

Fall 2018

# GEOG 107

Daisaku Yamamoto

Colgate University, [dyamamoto@colgate.edu](mailto:dyamamoto@colgate.edu)

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## Recommended Citation

Yamamoto, Daisaku, "GEOG 107" (2018). *Faculty Syllabi*. 96.  
<https://commons.colgate.edu/syllabi/96>

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## **GEOG107A: Is the Planet Doomed?**

Colgate University, Fall 2018

**Lecture:** MWF: 10:20 - 11:10 a.m.  
**Room:** Ho 238  
**Instructor:** Daisaku Yamamoto  
**Office:** Ho 309  
**Office hours:** Mon. 2:30-4:00 p.m., Tue. 4:00-5:30 p.m. or by appt.  
**Phone:** 315-228-6165  
**E-mail:** dyamamoto@colgate.edu

Online syllabus (up-to-date schedule): <https://goo.gl/ZbnFdH>

Moodle website: <http://moodle.colgate.edu/>

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Is the Planet Doomed? Rather than providing a definitive answer to this question, we will explore why the question itself has gained such relevance and traction in the contemporary moment. Why has catastrophic thinking become such a prevalent way of imaging the future of the world? What are the concrete forces driving this catastrophism and its doomsday scenarios? How is the end of the world as we know it, whether real or imagined, already reshaping global relations of power, profit, and well-being? How are people actually responding to these perceived catastrophes in different places? This course shows how the discipline of Geography, with its integrative modes of analysis across multiple areas of study, can help answer these questions and aid our understanding of some of the world's most pressing problems (and their interconnections)—from climate change to pandemic diseases, from mass poverty to natural disasters, and from resource scarcity to territorial conflicts.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By successfully completing this course, you will acquire foundational skills to:

- Identify and obtain relevant and useful information to conduct basic geographic research
- Critically analyze scholarly literature of human geography
- Create and evaluate simple and effective analytical charts and maps
- Apply geographic theories to interpret the experiences of other regions and countries
- Present your geographical knowledge and ideas in a clear and persuasive manner

### **READINGS**

Required item:

- Parenti, Christian. 2011. *The Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*. New York: Nation Books.

Recommended items:

- Hartmann, Betsy. 2016. *The America Syndrome: Apocalypse, War, and Our Call to Greatness*. New York: Seven Stories.
- Hacker, D., and Sommers, N. 2011. *A Writer's Reference*, 7th ed. Bedford: St. Martin's Press.
- Klass, G M. 2012. *Just Plain Data Analysis: Finding, Presenting, and Interpreting Social Science Data*. 2nd ed. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Other reading/viewing assignments will be available to you either online (Moodle) or at the library reserve.

## EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To get most out of the class, you should complete the assigned readings/viewings in advance of the class. As with each of your class at Colgate, you should expect to spend roughly **two to three hours preparing for each hour of class time**. If you are constantly spending more than three hours to prepare for a class, please let me know because that means that either I am giving you too much work, or there is a clear room for you to improve your workflow. If the latter is the case, I would like to work with you so that you can work more efficiently and effectively.
- Your active participation to the class is strongly encouraged. **No question is a dumb question in this course**. Because this course involves geographic, economic and sociological terms and concepts that are unfamiliar to you (and I sometimes forget how confusing they can be), you are doing a huge service for me and many students in the class by asking ANY questions.
- The primary goal of this course is to develop the conceptual tools to interpret critically a broad range of issues that pertain to development and well-being. To this end, outside of class you should follow various development-related issues in the news media, such as the [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), and [PRI's The World](#) (radio program, available on podcast).
- Attend **at least two** "required" events marked **in pink** on the online syllabus. These events *may* be added during the semester. In addition to these events, I would like you to attend **another public lecture/screening event** of your choice that broadly relates to the course theme during the semester. Some of those events are listed on the online syllabus (marked **in yellow**), but you may find and attend to a different one. **Submit a printed copy of a short description and your response to the event within a week of the event for grading consideration.**

## CLASSROOM CONDUCT

The basic principle of this course is that we work together to create the best possible learning environment. More specifically,

- Please come to class on-time. Arriving late is disruptive.
- It should be unusual for a student to leave the room during class (e.g., please use the restroom before class).
- This is an old-fashioned class. I draw a lot of diagrams on the blackboard during class; hence I ask students to handwrite their notes on a notebook. **Use of laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones are not allowed** unless I specifically ask you to use them for some activities.
- You may not audio or video record class sessions without my permission.

All activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the Student Rights and Responsibilities, and the System of University Standards and Student Conduct (see *Colgate Student Handbook*). Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment for others may be subject to disciplinary action under the Code.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty and integrity is expected at all times. Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism and cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct, will not be tolerated. You may read the Academic Dishonesty and the Academic Honor Code in *Colgate Student Handbook*.

## HARASSMENT

University policy prohibits sexual harassment as defined in the University statement on sexual harassment. Complaints about sexual harassment should be reported, following the recommended procedures in the *Handbook*.

## REQUIRED COURSE WORK

Your grade will be based on the points that you accumulate in the course. The only "curving" method that

I use the *natural break* method (will be explained in class). This course has a project with multiple components, which may feel quite demanding if you expect the course to be organized simply around lectures and tests (it is not).

Midterm exam		30 pts
Final exam		50 pts
Research project	The project has multiple components	100 pts
Quizzes and mini-homework	To be given in class during the semester	up to 20 pts
Class participation	See the "Attendance and Participation" below	20 pts
TOTAL		200-220 pts

### GRADING

If you are taking the course on an A-F basis, you will be graded as follows:

Achievement that is <b>exceptional</b> relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements	Achievement that is <b>significantly above</b> the level necessary to meet course requirements	Achievement that meets the course requirements <b>in every respect</b>	Achievement that is <b>worthy of credit</b> even though it fails to meet course requirements fully	Achievement that is <b>not worthy of credit*</b>
<b>A+</b> : 100.1 or higher	<b>B+</b> : 89.9-87.0%	<b>C+</b> : 79.9-77.0%	<b>D+</b> : 69.9-67.0%	<b>F</b> : 59.9% or less
<b>A</b> : 100-93.0%	<b>B</b> : 86.9-83.0%	<b>C</b> : 76.9-73.0%	<b>D</b> : 66.9-63.0%	
<b>A-</b> : 92.9-90.0%	<b>B-</b> : 82.9-80.0%	<b>C-</b> : 72.9-70.0%	<b>D-</b> : 62.9-60.0%	

If you are taking the course on a **S/U** basis, you will receive a **S** if your performance is sufficient to merit a "C-" on the A-F scale.

If you are not satisfied with the evaluation of any exam, assignment, and overall course performance, **write me a short letter** that explains why you believe that the assigned points (or grade) deserve reevaluation.

### LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND MAKEUP EXAMS

Late submission of assignments will be penalized at least by 10% of the maximum assignment points. *Verifiable medical or family emergencies, with appropriate documentation, are the only circumstances under which the preceding deadlines will be negotiable.* I will not provide make-up exams except in extremely unusual circumstances, or without my permission based on well-justified reasons *in advance* to the exam.

### ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance and participation are essential to earn good grades. While I do not take formal attendance, 20 points of your course points are based on your "class participation." If you miss class frequently, you obviously cannot participate in class discussion, and your participation points will be affected. I will use the following guidelines to determine your participation points:

- A** if you regularly (almost every class) ask questions, and share your ideas/views with class
- B** if you occasionally volunteer to ask questions, and share your ideas/views with class
- C** if you answer questions only when asked
- D** if you are a completely passive audience, or if you miss class frequently
- F** if I find you conducting any intentional and disruptive behavior (e.g., text-messaging in class)

## YOUR RESOURCES

### LIBRARY LIAISON

Professors Peter Tagtmeyer ([ptagtmeyer@colgate.edu](mailto:ptagtmeyer@colgate.edu)) and Josh Finnell are the library liaisons for this course. He will work with us throughout the research project. They are available to meet with you individually at any stage of the research process.

### WRITING AND SPEAKING CENTER

One of the most important assets that you can and should build in the next four years is the enhanced ability to express your minds through words. The Writing & Speaking Center in 208 Lathrop is committed to helping all Colgate students succeed as clear, effective communicators. Peer writing consultants can help you refine your writing by reviewing a paper's focus, development, organization, clarity, grammar, source integration, or other aspects. Peer speaking consultants can help you prepare or organize the content of an oral presentation; they can also help you improve your delivery to an audience. For more information or to make an appointment, visit <http://www.colgate.edu/writingcenter> or call (315) 228-6085.

### COUNSELING CENTER

If you are experiencing emotional and personal difficulties (related to college or not), the Counseling Center offers completely confidential and highly professional services, both for individuals and groups. <https://www.colgate.edu/offices-and-services/counseling>

### TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

Contact the ITS Desk for any problems or questions about your technology needs, such as computer repairs, Moodle questions, software installation, etc. Call (315) 228-7111 or check out: <http://www.colgate.edu/offices-and-services/information-technology/getting-help/support-for-students>

### STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss your specific needs. You should also be in contact with Lynn Waldman, Director of Academic Support and Disability Services at 315-228-7375 in the Center for Learning, Teaching, and Research. She reviews documentation to determine and help coordinate reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with any kind of disability or special need.

