

# GEOG 4381: The Parks Idea in North American Landscapes

## Spring 2022

Angelo State University  
Dr. Arnaldo De León Department of History

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### Instructor

Rob Briwa (he/him/his) | Office: Academic 210G | rbriwa@angelo.edu |

### Course details

GEOG 4381 Lecture Section 001 | Classroom: Academic 225 | Tuesday/Thursday | 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

### Course materials

There is no required textbook for this course. All required and optional readings will be made available on Blackboard as .pdf files on a rolling basis, at least one week in advance. **Unless otherwise specified, you should complete course readings by Wednesday night in preparation for class discussions on Thursdays.**

A tentative list of readings is listed in the syllabus schedule. Note that this list is subject to change: I may substitute more appropriate readings or eliminate readings, but never add additional, new papers. Note that some weeks have multiple readings listed. At my discretion, we will pre-arrange “Reading Groups,” and assign each group a subset of papers. Each Reading Group will be responsible to lead discussions on their assigned paper. My intention by taking this technique is that together, we will ‘piece together’ wider narratives about park landscapes through sharing our individual papers and perspectives.

### Office hours

Briwa | Mondays 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. | Wednesdays 11 a.m. to noon | Other times by e-mail appointment.

### Course description

From Grand Teton National Park’s towering peaks to San Angelo State Park’s O.C. Fisher Reservoir, parks are special parts of North American cultural landscapes. GEOG 4381 examines the national and regional parks idea as it evolved in North America. Major course themes include, but are not limited to, the following: the philosophical underpinnings of parks and protected spaces in North American landscapes; historical contexts driving the parks movement in North America; changing cultural meanings of parks in North American geographical imaginings; and parks’ historical and contemporary intersections with diverse political and socio-environmental issues. Note that this course fulfills advanced geography degree requirements or can serve as a substitute for GEOG 3302/3303.

This course is designed to address park landscapes and their major defining themes through a topical framework, rather than a chronological format that may be more familiar to students

with experience in History courses. Additionally, it is designed to introduce students to a seminar experience through the development of discussion and critical thinking skills as a central component and learning outcome of the course.

## Learning goals

Upon completion of this course, students should have achieved the following goals:

- Understand the philosophical underpinnings and early development of national and state park systems in the United States;
- Gain a familiarity with key “wicked problems” facing historical park development and today’s park landscapes;
- Identify selected ways park landscapes are mobilized to promote discourses about national and regional identity;
- Develop critical thinking and reading skills required of upper-level coursework in university and graduate school settings;
- Apply geographical frameworks and concepts towards understanding park landscapes.

**Prerequisites:** None

## You are not alone

Diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can interfere with your learning experience. So, too, can problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis. It’s OK to experience difficulty, and it’s OK to reach out for help.

Students’ mental and physical well-being are my utmost concerns this semester. I encourage you to explore and make use of health services available to students. The University Health Clinic is based in the [University Sports Medicine Clinic, Shannon Clinic - Jackson](#). The Health Clinic provides confidential services to ASU students *who have paid the current Medical Services Fee*. Students who are registered, attending classes, and have paid the medical services fee have access to unlimited visits to all [Shannon Urgent Care locations](#) for Basic Medical Care by board certified healthcare providers at no additional cost.

Similarly, ASU Counseling Services provides short-term therapy to ASU students. Whether you are suffering from issues like depression, anxiety, adjustment issues, relationship problems, academic concerns, emergencies, or trauma, ASU Counseling Services are there to help. Appointments can be made by calling [325-942-2371](tel:325-942-2371) or visiting [Counseling Services](#), at 1901 Johnson St, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.

You are not alone in navigating this semester. **I am a resource for you.**

## Keys to Student Success

Doing well in this course is not complicated, but it does require hard work. Over the course of GEOG 4381 you will be required to conduct out-of-class readings and assignments, search for geographical topics on your own time, and above all to write. To succeed in these tasks, aside from staying mentally and physically healthy (see above), you must stay on top of your assignments and remain organized. Be sure to take good notes; proofread all assignment submissions for spelling, grammar, and argumentation; and to contact me with questions and concerns. Lastly, avoid waiting to the last minute to work on assignments, especially for our final project. This often results in sloppy work and a poor grade.

## Evaluation

Your performance is evaluated by weekly geographical news entries; writing projects; and applied geography activities (see below for overviews of each type of assignment). There are a possible **350 points** for this course (not including extra credit points). Total points are tentative and subject to change. Extra credit is not available on an individual basis. Grades are not discussed over email, utilize office hours or schedule an appointment.

## Grade Thresholds

- A: 315 or more points
- B: 280-314 points
- C: 245-279 points
- D: 210-244 points
- F: Under 210 points

## Incomplete Grade Policy

It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 [Grading Procedures](#) for more information.

