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TYSTYSGRIF UWCHRADDDEDIG ADDYSU MEWN ADDYSU UWCH

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Cylch Dysgu 2 | Teaching Cycle 2

Reading and Active Learning in the Study of Historical Geography

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"It's not possible to read critically if one treats reading as if it were a similar operation to buying in bulk." (Freire, 1998, page 34)

Introduction

For students of human geography (and, indeed, of the vast majority of university subjects), reading is no less than essential to successful study and learning. While lectures and other taught sessions provide students with crucial orientation and structure in their engagement with new ideas and themes, reading clearly allows them to explore these ideas in far greater depth and, in some cases, to discover alternative approaches to a given topic that are not covered in class or that challenge the perspectives provided by the lecturer.

In the modules to which I contribute, the importance of reading, not only immediately prior to exams but also throughout the whole semester, is repeatedly emphasised to students both orally and in the written materials with which they are provided. Nevertheless, when marking students' exam papers, lack of sufficient reading is undoubtedly one of the most persistent problems that I have encountered and is one of the principal factors that prevent many students from gaining the marks they could actually achieve.

The purpose of this teaching cycle, therefore, was to find ways of tackling these problems by encouraging students to read as the module progresses. The aim, however, was not just to encourage students to read particular texts far earlier on in the semester than they might otherwise have done, but also to help them to engage critically with these texts. As such, the intervention focused on facilitating two of the key intended learning outcomes of the module:

- Develop critical skills in reading, as well as in the analysis of other media.
- Show evidence of the depth of their reading and their ability to construct an argument in written form.
Essentially, then, this may be viewed as an exercise in seeking to implement constructive alignment by ensuring that students are given the opportunity to do and to practice the skills that we expect them to attain by the end of a course. As Biggs and Tang (2007, page 52) explain, if students’ learning is to be aligned with the intended outcomes of a particular course, then it is crucial that both the teaching and learning activities and the mode of assessment allow the outcomes to be activated through practice¹.

**Overview**
Since 2006 I have acted as co-ordinator for an optional second year ten-credit module entitled 'Historical Geographies of the Modern World'. Split into two sections, the first of which deals with the early modern world and the second with the 19th and 20th centuries, the module is taught in ten two-hour sessions over the course of one semester. I teach the first five sessions and the final five are taught by a colleague. Like the Americas module discussed in the previous teaching cycle, Historical Geographies does not involve any coursework and is assessed entirely by means of an end of semester unseen examination. Consequently, the module shares some of the problems that I encountered in The Americas course - most significantly, the absence of any formal term-time assignments that allow the lecturer to gauge students’ progress and understanding well in advance of the exam (see Appendix 2.1 for module description).

When I marked the exam papers after teaching this module for the first time, I was encouraged by the generally competent standard of answers. Nevertheless, I was also disappointed by the limited range of reading that many students appeared to have done, despite having been reminded on various occasions about the importance of wide and varied reading. Indeed, it was clear that even the key recommended texts were read by some students only in a superficial manner.

The possible reasons for this recurring problem are various. Students may still be adjusting to the transition from first to second year and the greater

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¹ For Biggs and Tang (2007, page 53), the alignment between assessment and teaching/learning activities and the intended learning outcomes marks the difference between constructive alignment and other types of outcomes-based learning theories, which focus exclusively on the alignment between outcomes and assessment.
workload (including reading) that this involves. Perhaps more significantly, they are arguably not provided with sufficient guidance on how to approach reading, and hence feel overwhelmed and intimidated by long reading lists. Exploring ways of ensuring that students carry out sufficient reading well in advance of the exam and, just as importantly, that they learn to read in a way that encourages them to engage critically with the texts therefore provided an ideal focus for a second teaching cycle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of module details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title:</strong> Historical Geographies of the Modern World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semester:</strong> 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact hours:</strong> 10 x 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of staff:</strong> 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credits:</strong> 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment:</strong> 100% end of semester unseen exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of students registered in 2006-7:</strong> 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of students registered in 2007-8:</strong> 37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Encouraging critical reading**
When I taught the Historical Geographies module for the first time, my classes were given exclusively by means of traditional lecturing. Although students had the opportunity to ask questions at the end of lectures (and they seldom did), they were not required to participate actively in any way. Having briefly experimented with class-based exercises in the previous teaching cycle, I was interested in developing these further in the Historical Geographies module and, specifically, use them in a way that would help students to learn how to read actively and critically.

Recent pedagogical literature reassures anxious academics that ‘traditional’ lecturing continues to play an important role in teaching, above all in providing essential information that students require in order to engage with a particular subject or theme (Brockbank and McGill, 1998, page 151; Race, 2001, pages 106-8; Scheyven et al, 2008). Used as the sole teaching method,
however, it arguably discourages all but the most motivated students from engaging in active, reflexive ways with the materials that they are asked to study. As Biggs and Tang (2007, pages 8-9) suggest, those students who are already academically inclined will find traditional lectures perfectly adequate as a basis for 'deep' learning - in other words, for learning about a given subject in a way that allows them to explain, apply and also critique particular theories and ideas. By contrast, the majority of students are unlikely to develop an active approach to learning without significant guidance or feedback from lecturers. Consequently, it is misguided to expect that students will engage critically with reading in the absence of teaching methods that are specifically designed to develop this skill. If the acquisition of critical reading skills is central to the stated learning outcomes - as is the case for the Historical Geographies module - then it is crucial that teaching is designed in a way that will help students to achieve this.

Reading is a central and indispensable element to the vast majority of university degree courses. Given that inadequate student reading is a very common complaint amongst lecturers, it is curious that relatively limited attention appears to be devoted in pedagogical literature to discussing either students’ approaches to and experiences of reading or lecturers’ expectations of what and how much students should read\(^2\). Nevertheless, reading activities do feature prominently in many active learning exercises that academics in a variety of disciplines have developed. In some cases, such exercises may involve asking students to read material during class time and, in other cases, to do preparatory reading before attending the class. Indeed, several recent project summaries posted on the Geography Discipline Network site by historical and cultural geographers report very positively on the use of in-depth reading exercises as a means of enhancing students’ critical and analytical skills as well as their enjoyment of reading (Robertson 2004; Young, no date).

