

# Geography of the James River Watershed

## GEOG 215 Fall 2016



### *Instructor:*

Dr. Todd Lookingbill  
Office: 311 Carole Weinstein International Center  
Phone: 804.289.8265  
Email: [tlooking@richmond.edu](mailto:tlooking@richmond.edu)  
Office hours: Wed 4:30-5:30; Fri 11:00-noon

The website for the class can be found on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.richmond.edu/>). All assignments, administrative information, readings, and class lecture notes are available there. The course blog site can be found at <http://blog.richmond.edu/james/>. This second site houses your class blog postings and provides an opportunity for non-stop shopping of all things James River related.

### *Course Schedule:*

Class meets TTh 9:00-10:15 in the Gray Classroom. To be successful in this course, you should expect to devote a significant amount of time outside the classroom to complete the community based learning component of the course. Tasks will not be distributed evenly throughout the semester, but an average of 10-14 hours per week should be dedicated to preparing for class, participating in class sessions, completing course assignments, and engaging in community activities and class trips.

### Important Trip Dates:

**Mon Aug 15 – Sat Aug 20:** Willamette River watershed comparative study

**Sat Sept 10, 8:00-3:00:** Dutch Gap River Clean-up & Paddle

**Sat Sept 17, 10:00-3:00:** RiverRat Training

***One of these two paddles towards RiverRat certification:***

***Sat Oct 1***, 8:00-4:30: Tire-less James Paddle in Scottsville

***Sat Oct 15***, 8:00-noon: Huguenot Flatwater Paddle

***Two of these three events:***

***Thur Aug 25***, 6:30-7:30 pm: RVAH2O Watershed Open House at Forest Hill Park Shelter

***Wed Sept 14***, 6:00-8:30 pm: James River Film Festival at the Floodwall

***Fri Oct 7***, 4:00-6:30 pm: Folk Festival on Brown's Island

***In-class trips (scheduled depending on weather)***

***September***, 8:00-10:15: James River Park System Belle Isle (Geotour and Dry Rocks)

***October***, 8:00-10:15: Reedy Creek Proposed Restoration Project (Bill Shanabruch)

***November***, 8:00-10:15: James River Park System Headquarters (Penelope Davenport)

***Course Description and Objectives:***

What defines a place? We will explore this question through the study of the James River watershed, our home while at the University of the Richmond. How does the concept of a watershed link us to this place? How does it link us to all places? This course will explore the relationship between the people, the land, and the water in the River City. But many of the observations that we will make this year in our study of this place will reveal truths that extend beyond these local watershed boundaries.

The course has the following primary objectives:

- To exercise and hone skills of critical observation, reflection and analysis of our environment;
- To provide an introduction to environmental geography emphasizing concepts of place, scale, connectivity and boundaries as they apply to the James River watershed;
- To better understand our local environment and the role of humans in the natural world in Richmond; and
- To apply what we have learned in the James River watershed to reveal truths that extend beyond our local community.

These goals are accomplished through a combination of engaged discussion in the classroom and first-hand exposure to the people and environments that define the natural resource challenges and opportunities within the James River watershed. In this broad survey course, you will become familiar with basic concepts in cartography, ecology, hydrology, historical geography, geology, biogeography, environmental leadership, and spatial analysis. You will also gain an increased understanding of the geographic concepts of place and region through our intensive focus on the watershed surrounding you.

Community-based learning is a central component of this course. We will combine academic readings and research, classroom discussions, and hands-on experiences to deepen our learning. During our August trip, we began the practice of comparative watershed analysis by exploring the Willamette River watershed. During the trip, we followed the path of water from the lava fields of the High Cascades, through old-growth forests of the Western Cascade Mountains and the fields of the Willamette Valley, and into the urban environment of Portland. Similarities and

differences between the geography and human-natural resource challenges confronted in this region and those we will observe within the James River watershed will be emphasized in our studies this fall.

*Course Materials:*

There is no required textbook for the course, but reading assignments are required in advance of each class. These readings will be accessible through Blackboard. Each student will sign-up to be the expert for one chapter of the book [In River Time](#). We will work our way through the book sequentially. Discussion leaders will post a 1-page summary of their chapter to Box and start each Thursday class with a 5-minute summary and a 10-minute interactive activity. Presentations will be evaluated as part of the Class Participation grade based on organization, topic knowledge, creativity, and enthusiasm/style. Lecture materials and readings will be available on Blackboard. Extra class material, including tree identification books, will be available to be signed out from my office. Please be respectful of classmates by diligently signing out and returning these materials when borrowing them.

*Student Evaluation:*

**52 pts Quizzes and Exam**

Short in-class quizzes may be given at any time during the semester (5 pts). These quizzes will cover concepts from the previous week's lecture and/or the current week's assigned readings. Students missing a quiz for a reason not approved ahead of time will score zero for that quiz. A mid-term exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions focusing on the material from lecture and the readings (20 pts). A dendrology exam will require the correct identification of twenty-five campus trees (7 pts). The final exam will be cumulative and essay based (20 pts).