## Paper Responses (100 points): 5 @ 20 points each

In upper level Geography courses such as this one, my view is that learning takes place best through engaging with materials in ways that reflect a spirit of open-ended and exploratory knowledge seeking, with the instructor responding to students' curiosity about the subject matter at hand. Therefore, I ask that you complete Paper Responses during the semester. These will require you to respond to questions and writing prompts on materials covered in readings, online materials, or lecture. **Paper Responses will be due Wednesday evenings at 5 p.m.** This ensures that I am able to review your responses and that you will be prepared to discuss readings in class. **I will distribute Paper Responses on a rolling basis during the semester. You will always have at least one week to complete a Paper Response.**

## Free Write Learning Checks (100 points): 4 @ 25 points each

Geographers, historians, and others must synthesize vast amounts of information and communicate its key points in succinct ways. To encourage development of this skill and incentivize student engagement with course materials, I will randomly select 4 class lessons to implement Free Write Learning Checks, which will require you to reflect on that day's materials and briefly respond to a writing prompt. **You will always be able to complete Free Write Learning Checks within the class time during which they are distributed. If you are taking this course online for any university excused absence (quarantine, family or medical emergency) or pre-arranged online learning accommodations (contact me!), you will be able to complete an online version of the Free Write Learning Check on Blackboard.**

### **Portraiture of a Park (50 points): 1 @ 50 points**

One of the themes of this course is that parks—whether existing at the national or state scale—are both representative of a geographical pattern (that is, they exhibit shared characteristics with other parks) and are unique places, with individual histories, geographical features, and meanings. This assignment will require you to examine a park in-depth from geographical perspectives. I will provide further details and guidelines on Blackboard and in-class!

### **Placing a Park (100 points): 1 @ 100 points**

As we progress through this course, we will learn the many uses of park landscapes and consider the factors—geographical, economic, social, and historical—that helped populate North American landscapes with state and national parks. This project will require you to consider these factors and create and place an imaginative geography of a park space of your own making and design in the United States. I will provide further details and guidelines on Blackboard and in-class!

### **Missed assignments and late assignments**

Any late work submitted will receive a 5% deduction prior to grading (which may then result in further deductions depending on the submission's quality), but I will still offer written comments on the submitted work. Any work submitted 5 days after the due date will accrue a 20% deduction, and I reserve the right to offer no comments.

Extensions and are given only in cases where a valid/verifiable absence **has been approved at least 24 hours in advance** of the due date (e.g., serious illness, a University-approved event). In the case of an excused absence without prior arrangements, you must notify me within 48 hours of the scheduled due date.

### **Course policies and procedures**

#### **Disruptive behavior**

I define disruptive behavior as behavior that interferes with the learning environment of your peers. This includes talking out of turn during lecture, as well as personal use of digital communication devices during lecture including, but not limited to: text, instant or email messaging, social media, and web browsing. Disruptive students will be ejected from the class at my discretion, according to University policy, and will be given an unexcused absence

regarding any missed coursework. All electronic devices must be switched off during class and headphones/ear-buds removed!

### Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all work. Any student found guilty of any form of dishonesty in academic work is subject of disciplinary action and possible expulsion from ASU. The College of Arts and Humanities adheres to the Statement of [Academic Integrity](#).

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious topic covered in ASU's [Academic Integrity policy](#) in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own. Plagiarism is literary theft. In your discussions and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word-for-word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation.

It is expected that you will summarize or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the reference list. Papers are subject to be evaluated for originality via Turnitin. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the [ASU Writing Center](#). **When in doubt—ask me in advance of submission! I'm happy to talk through proper documentation of scholarship, as familiarizing students with proper citation methods and improving writing skills is a fundamental goal of GEOG 2305.**

### Copyright Policy

Students officially enrolled in this course should make only one printed copy of the given articles and/or chapters. You are expressly prohibited from distributing or reproducing any portion of course readings in printed or electronic form without written permission from the copyright holders or publishers.

### Student Disability Services

Angelo State University and the Department of History are committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA) and subsequent legislation. Student Disability Services is located in the Office of Student Affairs, and is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting an employee of the Office of Student Affairs, in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, or contacting the department via email at [ADA@angelo.edu](mailto:ADA@angelo.edu). For more information about the application process and requirements, visit the Student Disability Services website at [www.angelo.edu/ADA](http://www.angelo.edu/ADA). The

employee charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing accommodation requests is:

**[Ms. Dallas A. Swafford](#)**  
**Director of Student Disability Services**  
325-942-2047  
[dallas.swafford@angelo.edu](mailto:dallas.swafford@angelo.edu)  
[Houston Harte University Center](#) 112

## Title IX at Angelo State University

Angelo State University and the Department of History are committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee, meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. This is done in order to connect students with resources and options in addressing the allegations reported. As a student, you are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU's Office of Title IX Compliance and the Title IX Coordinator. You may do so by contacting:

**Michelle Miller, J.D.**  
*Title IX Coordinator*  
Mayer Administration Building, Room 210 325-942-2022  
[michelle.miller@angelo.edu](mailto:michelle.miller@angelo.edu)

**You may also file a report online 24/7 at [www.angelo.edu/incident-form](http://www.angelo.edu/incident-form).**

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the **University Health Clinic at 325-942-2171, Counseling Services at 325-942-2371** or the **ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345**.