In the sections below, I discuss three separate class-based exercises that I planned and carried out over the course of my teaching on the Historical

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\(^2\) Two interesting papers, however, have been written on these issues by Mann (2000) and Stokes and Martin (2008). The study by Stokes and Martin clearly convey widespread frustration amongst academics about students’ approaches to reading and reading lists.
Geographies module with a view to encouraging timely reading amongst students and, even more importantly, their critical engagement with key texts.

Class-based exercise 1
Lecture topic: Colonialism and imperialism in the early modern world

The purpose of this lecture was to critically explore early modern European views of non-European peoples and places within the context of colonial and imperial expansion. Drawing on my own research interests and expertise, the lecture focuses above all on Spanish colonial expansion in the Americas in the 16th and 17th centuries. When I first taught this class in 2005, I hoped that students would not only read the modern academic texts that critically examine colonial attitudes and imaginations in the early modern era, but that they would also read at least some of the primary sources (such as the English translation of Columbus' diary) that were included on the reading list. When marking the exam papers, however, it soon became clear that the vast majority of students had not done so. My intention, therefore, was to design a class-based exercise that would provide students with an opportunity to actively think about and discuss a number of historical texts relating to the Spanish colonisation of the Americas and, as a result, hopefully encourage them to read more in their own time.

Previous experience (for example, when teaching the Americas module) taught me that students frequently feel uncomfortable about being asked and responding to questions in front of the whole class. In designing this exercise and the other two class based activities discussed below, I therefore tried to avoid this problem by allowing discussion to take place mainly in small groups yet at the same time ensuring that students were able to feed back to me their views and opinions.

The first half of the class involved a traditional lecture in which I provided some basic historical information about Spanish expansion in the Americas and discussed some examples of early European impressions of the New World. In the second half of the class, students were supplied with extracts from four historical texts relating to Spain’s conquest and colonisation of the Americas (see Appendix 2.2). Once the students had been divided into groups of four or five, they were asked to read the textual extracts and, in their
groups, to make some brief collective notes in response to the points listed on the handout:

- What kinds of similarities and differences between the New World and Europe do these texts appear to identify?
- What kinds of beliefs, values and motivations appear to shape these representations?
- Are there any prominent themes or ideas that run through all or some of the extracts?
- Any other observations?

The overall purpose was to encourage students to consider the insights that they felt the extracts could provide into early modern European perceptions and representations of the Americas and its native peoples. As the theme of European portrayals of the New World in the early modern era was discussed in the previous part of the lecture, I hoped that students would feel able to engage with the texts productively by drawing on the ideas with which they had already been presented.

The second part of the exercise required students to exchange the notes that their group had made with those produced by another group and to read and critically reflect on the notes made by their neighbours in response to the points listed above. On the reverse of the same handout, each group was then asked to note down the following in response to their neighbours’ ideas:
The final stage of the exercise, as I envisaged it, was to involve students returning the set of notes, together with the comments they had made, to the original group. This was to be followed by a brief discussion involving the whole class that would allow the groups (or group representatives) to reflect on the differences and similarities between their interpretations of the historical texts. In addition, therefore, to requesting students to discuss ideas collectively, I hoped to encourage them to constructively evaluate the opinions and observations made by their peers and to make them aware of how a particular text might be read and understood in a number of different ways, as well as to stimulate them to reflect critically on their own ideas.

Overall, the implementation of the exercise was successful, and the fundamental aim of encouraging students to discuss and compare their ideas about a set of texts was achieved. In order to obtain a more accurate picture of their responses to the texts, I collected the handouts on which they had written at the end of the lecture (see Appendix 2.3 for sample handouts). As a means of providing feedback to the students on the exercise, I also summarised each group’s comments and posted them on Blackboard for students to access in their own time.

With only a few exceptions, the students participated very actively and were happy to express their ideas to their peers. The notes that student groups made on the feedback sheets showed that they were able to draw on ideas presented earlier on in the lecture (for example, European feelings of superiority towards Amerindian peoples; the prominence of religion as a motivation for conquest) when discussing the historical texts. I was especially
pleased that some groups also recognised clearly that early modern European views of the Amerindians varied considerably - a point that I had sought to convey in the first part of the class. (The summary of each group's comments is included in Appendix 2.4).

The final part of the activity, which was aimed at drawing together the ideas each group had noted down, generated a lively discussion between representatives of the various groups. Although this began as a 'question and answer' session - in other words, I asked particular groups to reflect on the exercise they had just carried out - it soon developed into a genuine debate amongst the students in which they not only expressed their own views but also challenged each others' opinions. It is therefore clear that the exercise succeeded in helping students to engage actively, not only with the texts, but also with the ideas and viewpoints of their peers.

Despite the overall success of the exercise, a number of problems became apparent during its implementation. The single most important problem was that I had underestimated how much time would be required for the exercise to be carried out. I had scheduled approximately forty minutes, but this proved to be insufficient, given that students first had to read and digest the four extracts before discussing them in groups. As a result, the second stage of the exercise, which involved students critically discussing the ideas and opinions of their neighbouring groups, was very rushed indeed. It was also impossible for me to obtain oral feedback from every group at the end of the exercise, due to time constraints.

It also became clear that the format of the exercise was a little too complex, which meant that I had to spend a lot of time explaining how it would work - time that could have been spent more productively by the students in actually discussing the texts. I also soon realised that it would have been preferable to circulate the textual extracts to students in the previous week's lecture and ask them to do the reading before the class, or alternatively to reduce the amount of in-class reading. Because I was very familiar with the texts as well as with the historical contexts in which they were produced, I had forgotten that students would require considerably more time than I would to read and analyse their content.
In terms of the wider aims of this exercise - namely, to encourage students to make greater use of the historical sources indicated on the reading list - I am not convinced that it succeeded. Although some students' end of semester exam papers referred to the extracts that were discussed in class (principally in response to Question 3), there was limited evidence of students having taken the initiative to read and think about other historical texts and make use of them in answering the exam questions. The fact that the 2006-7 exam paper did not contain a question which linked in explicitly with the lecture in which the extracts were discussed may also be a contributing factor.

