

GGG 101: MAJOR WORLD REGIONS

COURSE SYLLABUS, SPRING 2025, 3 CREDITS

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE BASICS

Meeting time(s): TR 12 – 1:15pm
Location: Buchanan Hall D023
Modality: 100% In Person
Course URL: canvas.gmu.edu

TEXTBOOK(S) No required textbook.

PRE-REQUISITES None.

OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

Welcome to the Major World Regions course, where we explore the patterns, problems, and prospects of the world's principal human-geographic regions. This course introduces the fascinating field of geography and examines the physical and cultural characteristics that define these regions.

We will investigate how local and global forces shape the character of different places and spaces, emphasizing areal differentiation and the role of geographic differences in interpreting the current world scene. By examining the unique and shared features of various regions, we will gain insights into their interactions and interrelations in an increasingly interconnected world.

This course also aims to build your familiarity with the geography of major world regions, helping you critically assess the unevenness of geographic processes and patterns. By reflecting on our own roles in the larger world, we will develop a deeper understanding of how geography influences global dynamics and challenges.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course fulfills the Mason Core requirement in **Global Contexts**. Upon completion, you will be able to:

1. **Explain Global Interdependence:** Identify and describe the distribution of human and physical geographical features across the globe and explain how global connections across nations and cultures have shaped societies, creating interdependence and inequality.
2. **Demonstrate Disciplinary Knowledge:** Use geographic concepts to analyze the physical and cultural traits of at least one nation or culture in the context of contemporary events and global interdependence, demonstrating how these regions participate in or are affected by global contexts.
3. **Analyze Positionality and Solutions:** Apply an understanding of your own positionality within a globally interdependent and unequal world to illustrate similarities and differences among world regions and analyze solutions to global problems using skills to profile places, interpret maps, charts, and photos, and understand regional diversity.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Your understanding and mastery of the course material will be evaluated through a variety of assessments. Each category is designed to measure different aspects of your learning experience, contributing to your overall grade as follows:

Course Element	Assessment %
Quizzes	10%
Map Assignments	10%
Applied Assignments	10%
Exams 1-3	45% (15% each)
Final Exam	25%

Quizzes (10%): Regular quizzes will check your engagement with and understanding of the material covered in lectures and readings. Quizzes will be administered at the start of class.

Map Assignments (10%): Geographic literacy is a vital component of this course. You will complete a series of map-based exercises designed to help you identify countries in the regions around the world. These assignments will be spaced evenly throughout the semester.

Applied Assignments (10%) You will complete two applied assignments during the semester, each focusing on a specific region. These assignments are designed to encourage critical thinking and application of geographic concepts through independent research and reflection.

Exams (70% Total): All exams will assess material discussed in lectures, assigned readings, and activities. They will consist primarily of multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions, evaluating your comprehension of regional themes, patterns, and processes. While review sheets will not be provided, you are encouraged to engage actively with course content, take detailed notes, and participate in discussions. If you have questions or need clarification on any topics, please reach out.

- Exams 1-3 (45% of total grade, 15% Each): These exams will assess your understanding of course material in thirds, with each focusing on distinct sections of the course material.
- Final Exam (25%): The final exam is cumulative, emphasizing your ability to synthesize course concepts from throughout the semester. It will follow a similar format to the earlier exams but with a broader scope.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

	Date	Day	Daily Focus
Jan	21	1	Overview
	23	2	A World of Regions
	28		<i>No Class</i>
	30	3	World of People
	4	4	Rocks and Water
	6	5	Europe
Feb	11	6	World of Dollars
	13	7	Anglo America
	18	X1	Test 1
	20	8	World of Cities
	25	9	Russia
	27	10	Middle and South America
	4	11	Caribbean
	6	12	A Political World
Mar	11		<i>Spring Break</i>
	13		<i>Spring Break</i>
	18	13	Sub Saharan Africa
	20	14	Globalization and Development
	25		<i>No Class</i>
	27	X2	Test 2
	1	15	NASWA
	3	16	Our Atmosphere
	8	17	East Asia
	10	18	A Cultural World
Apr	15	19	South Asia
	17	20	Central Asia
	22	21	Southeast Asia
	24	22	Australia and Oceania
	29		<i>No Class</i>
	May	1	X3
8		FE	Final Exam, 10:30-1:10

GRADING

The expected grade breaks are the following:

A	A-	B	B-	C	D
100 - 92	91.9 - 87	86.9 - 82	81.9 - 77	76.9 - 71	70.9 - 65

Submission Policies:

- Assignments and activities will (primarily) be conducted through Canvas. Students should familiarize themselves with its features, including file submission, to ensure smooth participation. Assignments should only be emailed to the instructor if explicitly requested.
- For assignments allowing multiple submissions, only the most recent submission will be graded, so ensure the final version is correct and complete, as earlier versions will not be reviewed.
- Unless otherwise specified, assignments should be submitted as PDFs with in-line text and tables, not screenshots of tables. Links to documents stored on external services such as Google Docs or Drive will be treated as non-submissions.
- Files must be readable and formatted according to the guidelines. Corrupted or improperly formatted files, such as those with missing visual elements or unclear tables, may result in deductions or be treated as non-submissions.

Late Submission Policy:

- Late submissions will incur a deduction, which increases every 24 hours after the deadline. These deductions are based on the total points possible for the assignment.
- Extensions require valid documentation and timely communication. If extraordinary challenges arise, please reach out promptly to discuss options.
- All submissions must meet the posted end-of-semester cutoffs to be graded.

