



# Blogging through the "GEOG-ing"

## A Syllabus Transformation of GGY 3720: North America

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### BACKGROUND:

It had been years since I taught the *Geography of North America* course. Usually only Geo-majors take the course as a requirement. I knew that the course would be low enrollment. Furthermore, I did not want to build another standard lecture course. (i.e. "Death by PowerPoint").

I thought that students would learn better by *research and writing*, rather than listening to lectures and taking tests.

Each student created their own blog website. Students blogged anonymously, using a pen name known only to the other class members. They were to take on the persona of a professional writer. They were writing in the role of an expert or researcher -- not merely a student completing an assignment.

My hypothesis was that if students answered geography questions about North America from the perspective of a writer/blogger, they might connect with the material in a more personal and more permanent way.

Through writing and research on a specialized regional area, the student would become the expert. Hopefully this first-hand, depth of knowledge will live on with them after the course is concluded.

Students also learned by writing supporting comments and/or critiques on their classmates' blog posts.

Each student also conducted a region-specific research project and wrote a Pembroke Undergraduate Research and Creativity (PURC) proposal for their topic.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Appreciation is given to the **UNCP Teaching and Learning Center** for financial support and scholarly encouragement.



SAMPLE  
SCREEN  
SHOTS  
→



The course is only partially completed (as of March 1, 2019), but many blogging lessons have been learned:

- \* Geography is not only about place-names!
- \* Surprised student: "You mean my writing is going to be exposed in public!?!?"
- \* The real world is complicated. Most textbooks only give generalizations. There are many detailed stories to learn when you zoom into areas.
- \* Boromir's Meme: *One does not simply "write" an article by cutting and pasting the text from Wikipedia!*
- \* A "second pair of eyes" in draft mode is always needed before you publish a blog. There are always typos.



Positive aspects about the course format (from students at TLC Midterm "Check-in"):

- \* The ability to make websites helps students self-learn.
- \* The free range to learn and research what students want in all areas of US and Canada.
- \* The instructors willing to meet and be involved with the students.
- \* The encouragement, availability and communication of the instructor.
- \* Explanation of assignments and meetings in cart lab to demonstrate doing things.
- \* Flexible Deadlines for WordPress articles.

### OUTCOMES:

**1. Students own a commercial website!** Technically, they are all now "professional writers". They have the option of keeping their websites and even "monetizing" them on WordPress.com after the course is over. Along with other social media sites, they now have a professional website for their resumes and business cards. When asked "so what do you do?" at a professional or social meeting, they can now reply "I'm a writer!"

**2. Students are also now real academic researchers and have published!** They have submitted abstracts for their North American research and writing. These are to be presented at UNCP PURC Symposium on April 10, 2019. This will be the first "public presentation" for nearly all students. Abstracts are published online by PURC. Students will also post further information on their blogs.



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**INTRODUCTION**

I had been asked to teach the Geography of North America course (which was last taught in the 1980s) in a "transformed" course that focused on the content, but not the format, of the course. I had not used a book, another teacher's course (i.e., Teach by PowerPoint), or a textbook. I had been asked to transform the course, not to transform the content.

My students would learn about the Geography of North America through the use of a variety of resources. I would use a variety of resources, including the use of a variety of resources. I would use a variety of resources, including the use of a variety of resources.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Students will be able to identify the major geographical features of North America.
2. Students will be able to explain the physical processes that have shaped North America.
3. Students will be able to describe the human geography of North America.
4. Students will be able to analyze the regional differences in North America.
5. Students will be able to evaluate the impact of human activities on the environment.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**

The course will be taught through a variety of resources, including the use of a variety of resources. I will use a variety of resources, including the use of a variety of resources.

**ASSESSMENT**

The course will be assessed through a variety of resources, including the use of a variety of resources. I will use a variety of resources, including the use of a variety of resources.

**CONCLUSION**

The course will be a success if students are able to identify the major geographical features of North America, explain the physical processes that have shaped North America, describe the human geography of North America, analyze the regional differences in North America, and evaluate the impact of human activities on the environment.



## Meteorology and Myth: The Thunderstorm and Tornado Deities of Japan

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**Rain 雨 (アメノカミ)** is a deity of thunderstorms and lightning. He is usually depicted as having a horn to create thunder. Persistent rainfalls of thunder in summer during thunderstorm season, but rain and cold winds are created during the thunder season. Rainfall and lightning are often led to rain.

**Fujin 風神 (カミ)** is a wind god of ancient Shinto legend, although his image likely of Buddhist origin. He is the cause of winter west storms. Fujin, windstorms, storms, moisture, and tornadoes and waterfalls are all weather hazards characteristic of Japan's climate.

Fujin is depicted as a demon with green skin. Tornadoes are demons in their destruction and should be feared, but only to the extent Fujin is a violent green creature. Fujin is shown as a green creature with a long, pointed tail. Fujin is shown as a green creature with a long, pointed tail. Fujin is shown as a green creature with a long, pointed tail.

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 Dr. Dennis J. Edgell  
 Sociology and Geography Department

**BACKGROUND**  
 It had been several weeks (through the Geography of North America course) and the students were taking the course as a requirement. Some of the major areas to be covered were: "The Americas", "The Caribbean", and "The Arctic and Antarctic Regions". The students were to be able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region. The students were to be able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region. The students were to be able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region.

**GOALS**  
 Each student created their own blog, wrote, and posted a blog post. The students were to be able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region. The students were to be able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region. The students were to be able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region.

**RESULTS**  
 The students were able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region. The students were able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region. The students were able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region.

**CONCLUSIONS**  
 The students were able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region. The students were able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region. The students were able to identify and describe the major geographical features of each region.

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**Metamorphosis and Myth**  
 The Thunderbolt and Symbols of the Gods  
 Dr. Dennis J. Edgell  
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**Background**  
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**Goals**  
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**Results**  
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**Conclusions**  
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