I believe it is likely that greater use would have been made of these sources if students had been assigned a coursework essay in addition to the end of semester exam. Indeed, it may be argued that changing the form of summative assessment used in the module would better help students achieve the intended learning outcomes. This is an issue to which I will return briefly in the conclusion to this report.

Class-based exercise 2
Lecture topic: Mapping and cartography - inventing visions of the world
The second class-based exercise was integrated into a lecture that introduces students to the role that mapping and cartography played in colonial and imperial expansion and, in particular, to the ideological dimensions of map-making. Drawing again on examples from early Spanish America, the lecture also explores the ways in which the geographical knowledges and map-making skills of Amerindian populations contributed to the production of colonial maps. As such, the lecture is not purely about historical mapmaking, but uses cartography as a focus for students to learn about colonial relations in the early modern era.

In planning a class-based exercise for this lecture, I was interested in providing students with an opportunity to gain experience in making critical use of an academic article when answering an exam-style question, and also in evaluating the work of their peers, using the criteria that are applied in the assessment of unseen exam answers. In addition to ensuring that the students read and think about a text of key importance to the lecture topic,
then, the exercise was intended to help students develop their skills in critical reading and to demonstrate these skills in the form of a written argument. A crucial part of the exercise, moreover, was the provision of feedback on the written answers from one student to another and from me to the students.

In the week preceding this lecture, students were asked to read the article and make notes on it in preparation for the class. The success of the exercise therefore depended heavily on students doing adequate preparation before attending the class. In planning the exercise, I was aware that I would have to explain clearly to students what the purpose and intended benefits of the exercise were to ensure that they took the preparation seriously. This was especially important, I felt, given that the majority of ten-credit second year modules do not require students to do preparatory work for lectures.

In addition to making it clear that they would obtain practice in critical reading and writing skills that are central to the intended learning outcomes and that are assessed in the end of semester exam, I hinted to the students that the reading and class-based exercise would stand them in good stead in terms of the themes covered by the exam. Because I wished to avoid conveying the message that the purpose of the exercise was purely oriented towards assessment, I was also careful to emphasise that it was primarily intended to improve their skills in the critical analysis of texts and in writing, and also make their learning experience more enjoyable and rewarding.

As I had done in the lecture on colonialism and imperialism, I scheduled the exercise for the second half of the class. In the first half, I gave a 'traditional' lecture on cartography's role in European expansionary projects and, after the break, distributed a handout (see Appendix 2.5) to students which contained the following exam-style question:

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3 The importance of being clear to students about the purpose of such exercises as a means of ensuring their positive participation is highlighted by Scheyver et al (2008) as well as by Felder and Brent (2008).

4 As Biggs and Tang (2007, page 36) suggest, conveying the idea to students that a particular topic is important because they will be tested on it may simply devalue that topic in the eyes of the students. In the class on cartography, my decision to tell students that the theme (and not only the skills practised in class) would be relevant to the exam was an impulsive one, probably motivated by my worries that students might not take the exercise seriously. In future, however, I only intend to emphasise the skills- and outcomes-based relevance of the exercise to the end-of-semester exam, for the reasons set out by Biggs and Tang.
In addition, students were given a handout containing a simplified version of the criteria that are used in the assessment of unseen exam answers at second and third year level.

Students were given approximately 10 minutes to write their answers to the question above. They were encouraged to make use not only of the preparatory reading they had done, but also of what they had learned in the first part of the class. When this task was completed, students were asked to swap their answer with a neighbour and, making use of the assessment criteria (see Appendix 2.6), to provide their neighbour with some brief feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the answer. I did not ask students to give their neighbour a mark, as I wished them to concentrate instead on qualitatively evaluating and providing constructive criticisms on what they had read. Students were given the option of either providing oral feedback to their neighbours or of giving written feedback, using the boxes provided for this purpose on the reverse of the first handout (The vast majority of students chose to provide oral feedback). About 10 minutes were allocated for this task.

Finally, at the end of the class, I collected in the answers. Once I had read through all the responses, I posted generic written feedback on Blackboard, highlighting the principal strengths and weaknesses of their answers and making some suggestions about the ways in which these answers should be developed for a full exam-style essay (see Appendix 2.7).

As with the previous intervention, I felt that the implementation of this exercise was predominantly successful in terms of students' engagement with it. Before the class took place, I was worried that the prospect of compulsory preparatory reading would have a significant impact on attendance, but this was not the case in this instance. Attendance was about 50% (ca. 24 students), but this was not significantly lower than attendance in most other
I was worried that some students might come to the lecture without having done the necessary preparation, but again this did not appear to have been the case.

Students took the 'mini exam' seriously, and were generally willing to engage in discussion with their neighbours about the ways in which they had answered the question. I did gain the impression, however, that some students felt uncomfortable about being asked to comment critically on their peers' work. This may be due to the fact that peer assessment is not frequently used in human geography teaching in the Institute. Furthermore, because most students chose to feed back orally, however, it was difficult to determine how detailed their comments were.

When I read through the answers after the class, I was encouraged by the generally competent standard and by the level of understanding of the topic that students had shown. I was especially pleased that the majority of students mentioned not only the practical role that mapmaking played in the conquest of the New World, but also the ideological dimensions. In addition, most students sought to integrate material both from the lecture and from their preparatory reading. The answers also made me aware of areas of discussion that many students did not consider when writing their answers.