Grade Concerns and Opportunities:

- All requests for grade reconsiderations must be made via email. When requesting reconsideration, refer to specific points of objection and provide specific examples or references, such as rubric criteria or feedback points. This ensures a focused discussion and equitable grading practices. Assignments will be evaluated uniformly, consistent with university accommodation policies. For further grade disputes beyond the instructor's review, students should refer to the university's grade appeal policy.
- Extra credit opportunities are rare in this class, and requests for extra credit are not entertained. If extra credit opportunities arise, they will be announced and made available to the entire class. These opportunities will focus on enhancing conceptual understanding and skill application, ensuring alignment with course objectives.
- If you are not satisfied with your progress during the semester, please see me as early as possible to discuss concerns.

Feedback and Grading Timeline:

- Grades for submitted material will typically be provided within 4 business days of submission, though the timeline may extend to 7 business days for larger assignments such as projects or labs. If you have questions about your grade or need additional clarification, please wait at least 4 business days before contacting me to allow for grading and review.
- General feedback is concise; for detailed discussions, please follow up in class or during office hours.
- Grades are calculated according to the syllabus criteria, and students are graded equitably based on their performance. Requests for rounding up grades cannot be accommodated to maintain fairness for all.

GENERATIVE AI AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The use of content-generating AI tools is prohibited unless explicitly allowed in an assignment. Unauthorized use of generative AI tools will be treated as academic misconduct. Where AI use is permitted, guidelines will clarify acceptable applications to ensure fairness and uphold integrity. If you are unsure about whether generative AI is permitted for an assignment, please ask for clarification before submission.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

- Regular attendance is critical for your success in this course. Studies consistently show a strong positive correlation between attendance and final grades. Missing class can leave gaps in understanding that may be difficult to fill. Students are responsible for reviewing missed material and staying up to date.
- ***Notify me only if your absence involves an exam or major assignment.*** For excused absences due to illness or valid reasons, provide a general doctor's note specifying the period covered. If you will miss classes due to a religious observance or participation in a university activity, you are obligated to notify me within the first two weeks of the semester (University Policy AP.1.6.1). In such cases, a reasonable alternative opportunity will be provided.
- Arriving on time shows respect for your classmates and helps maintain the flow of our class activities. Please make every effort to be punctual, as quizzes and exams will begin at the scheduled class start time, regardless of when you arrive. Late arrivals will not receive additional time to complete timed assessments.
- In the rare event that I need to cancel class; I will notify you via email or Canvas as soon as possible. Please check these platforms regularly for updates. In case of an unexpected absence, I appreciate your patience and understanding while arrangements are made.
- To maintain a focused learning environment, please avoid bringing unauthorized guests to class and ensure technology use remains course related.

INCLUSIVITY, ENGAGEMENT, AND RESPECT

At George Mason University, we value diversity in all its forms, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, socioeconomic status, nationality, and perspective. Each student brings unique experiences and insights that enrich our collective learning environment

This course may involve discussions on sensitive or controversial topics, and all students are expected to approach these conversations with openness, empathy, and respect. Together, we can create a collaborative atmosphere that values curiosity, constructive dialogue, and mutual respect.

- A dynamic and inclusive classroom environment relies on open, respectful communication. Thoughtful contributions—whether through sharing ideas, asking questions, or offering insights—not only enhance your learning but also benefit the entire class. As such, use professional and considerate language in all interactions, as tone and word choice significantly impact how messages are received.
- Be open to diverse perspectives and engage thoughtfully, even when opinions differ.
- It is my intent that every student feels supported and well-served by this course. If something said or done in the classroom—by myself or others—causes discomfort, offense, or concern, I encourage you to bring it to my attention.
- Students are encouraged to use their chosen first name and pronouns. I use male pronouns (he/him), and my last name is pronounced LESS-LEE. Please inform me of your preferences and update your Mason file in PatriotWeb for consistency.

TECHNICAL EXPECTATIONS

- Regular access to a computer with an updated operating system and a stable internet connection is required to participate in and complete course activities successfully. Test your setup early to avoid disruptions during assignments or exams.
- Materials on Canvas or other platforms are intended for students' use only. Sharing materials (e.g., lecture slides, recordings) with anyone not enrolled in the course is strictly prohibited.
- If students need to use ESRI proprietary software off-campus or on non-Windows machines, they can access it through the Patriot Virtual Computing & Labs (PVCL). Instructions are provided upon request. Students new to certain software packages are encouraged to review introductory tutorials before starting lab activities to build confidence and minimize delays.
- If students anticipate challenges in meeting technical requirements (e.g., lack of reliable internet access or appropriate hardware), they should inform me early in the semester so we can explore alternative solutions.
- Ensure your work is saved and backed up using reliable storage options such as OneDrive or Dropbox.
- Video or audio recordings are permitted only with prior written consent or as part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded sessions are for personal, private use only and must not be shared with others without explicit permission.

CONTACTING ME

I am here to support your learning and help you with any challenges you may encounter during the course. You can reach me outside of class in the following ways:

1. Zoom Appointments: Schedule a meeting through my [Calendly - Office Hours](#). If no available times fit your schedule, email me with at least three alternative meeting times, and I will do my best to accommodate you. Appointments are ideal for complex questions, such as in-depth assignment guidance or feedback on your work. A device with a functional microphone is required for participation. While using cameras during conversations is not mandatory, it is appreciated when speaking to facilitate communication.
2. Email: I respond to emails promptly Monday through Thursday. For weekend inquiries, expect a reply by noon on Monday. Before emailing, review the syllabus for common answers and include relevant details such as assignment names or due dates. For complex issues, consider scheduling a meeting through my Calendly link for in-depth discussion. Email is best for quick questions, while detailed discussions should be addressed in a scheduled meeting.

MODIFICATIONS

Occasionally, circumstances may require adjustments to the course schedule or policies. Any changes will be communicated promptly via email or Canvas. Students are responsible for regularly checking Canvas or email for updates, as all changes will take effect immediately upon notification.