Sarah J. Halvorson

Office: Stone Hall Room 211

Phone: 243-2793

E-mail: sarah.halvorson@umontana.edu

Office Hours: TR 12:30-2:00 or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Daniel Kozel

E-mail: daniel.kozel@umontana.edu

Office Hours: TR 10:00-11:00 or by appointment

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 such as the Alps (European and Japanese), Andes, Atlas, Carpathians, Caucasus, Hindu Kush-Karakoram-Himalaya, Pamir, Pyrenees, Rockies, Sierra Nevada, Tien Shan and Zagros (just to name a few!).

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 texts are:

Orlove, Ben; Wiegandt, Ellen; and Luckman, Brian (2008) *Darkening Peaks: Glacier Retreat, Science, and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

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.

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!

Mountain Film Response Paper: This assignment provides an opportunity for geographical inquiry through the analysis of a documentary film that deals with an aspect of mountain geography. More details on this assignment will follow in class.

Exams: There will be three exams. 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.

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

In-Class Assignments	100 points
Mountain Film Response Essay	100 points
<u>3 Exams (100 points each)</u>	<u>300 points</u>
Total Possible	500 points

I will be grading using the plus/minus system as follows:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
93.3-100	90-93.3	86.7-90	83.3-86.7	80-83.3	76.7-80	73.3-76.7	70-73.3	66.7-70	63.3-67.7	60-63.3	<60

If you're taking this class pass/no pass, a pass > 69%. Please feel free to come to my office hours or to catch me after class with questions. I am also available by appointment if the regular office hours do not fit your schedule.

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.

~ SEMESTER SCHEDULE ~

DATES	TOPICS	READINGS
WEEK 1	INTRODUCTION TO MOUNTAINS & SOCIETY	
Jan. 28 & 30	Introduction: Mountains – A Global Priority Representations & Realities of Mountain Places; Mountain Locations and Characteristics; Mountains in Geographical Inquiry	<i>Mountain Geography</i> Ch. 1
WEEK 2	MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENTS	
Feb. 4& 6	Physical Dimensions, Mountain Types, Hazards, and Environmental Change	<i>Mtn Geography</i> Ch. 2
WEEK 3	MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES AND CULTURES	
Feb. 11 & 13	Beliefs, Values, and Cultural Traditions; Sacredness of Mountains and Sacred Sites	<i>Mtn Geography</i> Ch. 9, Reading 1 (M)
WEEK 4	MOUNTAINS IN TRANSITION I	
Feb. 18 & 20	Social and Demographic Trends; Infrastructure and Issues of Access and Marginality; Urbanization; Mountain Livelihoods	<i>Mtn Geography</i> Ch. 10 Reading 2 (M)
WEEK 5	MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS	
Feb. 25	EXAM I	
Feb. 27	Mountain Farming Systems; Highland-Lowland Interactions	<i>Mtn Geography</i> Ch. 11
WEEK 6	MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS	
March 4 & 6	Adaptability and Sustainability DUE March 4: submit proposal for Mountain Film Response paper	Reading 3 (M)
WEEK 7	MOUNTAINS IN TRANSITION II	
March 11 & 13	Mountains in Global Economic Context; Case Studies of Mining and Mountain Top Removal	Reading 4 (M)
WEEK 8	GEOPOLITICAL DIMENSIONS	
March 18 & 20	Mountain Warfare, Conflicts, and Geographies of Peace	Reading 5 (M)

WEEK 9	SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT	
March 25 & 27	Indicators, Policies, and Opportunities	<i>Mtn Geography</i> Ch. 12
WEEK 10	<i>Spring Break ~ March 21-April 4 ~ No Class Meetings</i>	
WEEK 11	MOUNTAIN WATERS & WATERSHEDS	
April 8 & 10	Hydrological Characteristics and Watershed Science DUE April 10: Mountain Film Response Paper	<i>DP</i> Ch.1 Reading 6
WEEK 12	GLACIER RETREAT, SCIENCE AND SOCIETY I	
April 15	EXAM II	
April 17	Societal Perceptions: Cultures and Institutions	<i>DP</i> Part 1
WEEK 13	GLACIER RETREAT, SCIENCE AND SOCIETY II	
April 22 & 24	Scientific Observations: Measurement, Monitoring and Modeling; Trends in Natural Landscapes	<i>DP</i> Part 2 & Part 3
WEEK 14	GLACIER RETREAT, SCIENCE AND SOCIETY III	
April 29 & May 1	Impacts on Human Landscapes: Resources, Hazards and Cultural Landscapes	<i>DP</i> Part 4
WEEK 15	SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT REVISITED	
May 6 & 8	Adaptation and Accommodation: Role of Culture, Education, and Science	<i>DP</i> Part 5 Reading 7 (M)
MAY 12	EXAM III at 8:00-10:00 AM	