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: There are likely changes (addition, deletion or substitution) in the readings, and those changes will be announced in class and posted on the online syllabus.

Wk	Date	Topics	Readings (to be done before class)	Submission links etc.
	8/30	Half-period Overview		
1	9/3	Global catastrophic risks in the age of Anthropocene Skills: Class participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Crutzen</a> [References]</li> <li>• <a href="#">"Global catastrophic risks"</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">"Global catastrophic risk 2017"</a></li> <li>• Bostrom and Cirkovic (<a href="#">book</a>; <a href="#">Intro chapter</a>)</li> </ul>	
	9/5	On the apocalyptic tone....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Grove</a></li> </ul>	
	9/7	Geographical mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Massey</a> [Reference]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Massey (Script)</a></li> </ul>	
	9/7	<i>Thousand Ocean Sounds: Taiko Drum Concert</i> 4:30pm at Colgate Memorial Chapel ( <a href="#">Event Calendar</a> )		
2	9/10	Why do societies collapse?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Diamond</a> (video 18:12)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Lec slides</a>
	9/12	Climate doom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Wallace-Wells</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">Lec slide</a>
	9/14	Catastrophic convergences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenti 3-36 [References]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Parenti video</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Map of organized violence in 2016</a></li> </ul>	
3	9/17	Catastrophic convergences (CLASS CANCELED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenti 37-94</li> </ul>	
	9/19	<del>America syndrome?</del> Prof. Bill Meyer guest lecture		<a href="#">Quiz 2 (take home)</a>
	9/21	Discuss Parenti	(If you have time start reading materials for the next class) [References]	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Africa maps</a> (Harvard)</li> </ul>	
4	9/24	"Using" climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hartmann</a> 15-45</li> <li>• <a href="#">Klein</a> [Optional]</li> </ul>	Course project instruction?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hartman (2011)</a></li> </ul>	
	9/26	Case study: Sahel region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Michel</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Polgreen (Reading questions for the two articles)</a></li> </ul>	
	9/27 THU	Social Science Luncheon Seminar Series: "Climate and Colgate" Adam Burnett (Geography) 12:15-1:15pm, Alumni Hall 111( <a href="#">Event calendar</a> )		
	9/28	Skills: Search and reading scholarly writings (Bring your computer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Course project instructions</a>
5	10/1	Anthropocene or capitalocene?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Patel and Moore</a></li> </ul>	
	10/1	Public lecture: <i>Foreshortened Futures: Temporalities and Militarization in Guatemalan Forest Conservation</i> Micha Rahder (Louisiana State University) 4:30-6:00 in Persson Auditorium ( <a href="#">Event calendar</a> )		
	10/3	Commanding heights and neoliberalism Skills: Making effective charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PBS: <a href="#">Commanding Heights Ep. 2</a> (video) -- <a href="#">Post-viewing questions</a> (for your reference only)</li> </ul> <p>[Recommended]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Commanding Heights Ep. 1</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Commanding Heights Ep. 3</a></li> </ul>	
	10/4 THU	Evening workshop: 7-9 pm Ho 203 (Computer lab)	[Reference] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Klass</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">Chart making instructions</a>  <a href="#">In-class sides</a>
	10/5	Shock doctrine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Klein: <a href="#">The Shock Doctrine</a> (video)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Harvey</a> (short video)</li> </ul>	Milepost 1
6	10/8	<b>Midterm recess</b>		
	10/10	Shock doctrine cont.		<a href="#">Lec slide</a>
	10/10	Public lecture: Cannabis as an Environmental "Object of Concern" Jake Brenner (Ithaca College) 4:30-6:00 Ho 101 ( <a href="#">poster</a> )		
	10/12	Nitrogen capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Huber</a> (NOT for rhetorical analysis)</li> </ul> <p>[References]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">What is political ecology?</a> (video: 6 min)</li> </ul>	<b>For rhetorical analysis mini-homework, use:</b> - <a href="#">Huber Kami copy</a> - <a href="#">Kaimal</a> (in-class handout)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Process of nitrogen fertilizer production</a></li> </ul>	
7	10/15	Guest lecture: Alex Sklyar (Univ. of Michigan) "Enunciatory Communities and Double Binds"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Fortun</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">Milepost 1 submission</a>
	10/17	Diverse economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Gibson-Graham</a> [Reference] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Iceberg of economy</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<a href="#">Study guide for midterm</a>
	10/19	Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	
8	10/22	<b>Midterm exam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	
	10/24	Pandemic doom 1 Skills: Making maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Wallace; Hoffman</a></li> </ul> <p>[References] <a href="#">Ebola virus disease basics</a> <a href="#">Ebola crisis response by WHO</a></p>	
	10/25 THU	<del>Evening workshop: 7-9 pm Ho 203 (Computer lab)</del> Public lecture: Japan's demographic time bomb: Women to the rescue? Yukiko Asai (Waseda Univ. & Chicago Univ.) 7:00-8:15pm Persson Auditorium		Map making instructions
	10/26	<b>No class meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch all four episodes on <a href="#">this site</a> (15-17 min each), and write a one-page write-up (<a href="#">submit here</a>)</li> </ul>	Milepost 2
9	10/29	Project-related matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Lec slides</a>
	10/31	Pandemic doom 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Davis</a> (postponed from 10/26)</li> </ul>	Milepost examples <a href="#">1</a> & <a href="#">2</a>
	11/2	Mapping workshop: <b>Meet in Ho 203 (during the class hour)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Krygier</a></li> </ul> <p>[References] • <a href="#">Why all world maps are wrong (video)</a></p>	<a href="#">Milepost 2 submission</a> (due 11:59pm)  <a href="#">Map making instructions</a>  <a href="#">ArcGIS Online</a>
	11/2 FRI	Friday Night Film Series: <i>Grain</i> . 5pm in Little Hall 105 (Golden Auditorium)		
10	11/5	Resource doom 1: Too many people or too much resource?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rosser</a> (Be prepared to answer the questions on <a href="#">this sheet</a>)</li> </ul> <p>[References]</p>	