In particular, the contributions of indigenous geographical knowledges to the production of colonial maps, and the use of cartography by Amerindian peoples as a tool of resistance, were neglected by most students. As such, the exercise proved to be very valuable indeed, firstly in helping me to gain insight into students' understanding of the topic, and secondly in allowing me to feed back to students about areas that they needed to consider more carefully, in terms of both the subject matter and their approach to answering exam-style questions.

When setting the end of semester exam paper for 2006-7 (see Appendix 2.8), I ensured that it included a question that would allow students to make use of what they had learned in the class on colonial and imperial cartography. In the exam, students were expected to choose one question relating to each section of the module, and for each of the two sections they had a choice of three questions. When marking the exam papers, it was soon apparent that question 1, which related to the topic on cartography, was the
most popular: out of total of 39 students who sat the exam, 20 chose to answer this question.

The implementation of the exercise, therefore, clearly affected students' choice of questions in the exam. But how successful was it in terms of helping students to show evidence of critical skills in reading and writing under exam conditions? There is little doubt that it played an important role in ensuring that students read and also understood the ideas of J. B. Harley, whose work on cartography was required reading for the module. The majority of answers demonstrated that students had competently grasped the arguments that Harley makes about the connections between cartography and imperial expansion.

Unfortunately, a significant number of students did not do additional reading, but based their answers mainly on the article by Harley and the lecture materials. Nevertheless, the exercise helped to ensure that most students who answered this question did not simply rely on lecture materials but also made significant use of the reading they had done. Although it is impossible to provide concrete evidence for this, I would also suggest that the exercise helped many students to engage in greater depth with the reading - and, as a result, to obtain better grades than they might otherwise have done.

It is clearly desirable for students to be able to show evidence of breadth of reading and especially of their skill in making connections between these various readings, the number of books they have read. I would argue, however, that it is less critical to their attainment of intended learning outcomes than the way in which they have engaged with the texts. As Freire (1998, page 34) argues,

"It's not possible to read critically if one treats reading as if it were a similar operation to buying in bulk. What's the point of boasting of having read twenty books - twenty books! Really reading involves a kind of relationship with the text, which offers itself to me and to which I give myself and through the fundamental comprehension of which I undergo the process of becoming a subject."
I have frequently come across exam answers and essays that make reference to a wealth of sources, but without showing any evidence of discrimination, genuine understanding or critical engagement. Furthermore, giving students the opportunity to engage with just a few texts in a sustained and reflective manner may also play a role in heightening students’ enjoyment of their studies - simply emphasising quantity or coverage can convey the unhelpful message that learning is "yet another act of consumption rather than ... a more engaging participatory practice whose enjoyment endures..." (Young, no date).

The table below summarises the distribution of grades obtained by students for the three exam questions that related to my section of the module (see Appendix 2.9):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Upper second</th>
<th>Lower second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>No. of candidates</th>
<th>Mark range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59-85</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30-72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table indicates, none of the students who answered question 1 gained a first class mark. Nevertheless, compared to those who answered question 3, a much higher proportion gained marks within the upper second range – 55% as compared to just 19%. As noted above, it is difficult to demonstrate this with any certainty, but it is probable that the class-based writing and discussion exercise played a part in raising many students’ performance from the lower second to the upper second mark range.

If this is indeed the case, it is an encouraging outcome in terms of the success of the intervention, as it is of benefit to the majority of the student cohort - in other words, those students who generally fall within the middle mark ranges.5

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5 This outcome would appear to corroborate the findings of Tschumi, discussed by Felder and Brent (2008). In an introductory course on computer science, the introduction of class-based group work was most effective in improving the performance of those students who had previously been attaining grades lower than a 'C'.

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Class-based exercise 3

Lecture topic: Women and gender in early colonial worlds

The third class-based exercise aimed at encouraging students to engage critically with reading was incorporated into a lecture on the theme of women and gender in early modern colonial contexts. The lecture firstly sought to introduce students to feminist geographers’ theorisations of gender and colonial space and, secondly, to sketch out some of the key aspects of gender relations in the specific historical context of colonial Latin America. In particular, the lecture focused on the role of various groups of women in Spanish American colonial society and examined the ways in which they used and experienced space within that society.

As with the previous intervention, I planned the exercise with the aim of ensuring that students read some of the key recommended texts relating to the lecture topic. More specifically, however, I was interested in giving students the opportunity during class time to consider how particular theoretical approaches might be applied and also critiqued in specific empirical contexts. One week before the class, students were assigned an article by Sara Mills (1996) entitled 'Gender and colonial space'. The theorisation of gender and colonial space in this article is developed on the empirical basis of the British Empire in 19th century India. As such, some of its theoretical insights are can be usefully employed in the context of early colonial Spanish America, while others (as one would expect) are less relevant because of the significant temporal and geographical differences between these two colonial arenas.

Where the class-based exercise was concerned, therefore, I hoped to bring students to think about the ideas developed by Mills but also to consider how and to what extent they might be applicable to other colonial contexts. In other words, the exercise was aimed at helping students to develop skills in actively using the knowledge they had acquired by reading Mills' article. At the end of the preceding lecture, I explained these aims to the students, to ensure that they would be aware of the purpose of the exercise. As Biggs and Tang (2007, page 75) point out, being able to apply or perform understanding (as opposed to mere repetition of knowledge) constitutes a profound and crucial difference between surface and deep approaches to learning. However, while
university lecturers routinely expect students to show evidence of these skills in active, critical thinking, in many cases they arguably do far too little in terms of helping students to develop and practice them.

In addition to reading the Mills article, students were asked to think about and make notes on the following points before attending the class:

- What does Mills mean when she refers to the "gendered nature of colonial space"? (Mills, 1996, 125)
- What are the principal criticisms that she makes about previous studies of gender and colonial space?
- What are the "two levels of colonial space" that Mills refers to?