**8 pts Community Based Service Learning**

Community Based Learning (CBL) will be an integral part of this course. The goals of our community engagement are to provide opportunities for reflection, to draw connections between the academic content of the course and "real-world" applications, and to help us engage with geography in a societal context. Please take a moment when you have a chance to visit the Resources for CBL Students webpage:

<http://engage.richmond.edu/cbl/students/>

A total of 8 hours of community service are required. These hours are meant to provide additional exposure to the people and places within the watershed. The activities will be written about in your blogs and discussed in class. Opportunities will be posted on the class blog site and are available at <http://engage.richmond.edu/resources/environment>. Plan ahead. Any requests to count an activity other than the ones posted on the blog site must be made by the end of the second week of classes. Four hours must be completed by Sunday, October 23. The remaining four hours must be completed by Sunday, November 20. In addition to your required blog entries (see Observation Logs Handout) email me a 1 to 2-sentence description of your activities with honor code statement by these deadlines. No exceptions to the deadlines will be made.

### 10 pts Observation Logs

Observation logs will be maintained on the web (<http://blog.richmond.edu/James/>). Four original posts (0.5 pt each) are required during the semester (see Observation Logs Handout). Two points will also be evaluated based on your postings on the summer readings, and two points will be evaluated based on your trip observation journals. Postings should link observations from time spent in the James River watershed to topics discussed in class. The concepts of scale, connectivity, boundaries, place, and region should be emphasized. Two longer reflective pieces (1 pt for the first and 3 pts for the second) will be submitted that require linking prior postings in a cohesive essay. Observation Log entries are due on Monday night at 10:00 pm of the week in which they are assigned. Not posting an entry on time will result in a zero for that week's assignment.

### 20 pts Final Project

The semester will culminate with a final project that ties together the lecture and community-based components of the course. The final project this semester will focus on a comparison of the James River watershed to the Willamette River watershed. A map will be required as part of the project. What story will you choose to tell with your map? A comparison of superfund sites and environmental justice issues? The relative distributions of parks and green spaces in Portland and Richmond? Or the annexation history of the cities along their respective rivers? The choice is yours (see Final Project handout). Final projects will be evaluated based on a 5-page final report (10 pts), final map products (5 pts), and a 5-minute oral presentation (5 pts).

### 10 pts Class Participation

Class participation will be evaluated primarily on the In River Time assignment (2 pts) and active, engaged participation in the classroom (5 points) and field trips (2 pts). Participation will be quantified using the following guidelines (adapted from JA Schatzel, Stonehill College):

<u>Points</u>	<u>Expectations</u>
5	Always well prepared for class including completion of all assigned readings; consistently facilitates productive peer discussions; offers reasoned responses of high quality; raises substantive questions about the readings and assignments on an ongoing basis; and engages thoughtfully with invited guest speakers and field trip hosts.
4	Contributes regularly; generally prepared; asks questions and provides occasional responses of moderate quality; handles direct questions satisfactorily.
3	Allows others to carry the ball; participates infrequently; needs to be prodded; weak preparation; wastes class time with questions of little substance.
2	Often inadequately prepared; little involvement in class discussions; repeatedly late or leaves during class.
0-1	Unprepared; disruptive in class; unauthorized use of computers during class – e.g. e-mail or instant messaging; repeated talking with other students about topics not related to class.

One absence is permitted per semester. One point will be deducted for each additional absence.

**GRADING:** Grades will be assigned based on the following formula:

	<u>Point values</u>
Exams and Quizzes	52
CB service learning	8
Observation logs	10
Final project	20
Class participation	<u>10</u>
	<b>100</b>

- The grading scheme will follow standard University of Richmond guidelines (<http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/grading.html>).

<b>A &gt; 93 pts</b>	<b>B 87-83</b>	<b>C 77-73</b>	<b>D 67-63</b>
<b>A- 93-90</b>	<b>B- 83-80</b>	<b>C- 73-70</b>	<b>D- 63-60</b>
<b>B+ 90-87</b>	<b>C+ 80-77</b>	<b>D+ 70-67</b>	<b>F &lt; 60 pts</b>

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor.

**TIME-ON-TASK EXPECTATIONS:** To be successful in this course, you should expect to devote an average of 10-14 hours each week to preparing for class, participating in class sessions, studying course related materials, and completing course assignments.

If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

**Academic Skills Center** (<http://asc.richmond.edu> or 289-8626) helps students assess their academic strengths and weaknesses; hone their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information processing, concentration, and related techniques; work on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encourage campus and community involvement.

**Career Development Center** (<http://cdc.richmond.edu/> or 289-8547) can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major, connecting with internships and learning experiences, investigating graduate and professional school options, and landing your first job. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor during your first year.

**Counseling and Psychological Services** (<http://caps.richmond.edu> or 289-8119) assists students in meeting academic, personal, or emotional challenges. Services include assessment, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention and related services.

**Speech Center** (<http://speech.richmond.edu> or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

**Writing Center** assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work: <http://writing.richmond.edu>

**Boatwright Library Research Librarians** assist students with identifying and locating the best resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also assist students with questions about citing sources correctly. Students can schedule a personal research appointment, meet with librarians at the library's main service desk, email, text or IM. Link to <http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask.html> or call 289-8669.

**Note:** Students having special needs that require an accommodation or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with me within the first two weeks of the semester.