The Office of Title IX Compliance also provides accommodations related to pregnancy (such as communicating with your professors regarding medically necessary absences, modifications required because of pregnancy, etc.). If you are pregnant and need assistance or accommodations, please contact the Office of Title IX Compliance utilizing the information above. For more information about Title IX in general you may visit [www.angelo.edu/title-ix](http://www.angelo.edu/title-ix).

## Student Absence for the Observance of Religious Holidays

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. See ASU Operating Policy 10.19 Student Absence for [Observance of Religious Holy Day](#) for more information.

## Diversity and Inclusivity Statement

I acknowledge that Angelo State University is located on the original homelands of Indigenous peoples, and that their rich history is central to our commitment to learn from the past. I value human diversity in all its complex forms, and I respect the value of every person in this class. Everyone in class is encouraged to share their unique perspective as an individual, and not as representative of any category.

Furthermore, multicultural and intercultural awareness and competencies are key skills we must cultivate to create a safe environment defined by equity, participation, and empathy for others, as well as to develop the leadership skills that enable us to stand up against injustices experienced by marginalized individuals. To help develop these competencies and in keeping with Angelo State University's Values Journey, I intend to present material and classroom activities that celebrate diversity of thought, background, and experience.

Higher education is most useful when it challenges assumptions and provides new and sometimes uncomfortable ways of looking at issues. If you feel uncomfortable regarding content or perspectives presented in this course, I encourage you to contact me immediately so we can discuss those feelings. Your perspectives on course materials and diversity and inclusion matter to me, and I encourage you to share those as well.

Note that I would prefer to use your preferred language when addressing you, so please let me know if your preferred name differs from what I am using. Similarly, please let me know your preferred gender pronouns.

**Course schedule** (Tentative and subject to revision. All revisions explicitly announced in class and announced on Blackboard.)

Week	Day	Topic(s)	Reading/Assignment
1 <sup>st</sup>	1/18/22	Course Introduction	<b>Read the Syllabus</b>
	1/20/22		
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1/25/22	Geographical Ways of Seeing	Lewis (1979); Meinig (1979)
	1/27/22		
3 <sup>rd</sup>	2/1/22	Philosophies Towards Parks: Wilderness as an American Idea	
	2/3/22		
4 <sup>th</sup>	2/8/22	Philosophies Towards Parks: Conservation v. Preservation	<b>Portrait of a Park Guidelines Distributed on Blackboard</b>
	2/10/22		
	2/15/22	Forging a National Parks System I	The Organic Act of 1916;

5 <sup>th</sup>	2/17/22		Lane Letter of 1918; Nash (1970)
6 <sup>th</sup>	2/22/22	Forging a National Parks System II	
	2/24/22		
7 <sup>th</sup>	3/1/22	The Mature National Park System and Mission 66	McDonnell (2015)
	3/3/22		
8 <sup>th</sup>	3/8/22	Failed National Parks	Dilsaver (2008); Dilsaver and Wyckoff (2009); Weber (2016)
	3/10/22		
9 <sup>th</sup>	3/15/22	<b>Spring Break: NO CLASS</b>	
	3/17/22		
10 <sup>th</sup>	3/22/22	The State Parks Movement	Smith (2013); Briwa (2020) <b>Portrait of a Park Due</b>
	3/24/22		
11 <sup>th</sup>	3/29/22	Parks and Race	Scott and Jerry Lee (2018) Weber and Sultana (2013) <b>Placing a Park Guidelines Distributed</b>
	3/31/22		
12 <sup>th</sup>	4/5/22	Indigeneity and Parks	Spence (1996); Echo-Hawk (2009)
	4/7/22		
13 <sup>th</sup>	4/12/22	Visualizing Parks I	Briwa and Bergmann (2020) Wyckoff and Dilsaver (1997)
	4/14/22		
14 <sup>th</sup>	4/19/22	Visualizing Parks II	Bergmann and Briwa (2020)
	4/21/22		
15 <sup>th</sup>	4/26/22	Parks Prospects and Problems I	Donahue (2001); Tweed (2010)
	4/28/22		
16 <sup>th</sup>	5/3/22	Parks Prospects and Problems II	Abbey (1968)
	5/5/22		
Finals Week	5/10/22	Final Exam Slot: 10:30 to 12:30	<b>Placing a Park Due</b>

I am happy to see you here in GEOG 4381: The Parks Idea. Welcome!!!