Following the introductory lecture, students were asked to form small groups and to spend approximately ten minutes discussing their ideas about the four points listed above. Once they had done this, they were asked to consider, in their groups, the extent to which they felt that Mills' ideas about gender and colonial space are applicable to the case studies about colonial Latin America that were presented in the lecture. Finally, each group was asked to report back to the rest of the class on one of the four points they had discussed, as well as on their views about the applicability Mills' ideas to the colonial Latin American context (see Appendix 2.10 for a copy of the handout given to students).

In a number of ways, this exercise proved to be considerably less successful than the previous two. In the first place, attendance at this class was very poor, as only 13 students were present. Although the precise reasons for this are difficult to determine, the failure of many students to do the preparatory reading for the class may well have played an important part on this occasion. The article that students were asked to read for this class was longer and rather more challenging than the article by Harley that I had set for the lecture on colonial cartography, so the level of difficulty may have been a contributing factor. Furthermore, I believe that a general lack of interest in or resistance to
the topic may also have contributed to students' decision not to attend: it has 
struck me on numerous occasions in the past when teaching tutorials on 
feminist geography and gender that a large number of undergraduate 
students are reluctant to engage with this theme in a positive way.

Although the students who were present participated in the exercise in 
a fairly co-operative manner, they generally seemed somewhat reluctant to 
engage actively in discussion about the topic in their groups. As suggested 
above, this may be because they found the article more challenging and less 
interesting than the previous one, but it may also reflect the fact that a smaller 
number of students were present. I have often found that it is easier to initiate 
group discussions in a larger class, perhaps because individual students feel 
less 'exposed' and hence more willing to break the initial silence.

It also became clear during the implementation of the exercise that I 
had given the students too many points to discuss in the time that was 
available (ca. 10 minutes). Because they had been asked to think about the 
points before attending the class, I thought that this would be sufficient. 
However, most groups required longer than ten minutes to go through the four 
points, which meant that less time was available for group discussions about 
the applicability of Mills' ideas to colonial Latin America, as well as for groups 
to report back to the class at the end of the exercise. Nevertheless, while the 
students struggled with some aspects of Mills' article, they were able to 
articulate how some of her ideas might be relevant to the Latin American case 
studies mentioned in the lecture.

In discussing the previous class-based exercise on cartography, I 
noticed that it appeared to have a significant impact on students' choice of 
exam questions. This was clearly not the case where the exercise on gender 
and colonial space was concerned, given that only three students chose to 
answer the exam question relating to this topic. It is interesting to observe, 
however, that two of these three students answered the question very well 
indeed and gained above average first class marks. In answering the 
question, they provided evidence of considerable initiative in terms of further 
reading and their ability to make pertinent critical connections between the 
work of different authors.
Two of the three students were highly successful in achieving the intended learning outcomes indicated at the beginning of this report, and the third attained 59%, thereby narrowly missing an upper second mark. Given the small number of answers to this exam question and the fact that those individuals who gained first class marks are in any case strong students, it is difficult to determine whether the exercise had a beneficial influence on the quality of the answers. It is clear, however, that I need to give careful thought to how I approach this particular topic, as the majority of students did not engage with it as I had anticipated.

Before I go on to discuss student feedback and make some general observations about the intervention, I will provide some brief comments on my implementation of the class-based exercises in the current academic year.

**Teaching the Historical Geographies module in 2007-8**

In the current academic year I repeated the same set of lectures for the Historical Geographies module and, in doing so, I attempted to address some of the problems encountered in 2006-7 where implementation of the class-based exercises is concerned. The two principal measures that I took were:

1) Simplification of the exercises.
2) Allocation of slightly longer time slots for the completion of the exercises in class.

**Class-based exercise 1**

With regard to the first exercise, which involved in-class reading of textual extracts and their discussion in groups, I did not allocate more time but I did reduce the number of extracts that students were asked to read from four to three. In addition, I explained the whole exercise at the beginning rather than explaining it progressively, as I felt that this would help to avoid confusion amongst students about what they were expected to do. As on the first occasion, the exercise proved to be very successful in terms of the levels of student engagement. Although the group discussion at the end was hesitant at first, it again developed into a lively discussion in which students participated actively and volunteered their views and opinions on the texts.
However, the exercise was again hampered by being somewhat rushed - it was clear that the concluding discussion could have continued productively for considerably longer. A colleague who observed this session also felt that the format was still a little over-complicated and preceded by too much explanation.

Class-based exercise 2
The second class-based exercise again worked well. On this occasion, I asked students to read two preparatory articles instead of just one, and I omitted the peer assessment element as I was not convinced that students had found it beneficial\(^6\). Instead, I gave students a little longer to write their exam-style answer. Attendance was very good (considerably higher than it had been in the previous year), and students generally answered the question very competently, on balance better than in 2006-7, although it was very clear that they engaged far more successfully with one article than with the other (see Appendix 2.11 for my feedback to students on their answers). I addressed this issue in my feedback comments, and provided students with suggestions about how they might approach the article that they had found more challenging.

As in 2006-7, the end of semester exam question that related to this exercise (question 2; see Appendix 2.12) was by far the most popular: out of a total of 36 students who sat the exam, 21 chose to answer this question. Although the proportion of students who gained first class marks for this question (2 out of 21, or 9.5%) was actually lower than the proportion who gained first class for the other two questions relating to my section of the module, a significantly higher percentage gained marks within the 2:1 range. While 29% of students who answered question 2 achieved a 2:1 mark, only 11% of answers to question 1 and 16% of answers to question 3 were awarded a 2:1. Although it did not appear to improve marks at the highest end of the spectrum, the exercise may again have helped a significant proportion of students to raise their marks from a 2:2 to a 2:1 (see Appendix 2.13).

\(^6\) I am aware, however, that many pedagogic studies recommend peer assessment as an effective means of enhancing active understanding and critical skills amongst students (see e.g. Healey and Hall). In the future, therefore, I may experiment further with this approach.
again, I felt that those students who answered this question showed evidence
of a greater depth of understanding of key readings than they might have
done if the exercise had not been implemented.

