Central Idea: We are all products of our past experiences, and inextricably tied to that past is the idea of place. Where we are from is a great deal of who we are. Our work in this class will look at this relationship, both from the perspective of how we experience place, and also what happens when we separate people from place. One thing is a fact: our places are constantly in flux, changing through natural and human actions. Understanding these changes and our place among them is essential.

Required Readings:

Must be Purchased

Friedmann's text on the future of the urban human builds on the work of Sir Peter Hall (see below) and is continued by his contemporary Saskia Sassen. Friedmann's application of his earlier "World City Hypothesis" explores how different economic and social factors are at work developing the city of the 21st century. We will read this work in its entirety.

Weisman uses this text to look at our places and see what would happen if we were to all disappear. How long would our legacy on the landscape remain? By studying everything from petrochemicals and plastics to the wonders of the world and our common house pets, Weisman's thought experiment forces us to look at this reciprocal relationship between people and place. We will read this work in its entirety.

Additional Readings:

Will be Supplied


**Major Assignments:**

There are three major assignment cycles in this course alongside weekly response papers. Each major assignment will be based on one of the complete texts we read in this course. Each major assignment will consist of a paper (ranging from minimum 5 pages for the first to 12-15 for the third) and a presentation (either a speech or a poster/visual with a question/answer session). These three assignments will combine to form 70% of your overall grade. Further details will be distributed as separate documents for each assignment.

**Additional Assignments:**

Each week you are responsible for a written response to the week's readings. These will total at least two pages per week, and must be completed for submission at the beginning of class the first day of the week. You lose the equivalent of 1.5% of your overall grade for each response you fail to submit or fail to complete adequately. This portion totals 15% of your overall grade.

Each student will be responsible for providing the discussion questions at least once during the portion of the term. These are to be ready at the beginning of your assigned class date and are to be produced in a professional manner. This portion totals 5% of your overall grade.

The remaining 10% of your grade is composed of your classroom presence. This is a combination of attendance, participation, small in-class assignments, quizzes, and any other minor elements that may come up. It is expected that you will complete all tasks as assigned and provide a positive classroom example at all times. See student expectations below.

**Attendance:**

Any course that is dependent on discourse as a vehicle to inquiry requires regular attendance and participation (see student expectations below). As such, the attendance policy for this course gives you one day to use as you need. I suggest saving it for emergency situations so that you are not punished later in the term should you have
Absences beyond this day will result in a loss of 50% of your participation grade per absence. You're your participation grade is exhausted, you will lose 10% of your overall grade per additional absence. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must include instructor contact PRIOR to the scheduled class time.

**Student Expectations:**

The expectations for this course are similar to those you will experience in all of your college courses and life beyond the university. You are expected to show up on time and prepared every day. You are expected to complete all assignments completely, with your best effort, and by the scheduled due date. You are expected to be courteous and professional in all classroom interaction. More than anything, you are expected to come to class with an open mind, curious, and ready and willing to learn.

**Statement on Access:**

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination contact Affirmative Action office (7-3310) or your department head or advisor.

**Statement on Plagiarism:**

*From the Michigan Tech Academic Integrity Resource Center*

http://www.sa.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/aicr/index.php

"Academic integrity and honesty are central components of a student's education, and the ethical conduct maintained in an academic context will be taken eventually into a student's professional career. All graded academic exercises in this course must adhere to Michigan Tech's academic integrity policy. Under the academic integrity policy, students are expected to treat all graded academic exercises as work to be conducted privately, unless otherwise instructed."

*For further reading on the academic integrity policy, please see:*

http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html

**Anticipated Course Schedule (Subject to Change at Instructor Discretion):**

**Week One: What is a Place? What is a City?**

- Course Introductions, Lecture on the World City Hypothesis,
- Read: Hall, introduction to Friedmann

**Week Two: The Urban World: Citizenship and Economy**

- Reading Response #1 Due, Conduct Geographic Surveys, Discuss Readings
- Read: Fcagin, Friedmann chapters 1-3

**Week Three: The Case of the Midwest and its Future**

- Reading Response #2 Due, Discuss Survey Results, Discuss Friedmann, Assignment #1 Assigned,
- Lecture on "Sustainability"
- Read: Friedmann chapters 4-7
Week Four: Production, Consumption, and the Changing World  
Reading Response #3 Due, Discuss Friedmann, Watch Film: Manufactured Landscapes, Peer Evaluation of Assignment #1  
Read: Weisman prelude & chapters 1-2, Berger

Week Five: Ethnography – Where We’re From  
Reading Response #4 Due, Film Response Due, Discuss Film, Presentations  
Read: Weisman chapters 3-6, Berger

Week Six: The World, With and Without Us  
Assignment #1 Due, Presentations (continued), Introduction to Intertextuality and Art, Discuss Weisman, Lecture: Visual Presentation Techniques  
Read: Weisman chapters 7-8, Berger

Week Seven: Visual Representations of Earth  
Reading Response #5 Due, Presentation: Art of Hans-Werner Sahm, Lecture: Visual Presentations of Information, Discuss Berger, Discuss Weisman, Assignment #2 Assigned  
Read: Cronon

Week Eight: Industry and Employment  
Reading Response #6 Due, Art Response Due, Discuss Cronon, Peer Evaluation of Assignment #2  
Read: Weisman chapters 9-10

Week Nine: Plastic and Oil and the Rise of Synthetics  
Reading Response #7 Due, Visual Presentations/Questions, Discuss Weisman  
Read: Weisman chapters 11-16

Week Ten: The Long View  
Assignment #2 Due, Visual Presentations/Questions (continued), Discuss Weisman  
Read: Weisman chapters 17-19, coda

Week Eleven: What is the Natural World?  
Reading Response #8 Due, Discuss/Wrap-Up Weisman, Assignment #3 Assigned, Discuss “Nature”  
Read: Spirn, Price

Week Twelve: Manufactured Nature and the Lure of Natural Beauty  
Reading Response #9 Due, Discuss Spirn, Price, Cronon, In-Class Time for Assignment #3  
Read: Iyer, Abram

Week Thirteen: The Traveler and the Wanderer  
Reading Response #10 Due, Discuss Iyer, Abram, Peer Evaluation Assignment #3, In-Class Time for Assignment #3  
Read: Coupland

Week Fourteen: The 21st Century City, Personal Experience  
Assignment #3 Due, Discuss Coupland, Course Wrap-Up, Presentations