

GREEN MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Course Report

ES 2017 North American: A Diversity of Natural and Cultural Landscapes Spring 2000

William S. Lynn, Ph.D.
Geography and Environmental Studies
Green Mountain College
Poultney, VT 05764
william.lynn@greenmtn.edu
802.287.8301

After direct discussions with students, the Course Report is my most informative measure of teaching quality. I evaluate every class (often twice), and use the Report to improve the content, materials, and structure of each course. Because my questions are specific and comprehensive, I always use them in addition to more general institutional review forms. The Report has two sections, one quantitative and the other narrative. In the quantitative section, students circle their answers or mark them on computer forms. In the narrative section, students respond in writing to a set of questions. The full set of written comments is included, and small spelling and grammar corrections are made when it does not materially affect meaning. The results are tabulated after final grades are submitted.

Quantitative Section

Questions 1 through 10 query the instructor's teaching ability. Questions 11 through 13 assess student's overall experience in the course, classroom facilities, the textbook(s), and in-class assignments. These questions use a continuous measurement scale, ranging from 1 (lousy) to 5 (excellent). A perfect score is therefore 5.0.

Example:

Question 10. How would you rate the instructors overall teaching ability?

<i>Poor</i>				<i>Fair</i>				<i>Excellent</i>
1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5

Questions 14 through 18 queries the relative balance of course activities and expectations. Please note the change in measurement scale. 1 is now too little, 3 is just right, and 5 is too much. A perfect score is therefore 3.0.

Example:

Question 16. How would you rate the emphasis placed on lectures?

<i>Too Little</i>				<i>Just Right</i>				<i>Too Much</i>
1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5

Course Report on North America

Questions About the Instructor	Min	Max	Avg
1. How would you rate the instructor's knowledge of the subject?	4	5	4.7
2. How would you rate the instructor's enthusiasm for the subject?	4.5	5	4.85
3. How would you rate the instructor's organization and preparedness?	4.5	5	4.75
4. How would you rate the instructor's lectures?	4	5	4.5
5. How would you rate the instructor's responsiveness to questions?	3.5	5	4.45
6. How would you rate the instructor's explanation of concepts?	3.5	5	4.5
7. How would you rate the instructor's explanation of real-world situations?	4	5	4.8
8. How would you rate the instructor's fairness in grading?	4	5	4.6
9. How would you rate the instructor's feedback on your progress and grade?	3	5	4.3
10. How would you rate the instructors overall teaching ability?	4.5	5	4.8

Questions About the Course	Min	Max	Avg
11. How much would you say you are learning in this course?	3.5	5	4.35
12. How would you rate the readings?	3	4.5	3.65
13. How would you rate the project?	3	5	4.2

Questions About the Balance of Activities and Expectations	Min	Max	Avg
14. How would you rate the emphasis placed on lectures?	3	4	3.35
15. How would you rate the emphasis placed on discussion?	2	3	2.6
16. How would you rate the emphasis placed on testing?	3	3.5	3.0
17. How would you rate the overall difficulty of this course?	2.5	3.5	3.05
18. How would you rate the time required to complete all work in this course?	2.5	3	2.95

Student Data

Response Rate -- 10 students out of a class of 13, for a response rate of 77%.

Maximum Grade -- 97

Minimum Grade -- 74

Average Grade -- 87

Seniors -- 0

Juniors -- 2

Sophomores -- 5

Fresh -- 6

Majors represented -- Behavioral Science, Business, Environmental Studies, History, Liberal Studies, Special Education, Undeclared, Writing

Narrative Section

Question -- What is this course about?

This course provided a detailed overview of the geographical influences that have formed North America to what it is today and what can be expected in the future. This course teaches students to

Course Report on North America

link and overlap patterns and processes to help us understand the complexity of what shapes our surroundings.

The topography, geography, predominant weather patterns and cultures of North America. What leads from one step to the next was discussed, but could be clearer, i.e. native displacement by Europeans.

This course is about the geography and landscapes of North America. It not only has covered the geographic structure of the US and Canada, but also the cultures, language, history, etc. is all included in the term 'geography'.

North American and Canadian Geography. The historical developments of both countries and the several impacts that have been made are the general focus of this course.

Learning about our surroundings, landscapes, cultures, events.

The physical and cultural aspects of Canada and the United States, and how these two nations relate with one another. The economies of each and how they interact with the rest of the world.

The US and Canada -- history, people, land, topography.

This course described the many different aspects of North America: physical geography, cultural diversity, economic diversity and other socioeconomic factors.