Class-based exercise 3
When implementing this exercise for the second time, I allocated about forty
minutes with a view to making it less rushed. Taking up a suggestion made by
the observer of my lecture on colonial cartography, I modified the format by
asking representatives of each group to write a summary of their collective
thoughts on the whiteboard. I hoped this approach might help structure the
exercise more clearly and provide a less intimidating means for students to
articulate their ideas to the class as a whole.

Unfortunately, however, the student response to this exercise was very
similar to that which I had encountered the previous year. In fact, on this
occasion, students seemed even more reluctant to discuss the topic than they
had been in 2006-7, although they did co-operate when asked to note down
their groups’ points on the board. At the end of the lecture, one student
explained to me that his male peers felt unqualified to comment or make
judgements on women’s experiences of space because of their gender.
However, on the whole, female students appeared equally inhibited.

As in the previous year, the exam question relating to this topic proved
to be the least popular: only six students chose to answer it. Clearly, the fact
that this exercise was not well received in two consecutive years shows that it
needs to be carefully evaluated. However, given that students engaged well
with other exercises involving group discussion, I believe that the problems
are related to the way in which I approach the topic rather than to the format
of the exercise?

Student views on the class-based exercises
Some interesting and fairly detailed insights about student views on the class-
based exercises may be obtained from the end of module evaluation

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7 This is an interesting and highly complex issue, but given the specific focus of this
intervention I do not feel that I can devote much space to its discussion here. I briefly
return to reflect on this problem, however, in the final conclusion to this portfolio.
questionnaires for 2006-7 and 2007-8 as well as from a separate questionnaire which I asked students to complete when I taught the module in 2006-7. The end-of-module evaluation questionnaires do not contain a specific question relating to class-based exercises. However, students are able to make additional comments when they complete the questionnaires online, and several made observations about the exercises I had implemented in my half of the module. Predominantly, these comments were very positive, as may be seen below:

"Just a comment on Heidi in particular because she deserves the praise that she might not get. You can tell how well prepared she is for her lectures and how much work she does behind the scenes which is appreciated. She delivers material at the right pace and in an easy to understand manner. You don’t feel pressured to answer in lessons, but instead through the use of reading for the next lecture and exam style questions you are able to show your understandings. Her feedback for lectures shows how much work she puts in and that she ‘cares’ about the subject. Thanks Heidi!"

"I liked the discussions we had to prepare for in Heidi Scott's lectures."

"Seminar style approach by HS was effective…"

"The lecture summary notes provided on blackboard, as well as the practice exam question with the feedback on answers is very useful, particularly for revision."

"I really enjoyed the module - Heidi Scott provided excellent feedback that will be very useful for the examination."
Only one student directly expressed negative views about the exercises:

"A few too many pointless class based exercises."

These predominantly positive views are corroborated by students' responses to the additional questionnaire that I designed and circulated at the end of my set of Historical Geographies lectures in 2006-7 (see Appendix 2.14 for examples). The responses to the questionnaire are summarised below:

1) Overall, how enjoyable did you find the exercises?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very enjoyable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Not at all enjoyable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of student responses:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of student responses:</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Overall, how useful did you find the exercises in furthering your understanding of the lecture topics?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Not useful at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of student responses:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of student responses:</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

3) How clearly was the purpose of each exercise explained?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very clearly</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Not clearly at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of student responses:</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of student responses:</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) How useful did you find the feedback that was provided for the first two exercises?
5) Do you feel that, as a result of the exercises, you have done more reading for the module than you would otherwise have done by this stage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Not useful at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6) Class-based exercises were carried out in three out of five lectures. Was this:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not often enough</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About right</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too often</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from this tabular summary that the majority of students found the class-based exercises both useful and (to a slightly lesser extent) enjoyable. Most students, moreover, were of the opinion that, halfway through the module, they had carried out more reading than they would otherwise have done as a result of the exercises. It should be noted, moreover, that even some of those students who said that they did not particularly enjoy the exercises nevertheless found them useful.

In addition, most students felt that the frequency with which they were carried out over my five lectures was about right. This suggests that the majority of students prefer a fairly balanced mixture of 'traditional' lecturing and methods of teaching and learning that involve active student participation. This view is reinforced by students' responses to a further question, which asked them to state whether, given the option, they would prefer classes.
which incorporate participatory exercises or which are based entirely on 'traditional' lecturing, and to explain the reasons for their choice.

Although a small number expressed a preference for teaching based entirely on 'traditional' lecturing, the majority indicated that they preferred a combination of the two approaches, and that they found this most helpful to their learning. A number of students reiterated the view that the exercises encouraged them to read, and many who preferred a mixed approach also suggested that the exercises helped them engage more actively with the material, aided their critical thinking and understanding of the topic and helped to consolidate and clarify points made in the rest of the lecture. Here is a selection of students' explanations of their preferences for a mixed approach:

"Class based exercises make you think more critically and break up the lecture well."

"Class based exercises break up a long 2 hour slot and help to reaffirm what points are being made - the lecture. Also encourages [sic] you to do more reading."

Some class-based activity is very helpful in explaining key points but I also think lectures are a good overview of topics. I think you had a very good mix of both."

**General conclusions on teaching development**

Recent literature on teaching in higher education suggests that students are frequently resistant to class-based exercises that involve their active participation, particularly if they have not encountered this approach to teaching and learning before at university (Felder and Brent, 1996; Scheyven et al 2008). While some students may feel that such exercises are reminiscent of school teaching rather than the kind of teaching that they regard as appropriate at university level (i.e. traditional lecturing), others may not enjoy the interaction with other students or may resent active participation because
they feel that it requires too much effort on their part. As one respondent to
my questionnaire put it, traditional lectures are preferable "because they're
easier."

