Here is a land in distant seas
Full of all contrarities.

anonymous Australian poet, 1850

Australian history is almost always picturesque; indeed, it is so curious and strange, that... it does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies.

Mark Twain, Following the Equator, 1897

... Nature has, as it were, garbed herself in the robes of a teacher and displayed a continent with the least complexity of outline, build and structure, so that it may be said to resemble a “blackboard” on which our geographical problems may be elucidated.

Griffith Taylor, Australia, 1940

Australia is a settler country, a former British colony, the scene of indigenous genocide, a mythical unknown, a prison, a biophysical puzzle, home to a startling diversity of life, a cradle of modern democracy, and a powerful industrial economy with a rich resource base. As such, it serves in many ways as a mirror for the US – even matching the US roughly in size, if not in population. The two countries share many elements of a common history and biogeography and yet the human and environmental geographies of the two countries have traced very different paths into the modern world.

This course is an introduction to the human and environmental geography of “The Lucky Country,” a sobriquet embraced since the 1960s in celebration of its abundant resources, general affluence, stunning natural beauty, and the perception that it is not entwined in the dark historical complexities of Europe and Asia. So far, much like the US. However, this title was bestowed ironically in the 1960s by an author, Donald Horne, whose view was that Australia hadn’t quite earned its good fortune and good standing in the world. Later, Horne said of his quotation:
When I invented the phrase in 1964 to describe Australia, I said: 'Australia is a lucky country run by second rate people who share its luck.' I didn't mean that it had a lot of material resources ... I had in mind the idea of Australia as a [British] derived society whose prosperity in the great age of manufacturing came from the luck of its historical origins ... In the lucky style we have never 'earned' our democracy. We simply went along with some British habits.

Horne is exemplifying the long tradition in which the country’s people and landscapes have often been viewed (often by Australians themselves) as insufficient, inverted, or irredeemably alien, especially when compared with Europe. And yet Australia hovers near the top of all indices of prosperity and development, year after year, and in American media it is often presented as home to a set of endless beaches, environmentally sustainable development, quirky progressive politics, and an unequalled richness of biodiversity. It is hard to understand modern Australian human-environmental relations understanding the complex history of relationships between colonizing Europeans and Australian Aboriginal people, and the relationships between both groups and the landscape. In that way, again, Australia is a mirror for the US, but the vast differences in the biophysical landscape have resulted in a very different set of relationships than obtain in the US.

This course is introductory in that it is not meant to provide in-depth study on particular aspects of Australian geology, ecology, society or culture: rather, we will be treating such topics in a survey manner. This is appropriate to a 300-level class, and is also necessary because of the near-total lack of any Australian curriculum at the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Course goals include:

- Understanding the biophysical characteristics of the Australian continent
- Understanding the resource challenges of managing biodiversity in Australia, and some of the strategies characteristic of Australian government and society.
- Understanding how climate change may specifically impact Australia
- Understanding the socio-environmental relations characteristics of Aboriginal Australians, both historically and today.
- Understanding the colonial process of settlement, genocide, and assimilation as it unfolded in Australia.
- Understanding the general demographic, political and geographic patterns characterizing modern Australia
- Understanding Australia’s place in the global environment and in economic/political globalization.

There is no required textbook for this class, but you will be expected to do weekly readings, to attend class, and to complete required assignments.
Evaluation

There will be a number of assignments during the course of the semester, requiring the student to report on an aspect of Australian environment and society.

Map Library Assignment (10%): The Cartography Library will provide a set of maps of Australia covering a range of themes. There will be an assignment sheet that you will complete on your own time, visiting the library (which is on the 3rd Floor of Science Hall).

Herbarium Assignment (10%): UW Herbarium will provide a collection for viewing, and there will be an assignment sheet for you to complete on your own time.

CARTO Assignment (20%): Each assignment will be worth 20% of the final grade. The topics can be drawn from the list of weekly topics given below. Each student will submit one geographic analysis using the CARTO application that has been prepared with data for the class.

The CARTO assignment will be graded on the following rubric:

Conceptual: 60% of the grade will be based on the conceptual strength of the project. How clear is the argument or discussion? How organized and complete is the narrative or analysis? This is not about being right or wrong, it’s about communicating a concept effectively.

Aesthetic: 30% of the grade will be based on the visual composition and appropriateness of aesthetic choices for communication about the topic.

Technical: 10% of the grade will be based on the mastery of the technical process of producing the map.

The specifics of these assignments will be provided in documents loaded on to the course’s Canvas page on Learn@UW. Assistance with CARTO can be obtained from the Design Lab in the College Library (HC White).

Book/Movie Report (20%): Read a book, or watch three movies, from the supplied list and write a brief report on how it reflects people-environment relations in Australia.

Exams (40%): There will be two exams in this course, one in late October, and one on the last day of classes. These will be a mix of short answer, matching, and map usage. They are NOT cumulative, and there is no final exam. Exams will cover both reading and lecture material. Each will be worth 20% of the final grade.

Grading Scale: This course is graded on the following scale, where scores are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. Scores falling exactly on the 0.5% mark will be rounded up.

- A: 92-100%
- AB: 88-91%
- B: 82-87%
- BC: 78-81%
- C: 70-77%
- D: 60-69%
The instructor reserves the right to use professional judgment to adjust the scale to make final grades reflect the quality of work performed by the class as a whole.

