GEO 410.1 (951) THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY

Lecture & Seminar, HS 2015

Module coordinator: Benedikt Korf (benedikt.korf@geo.uzh.ch)

Course instructors:
AD = Alexander Damm, BK = Benedikt Korf,
LJ = Leigh Johnson, NB = Norman Backhaus, KFR = Kai-Florian Richter; PL = Patrick Laube,
RR = Rory Rowan, SA = Samuel Abiven, TE = Tracy Ewen

Guest lecturer:
Professor Stuart Lane, Université Lausanne

Monday 14.00-15.45 | Y 03 G 91 |
14 September - 14 December 2015
Course outline

GEO 410.1 Thinking Geographically is the only compulsory module in the Master programme in Geography. The course aims at developing the reflective skills of students to critically think about the theory and practice of Geography as a scientific subject and to identify possible interdisciplinary interfaces between different sub-fields of Geography. The course is taught by a team of instructors, coming from all different sub-fields of Geography at the GIUZ.

The course introduces key concepts (space, time, scale, risk). These key concepts are of fundamental importance in all sub-fields of Geography, i.e. human geography, physical geography, GISciences and Remote Sensing. However, these concepts are often attributed with different meanings and operationalizations between these different sub-fields as much as within each of these sub-fields. A “pure”, pre-conceptual access to “the world as it is” is not possible at all. Concepts always already mediate our access to the empirical world – they channel the operation from collecting data to representing specific empirical phenomena and interpreting them (theoretically, analytically). By discussing how concepts shape our scientific practices, we also hope to engage in a dialogue across the different sub-fields of Geography and about our specific scientific practices and conceptual languages.

Learning outcomes:

- Students know key concepts of geographical research in the different sub-fields of Geography.
- Students think about the practices of knowledge production in Geography and their theoretical, conceptual and empirical (ontological, epistemological) presuppositions.
- Students are able to apply selected key concepts in their respective sub-fields of specialization in their Master.

Learning methods:
The course applies the idea of dialogue-based learning. In each sub-unit, a team of instructors from different sub-fields will work on one concept. The team will look into how concepts guide, inform, shape research practices in different knowledge domains in Geography. The team will then discuss about possible interfaces of different knowledge domains, how concepts can help bridge these interfaces and what potential problems might occur along such interfaces. Two tutorials will look into one concept each in more depth.

We emphasize three important points throughout the course:

- First, concepts are pre-conditions to do research in all sub-fields of Geography – they mediate our access to the empirical world.
- Second, concepts are applied in a variety of ways both between and within these different sub-fields.
- Third, discussing how concepts shape scientific practices enables a more profound interdisciplinary collaboration across the different sub-fields of Geography.
Teaching language: English

Course requirements:
4 ECTS:
a) active participation in class; participation in the seminars ("Übungen") is mandatory.
b) active preparation and post-processing, e.g. through reading,
c) “Übungsportfolio” = course work (2 seminar exercises),
(d) End-of-term exam.

The final mark of the course will be composed as follows (on a scale of 1-6):
Course work (2 exercises): 40%; End-of term exam: 60%.

If the module is failed, there will be a repetition exam. The mark of the repetition exam will then be the final mark of the course.
More information about the course work („Übungsportfolio“) and the end-of-term exam will be given during the course hours.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a serious offence. Offenders will automatically fail the entire module. The entire module will have to be studied again in a later academic year. The course instructors reserve the right to engage in additional legal and disciplinary action according to the respective guidelines of the Universität Zürich.


References:

Core reading for the entire course:

Additional reading:

Additional references will be provided in the respective lecture units.
**Course programme**
Detailed information, additional references and handouts will be provided in the different lectures and seminars.

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**L = Lecture; G = group work; S = Seminar**

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