Without doubt, I had been concerned that student resistance to class-
based activities would emerge as a significant problem, but this was not in
fact the case (as noted above, I am confident that poor attendance for the
third class on gender was mainly due to the topic rather than the prospect of
class-based discussion). It may be that students were generally willing to
participate because they were clearly able to see the purpose of the
exercises: 26 out of 28 questionnaire respondents felt they were clearly
explained\(^8\). Moreover, as several core modules at first and second year level
in IGES also involve group-work and other forms of class-based exercises,
students would already have encountered 'non-traditional' approaches to
teaching in other courses. Finally, student responses to the questionnaire also
indicate that the majority find such exercises a welcome change from two
solid hours of lecturing.

On balance, it may be concluded that the interventions carried out in the
Historical Geographies module were successful in encouraging students to
read in a more timely fashion and also in helping them to develop skills in
critical reading and reflection. As noted above, however, striking differences
emerged in terms of the extent to which the individual class-based exercises
achieved their intended aims.

Whereas the first and second exercise worked successfully in class on
both occasions (despite time constraints), the third was not well received by
students in either year. This contrast was clearly reflected in students' choice
of exam questions: while the question relating to the topic on gender was
least popular in both years, the one on cartography was the most popular.
Interestingly, most of those students who \textit{did} choose to answer the question
on gender performed well - and some exceptionally so. Although it may be the
case that the preparatory reading and class-based exercise on gender

\(^8\) As Scheyven \etal (2008) argue, for exercises in active learning to work well, it is crucial that
students are made fully aware of the purpose of these exercises. Student feedback suggests
that, in this instance, I was successful in doing this. The importance of spelling out the
purpose of class-based exercises is also highlighted by Felder and Brent (1996).
helped a small number of interested students to achieve the intended learning outcomes, this particular exercise, in contrast to the previous two, cannot be considered an overall success because it failed to engage the majority of students with the topic.

I would like to suggest, however, that there could be additional reasons that go beyond levels of student interest in particular themes to explain why the exam question on colonial cartography was especially popular. In contrast to the class-based exercises on colonial texts and on gender, the exercise on cartography gave students the opportunity to demonstrate their understandings by means of writing in the form of a short exam-style essay, and also involved the provision of detailed written feedback on their work. As the responses to my questionnaire demonstrate, students found the feedback a particularly useful aspect of the class-based exercises. Given that summative assessment for this module is carried out by means of an unseen written exam, it is probably not surprising that students were especially engaged with an activity that they perceived as being most clearly oriented towards exam preparation.

**Personal learning and implications for future teaching**

As with the previous teaching cycle, this set of interventions proved to be very valuable in terms of my own personal learning as a lecturer. The success of two out of three of the class-based exercises, together with predominantly positive student feedback on my teaching approach, helped me to overcome my own scepticism about their value as a teaching strategy that can have a positive influence on student engagement and learning. As Scheyvens et. al. (2008, p. 51) observe, however, it is crucial that such exercises possess a clear pedagogic purpose, as mere ‘doing’ does not constitute learning.

With the exception of a rather unsatisfactory attempt to use a class-based exercise in the Americas module, my implementation of writing and discussion exercises in the Historical Geographies course in 2006-7 was the first time I experimented extensively with such teaching approaches. In terms of practicalities, I quickly realised that it is very easy to underestimate how long activities of this kind can take if they are to be carried out successfully, and indeed on several occasions I made the mistake of not scheduling
sufficient time for the completion of the exercise. I also learned that it can be counterproductive to make the format of the exercises too complex - a lot of time can unnecessarily be spent in explaining how an activity will work rather than actually carrying it out.

Both this teaching cycle and the preceding one provide evidence of how certain teaching interventions can influence students’ choice of and also approach to exam questions. In the first cycle, my feedback on definitions of ‘colonialism’ and ‘imperialism’ encouraged many students to answer a question in which these definitions could be used. In this second cycle, the exam-style paper on cartography, and the feedback I provided, again encouraged students to answer an exam question connected with this theme. In both cases, students' motivations were almost certainly the same: understandably, they chose those questions that they felt able to answer with greatest ease and hence increase their chances of doing well in the exam. In the Development and the Environment module, this was a clear cause for concern, because students had inadvertently been encouraged to engage in surface learning through memorising definitions. By contrast, in the Historical Geographies module, the majority of exam answers to the cartography question showed at least some evidence of ‘deep’ learning.

As Biggs and Tang (2007, page 169) suggest, therefore, students' preoccupation with assessment (in other words, with passing exams) is not necessarily problematic as long as those students are achieving the intended learning outcomes - in the case of the Historical Geographies module, developing skills in critical reading and analysis. This is not intended as a cynical comment on student motivations: clearly, many students are also motivated by intrinsic interest, by their enjoyment of a particular topic or learning activity or, in some cases, by their personal beliefs and politics. Nor do I wish to suggest that, as lecturers, we do not actively try to inspire students to engage with their studies in ways that go beyond exam performance. Instead, I would simply like to observe that assessment-oriented approaches to studying and teaching approaches based on constructive alignment are not necessarily incompatible or mutually exclusive.
In future years, I would like to extend the use of writing exercises in this module - not because I regard the purpose of class-based activities as being purely directed towards exam preparation, but because I feel that they allow students to articulate their ideas and convey evidence of their critical reading skills in a particularly focused way. As Brent and Felder observe (1996, p. 2), 

"Well-constructed writing assignments compel students to process material actively, identifying important points or connecting the material to their prior knowledge."

In addition, it is much easier to provide meaningful and detailed feedback on written work than on ideas and views that are expressed orally, as well as to obtain a comprehensive view of students’ progress.

I do not wish to suggest, of course, that group discussion should be replaced by writing exercises - rather, I believe that it would be useful to incorporate writing activities more fully alongside group discussion of readings. There is no reason why writing exercises should necessarily be restricted to exam-style papers, as they could also involve, for example, asking students to write a conversational or journalistic-style piece in which they explain the ideas of a particular author whose work they have read. Alternatively, students could be asked to write a brief report on a given article outside class time (no more than one side of A4) and to bring it with them to class for discussion in groups: these reports would then serve as a basis for critical comparison and would provide students with a more focused way of exploring varied ideas and opinions in relation to the same text.