- The adjustment will only be made in the direction of more generous grading; it will never make the grading scale more strict than what is given above. In other words, an 82% will always be a B, but it is possible that the instructor will expand downwards the numeric range of B grades (or any other grade). This determination will be made only after all assignments have been graded.
- In no case will any student receive a final grade higher than another student who has achieved a higher percentage score.

**Class Policies:**

- You are expected to attend all classes and to take comprehensive notes on lectures and reading materials. You will not do well in this class if you do not follow that advice.
- You will be expected to help maintain a civil and focused classroom environment. This means no chatting, no cell phone calls, no texting, no surfing the internet, and no reading newspapers.
- There will be no make-up exams as a rule, except for 'excused' absences. Excused absences are those arranged with me before an exam and for University-approved reasons (per UW Administrative Code) or those documentable as health- or crisis-related after an exam. You also are entitled to an excused absence for the purpose of observing a religious holiday; but you must notify me of your request for one during the first week of class.
- Note that all exams are in the usual classroom for the course, and that the third exam is scheduled during the class exam period in Finals Week.
- If you find yourself falling behind, or having trouble with any part of this course, please see me sooner rather than later.
- It is assumed that you are familiar with University policy on cheating and plagiarism as set forth in your copy of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- **Late work will be accepted at a discount rate of 15% per day late.**

**Classroom Civility**

You are expected to contribute to an environment of mutual respect and open discussion. Any actions or words which, in the opinion of the instructor, degrades the environment of mutual respect and open discussion may be met with disciplinary action. Behavior which disrupts the classroom environment will be subject to disciplinary action proportional to the severity of the disruption, and may include dismissal for the day and the forfeit of assignment grades.

**Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct**
It is assumed that you are familiar with University policy on cheating and plagiarism as set forth in UWS 14. UWS 14 is the chapter of the University of Wisconsin System Administrative code that regulates academic misconduct. UW-Madison implements the rules defined in UWS 14 through our own "Student Academic Misconduct Campus Procedures." UWS 14.03 defines academic misconduct as follows.

Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

- seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- assists other students in any of these acts.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation;
- paraphrasing from the web without crediting the source;
- using notes or a programmable calculator in an exam when such use is not allowed;
- using another person's ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one's own by not properly crediting the originator;
- stealing examinations or course materials;
- changing or creating data in a lab experiment;
- altering a transcript;
- signing another person's name to an attendance sheet;
- hiding a book knowing that another student needs it to prepare an assignment;
- collaboration that is contrary to the stated rules of the course, or tampering with a lab experiment or computer program of another student.

**Plagiarism** is the use of text from **any source** without attribution. If you repeat your own words from an earlier composition, without citation or quotation marks, it is still plagiarism and held to the same standard.

If you are accused of misconduct, you may have questions and concerns about the process. If so, you should feel free to call SAJA at 263-5700 or send an email to dean@studentlife.wisc.edu. *(This section adapted from: http://students.wisc.edu/doso/samplesyllabus.html)*
Course Schedule and Readings

Topic 1: Introduction to Australia
Susan Maushart, 2011. *Australia, we don’t know you, but we love you, say our American friends.*
The state of Australia: Our environment, 2014

Topic 2: People-Environment Geography
Griffith Taylor, 1940. *Australia*, Chapter 19

Topic 3: Australian Geomorphology
ABC, 2016. *The mining boom that changed Australia.*

Topic 4: Australian Biogeography and Climate
NOVA Australia’s Vanished Beasts Guide

Topic 5: Marsupials and Monotremes

Topic 6: Eucalyptus
The Rise and Fall of the Gum Tree, Nexus.
Australian Story: Eucalyptus. Website, University of Technology, Sydney.

Topic 7: Aboriginal settlement

Topic 8: Fire Ecology and Firestick Farming

**Topic 9: Dreamtime and Songlines**
Creative Spirits, 2016. What is the ‘Dreamtime’ or the ‘Dreaming’? https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/what-is-the-dreamtime-or-the-dreaming

**Exam 1**

**Topic 10 European Colonization**

**Topic 11: Nature as Prison**

**Topic 12: Landscape, Art, and Literature**
Bonyhady, 1985. *Images in Opposition: Australian Landscape Painting, 1801-1890* (Chapter TBA)

**Topic 13: The Great Barrier Reef**

**Topic 14: The Wet Tropics**

**Topic 15: The Red Centre**

**Topic 16: Flood, Drought and Bushfire**

**Topic 17: Australian Resource Geography**


Dargavel, 1995. *Fashioning Australia’s Forests* (Chapter TBA)

**Topic 18: Aboriginal Survival, Reconciliation and Land Rights**

Shaun Tan, 2010. *Rabbits*

National Sorry Day Letter, 2007


Mabo and Wik case summaries

**Topic 19: Australian Conservation and Climate Change**

Low, 2002. *Feral Future: The Untold Story of Australia’s Exotic Invaders* (Chapter TBA)


**Exam 2**

**Further reading**

*Aboriginal Culture and Civil Rights*


**History of European Colonization and Exploration**


**Environmental and Natural History**


**Ecology, Botany and Zoology**


**Modern Environmental Politics and Society**