North American geography, both land forms and landscapes, plus cultural information.

This course has been a survey of geographic, cultural, ethnic, and other various factors that make up the landscape of the United States and Canada.

Question -- How is this course or geography different from what you expected?

It was pretty much what I expected, although I learned how much there really is to look at about North America.

I didn't expect to learn as much about the people on the land as I did. I expected it to be focused more on the land.

Instead of learning about each state and its capitol, we learned a more detailed analysis of the structure of North America. It was more than I expected which is a good thing.

I think I expected to learn a lot more about the natural wonders of both continents -- considering their [sic] so diverse I would have liked to get to know about the nature instead of the human impacts.

Would have thought it would be more about physical geography.

As I have taken a more general geography course (world) with the same professor, both the course and the material were what I expected.

Course Report on North America

I wasn't sure how the course was going to turn out. Thought we would be studying more [of] the physical geography rather than history.

I expected this course to focus around a more specific geography of North America, rather than the other aspects I previously mentions. Not that it didn't greatly focus on geography, though.

This course went further in depth of the topics. I expected it to be all location and it gave me an understanding of why and how things are formed.

I thought geography was all about maps. This is a much more socio-economic course than I had originally expected.

Questions -- What would you like to say about this instructor?

Undoubtedly, he is the best and most effective professor I have had so far. He is fair, enthusiastic, animated, extremely intelligent, and delightfully friendly. He encourages a positive, challenging and exciting learning environment and his strong, sincere character is evident throughout the semester.

Sometimes when discussing the horrible evils that have and are happening, he does it so calm and coolly as to almost make one think he is favor of them going on. I, at first, was appalled by this, then realized he was stuffed with knowledge ripe for the taking. His unique style take a little time to adapt to.

Bill Lynn is amazing. He knows so much about the world and its landscape. His knowledge of geography is extensive and, therefore, he is able to teach his students without any problems or hesitations. He is enthusiastic about learning and motivates us to be interested in what he is discussing.

Bill, you know you're awesome, your career shows it. I already wrote this for animal worlds. you've been a helpful influence -- to be discussed later.

That he did a great job at teaching this course, and I would be pleased to have him again.

Knowledgeable in all aspects of the material, and has effective teaching methods. Needs to be more open to interaction with students in class.

Smart professor -- really knows what he is talking about :) You the man!

The instructor was very clear and made certain that we understood the information being presented. I felt that the examples given and the manner in which the information was presented and tested greatly added to the course.

Good concept of information, many different insights, and good interest in course content.

Professor Lynn is a down to earth person that makes it his business to relate the study of geography to virtually every aspect of our lives in a very palatable and understandable way.

Course Report on North America

Question -- What do you like most about this class?

The lectures were wonderfully engaging and lively. I enjoyed every class period and never dreaded attending.

That there was no final.

I like the testing method and how Bill discusses the chapter and answers questions before the test is administered.

I like the consistent testing, there's no question about what is due, when its due. Everything is straightforward and there is no unnecessary interest in meddling little details.

Attending useful lectures on the properties of our surroundings.

Weekly testing -- no major exams.

The set quizzes. How there is no [final] exam. The final project.

The lectures; they weren't boring.

The weekly quizzes. They helped keep me up on readings and learn[ing] the content in smaller increments so I retained more information.

The [final] presentations.

Question -- What do you like least about this class?

I honestly cannot think of anything!

There wasn't more time to spend in it.

I don't really like how the book was written, but Bill makes things clear that are not portrayed in the book.

Refer to second question.

To hard to answer, maybe our having to lecture to the class.

To much lecture -- post lunch afternoon class sometimes gets boring.

It is the last class of the day for me. Became tired and restless easily.

The book; it was boring.

The text.

Course Report on North America

Question -- What else would you like to say about this course?

A pleasure. Really. Have I complimented you enough???

Was very informative. The atlas wasn't use much after the first month of class. We could have used it to compare temperature regions of latitude and how they are similar and difficult.

It is a great course! Very informative as well as interesting and unique.

It would be a lot more interesting with more about the [physical] landscape itself.

That I enjoyed it immensely.

It was good.

Gave me a much better understanding on the US, its people, places, locations -- basically helped me out a lot, pertaining to what is happening and what has happened to our country/Canada.

This course was also very good at setting themes and patterns in my mind that can be seen and used not only in North America, but throughout the world.

I think that it would be beneficial to have the students do evaluations of their classmates when giving presentations to help the professor in grading fairly.