			You can find various YouTube videos on “resource curse” such as <a href="#">this</a> and <a href="#">this</a> .	
	11/7	Resource doom 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Malthusian theory of population” (<a href="#">video</a>)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Hartmann</a> 149-197</li> </ul>	
	11/9	Resource doom 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenti (course textbook) pp. 207-242</li> </ul> <p>[References]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Lin</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Graczyk</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Border zones</a></li> </ul>	
11	11/12	Resource doom 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hugo (2013)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reading questions for Hugo</a></li> </ul>	
	11/14	Nuclear doom 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Yamakawa</a> (2016, intro)</li> <li>• Fukushima disaster (<a href="#">Australian SBS Dateline video</a>, 2013)</li> </ul>	
	11/16	Nuclear doom 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Davis</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Kaneko</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reading guide questions</a></li> </ul> <p>[References]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Fukushima: Five years later</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Radioactive Forest</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Government PR video</a></li> </ul>	
12	11/19	<b>Thanksgiving break</b>		
	11/21	<b>Thanksgiving break</b>		
	11/23	<b>Thanksgiving break</b>		
13	11/26	Nuclear doom 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class video (nuclear decommissioning)</li> </ul>	One-page reflection ( <a href="#">submit here</a> )
	11/28	Monster and mother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ueda</a></li> </ul>	
	<del>11/29</del> THU 11/28 WED	Public lecture: Non Arkaraprasertkul on urban gentrification in China, Persson 27 (Auditorium), 4:15pm		
	11/30	Urban doom 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Davis</a></li> </ul>	CG article draft (moved from 11/28) due 11:59 pm <a href="#">Submit here</a>
14	12/3	In-class review exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	

		Skill: Peer Review		
	12/5	Urban doom 2	• World Bank	
	12/7	Urban doom 3	•	CG article revised
15	12/10	Catastrophism and Geography reviewed	•	
	12/12	SETs	•	
	12/14	Review	•	Country report due
	12/17	<b>Final exam: 9:00–11:00 a.m.</b>	•	

## REFERENCES

### Overview

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### Capitalocene

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### **Geological Doom**

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### **Nuclear Doom**

Yamakawa, Mitsuo, and Daisaku Yamamoto. 2016. *Unravelling the Fukushima Disaster*. London: Routledge.

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### **Resource Doom**

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Lin, J. Y. 2012, August 27. Youth Bulge: A Demographic Dividend or a Demographic Bomb in Developing Countries? *Let's talk development*.

### **Urban Doom**

Davis, M. 2004. "Planet of Slums." *New Left Review* 26: 5–34.

World Bank. 2009. *World Bank Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography*.