Another possible approach might involve asking students to write a brief individual report reflecting on the insights they have gained from a group discussion on particular readings carried out in class: so, for example, following the group discussion exercise on colonial texts discussed above, students could each be asked to prepare a brief reflective write-up of their ideas and impressions, to be handed in at the beginning of the following week's lecture. Students would then be provided with collective feedback on their written work.
Although it can only be demonstrated through actual implementation, I am confident that this approach would help to give many students a stronger sense of purpose when taking part in class-based discussion exercises, and hence increase levels of engagement. It would also give students more time to reflect on the texts they have read as well as on the views their group members have expressed - a factor that is very likely to be beneficial in terms of aiding the development of their critical reading skills and in encouraging deep approaches to learning more generally. As Scheyven et al (2008, page 67) suggest, "activity alone will not lead to deep learning; rather, thinking about and reflecting on learning activities is what is important."

Arguably, the exercises that I implemented in this module put into practice the first four stages of Toohey's (1999) model of learning, summarised by Scheyvens et al (2008, p. 53): being introduced to an idea, concept or topic, getting familiar with it, trying it out, and receiving feedback. In retrospect, however, I feel that my interventions could have provided greater scope for Toohey's fifth stage - namely, for students to reflect on prior experience and modify their ideas accordingly. Reflection, however, is crucial as a means for students to become aware of what they have gained from the activity in which they have participated, and hence learn in a way that leads to genuine understanding.

I would like to conclude by briefly discussing the mode of assessment for this module, an issue that I mentioned in an earlier section of this report. In many ways, I believe it would be beneficial to incorporate an assessed essay assignment into the module. Firstly, this would allow students to evidence in far greater depth their critical reading skills and would also provide much greater scope for them to draw on a varied range of sources in their assessed work, including not only academic books and articles but historical documents as well. Secondly, it would provide an obvious way of encouraging students to do reading at an early stage in the module, and also offer a structured way of gaining an in-depth view of student progress before the final exam. However, such changes have to be considered within the broader context of the degree scheme and the number of formally marked assignments that students are required to complete for other modules.
Virtually all students who take the Historical Geographies module are also required to take a core module entitled 'Practising Human Geography', which is assessed entirely by means of coursework and involves the submission of numerous pieces of work over the course of the semester. In addition, Human Geography students must submit two academic essays and one study skills assignment for the compulsory tutorial module in the first semester. Given, moreover, that some students may need time to adjust to the higher workload and level of difficulty that is involved in Part 2 (second and third year) study, the overall impact of introducing an added coursework element into a Semester One ten credit second year module has to be carefully evaluated, as well as the demands on staff time in terms of marking.

Nevertheless, I suggest that it would be valuable - and not too onerous in terms of workload either for the students or for myself and my co-presenter - to incorporate a modest coursework element (worth perhaps 20% of the overall mark for the module) that would involve asking students to write one or two fairly short reflective pieces on the group discussions about a particular reading in which they have participated, ideally drawing on additional sources of reading. In addition to encouraging reading and critical reflection, it would hopefully encourage students to take the exercises more seriously because they would recognise that their efforts are rewarded in terms of assessment, and would also provide me with timely feedback on student progress.

A possible alternative would be to adopt a model discussed by Richards et al (2002), which would involve setting an open-book exam in which students are given a week to research and write an essay. As the article by Richards and his co-authors suggests, this form of assessment allows greater time for reflecting, reasoning and consultation of sources and therefore provides "a good basis for evaluating high-level skills." (Richards et al, 2002, page 35). However, I feel that it would be beneficial to assign a writing task, such as the reflective pieces mentioned above, that not only differs significantly from a 'standard' academic essay - a format which students encounter in so many courses - but that is also carried out well before the end of the module.
You should discuss your planned development with your Mentor, and consider how you plan to gather feedback and evaluate what happened.

Class/Module
The module description (intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning strategies and assessment methods may be attached).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numbers in class</td>
<td>ca. 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings (timetable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2 (Lent term 2006)</td>
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<td>Venue</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The intended development:-
Purpose
The use of visual methods as part of human geography fieldwork provides students with a rewarding and distinctive way of engaging with their field site. Visual methods are also becoming increasingly central to research in critical human geography. At present, however, the creation, collection and analysis of visual materials is not a prominent feature of the fieldwork module in terms of assessment. The purpose of the planned development, therefore, is firstly to incorporate visual methods as a central element of an assessed individual report that students have to submit in the Easter term after the fieldtrip to New York. Secondly, the development is intended to align assessment more closely with learning outcomes by providing students with greater opportunities to evidence their skills in collecting and interpreting geographical data.

Expected outcomes
The expected outcomes of this development are:
- The development of student skills in a research method that is becoming increasingly prominent in human geography.
- An improvement in the individual report assignment in terms of its effectiveness in allowing the evidencing and assessment of student skills in collecting and interpreting geographical data.
- Closer alignment between learning outcomes and mode of assessment.

Approach
- Students will be asked to produce an individual report in which the incorporation and critical analysis of between four and six pieces of visual data (photographs, brochures, sketches etc.) will be a compulsory part of the assignment.
- To assist students in learning how to select, create and interpret visual materials, I will prepare a pre-fieldtrip lecture on visual methodologies and also prepare handouts and references to relevant reading.

Evaluation Strategy and Criteria
The effectiveness of this development will be evaluated in two principal ways:
- The quality and focus of the individual reports that students submit after the fieldtrip.
  (How successfully have students engaged with visual methodologies in carrying out their work?)
fieldtrip research, and are they effective in conveying evidence of students' skills in acquiring and interpreting geographical data?)

- Student responses to the module evaluation questionnaire. Some questions relating specifically to the visual methods element of the fieldwork will be incorporated.

Please ask your Mentor to countersign this form.
The top sheet should be kept in your Portfolio
A copy should be given to your Mentor.