

Name	: Macion Komwa, PhD	Meeting Times	MW: 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm
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Email	: mkomwa@gmu.edu	Office hours	W [10:30 am - 11: -30 pm] R- 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm or by appointment
Phone	: 703-993-5646	Credits	3.00

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)

Name: Casey Yuan (PhD Candidate)
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Learning Assistant (LA)

Name: Meghan Drzewiecki
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Course Description:

This course is designed as an introduction to the discipline of geography. Students will gain knowledge on the patterns, problems, prospects of the world's principal human-geographic regions and the role of geographic differences in interpreting world current scene. The course emphasizes a real differentiation, similarities of these world regions and how they interact/interrelate to another in today's globalizing world. The skills and knowledge gained from this course will become the basis for students to ask critical geographic questions about various geographic processes, features, patterns on the landscape at different scales.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Upon completing a Global Contexts course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain how patterns of global connections across nations and/or cultures have shaped societies to create interdependence and inequality.
- Use a disciplinary lens to demonstrate knowledge of how at least one nation and/or culture participates in or is affected by global contexts.
- Apply an understanding of one's own positionality within a globally interdependent and unequal world to analyze solutions to global problems.
- Compare and contrast different places or regions based on their geographic characteristics.

Mason Core: This course is part of the Mason Core curriculum and fulfills requirements for Global Contexts.

Global Contexts

The Global Contexts (GC) Mason Core requirement is to enable students to explore global connections through a disciplinary lens and to understand how global systems have created both interdependence and inequalities that engaged citizens must understand in order to work toward an equitable and sustainable future.

Required Textbook

Title: Nijman, Shin, and Muller, Geography: Realms, Regions, and Concepts, 18th edition, Wiley & Sons.

Assignments Procedures and Evaluation

Students are expected to submit high-quality assignments throughout the course. For assignments that do not require direct entry into Canvas (e.g., quizzes, surveys, text boxes), please save your work as a Word document and upload it to the designated assignment area within Canvas.

Important:

It is your responsibility to ensure that your uploaded assignment displays correctly within Canvas. Assignments will be graded based on how they appear when viewed through Canvas, including any issues with blank documents.

Map Quizzes & Exercises (300 points)

- There will be three map exercise quizzes on selected chapters. In these Map Exercise Assignments, students will explore a series of maps and charts that showcase one world region at a time. These resources visually represent geographic information, highlighting both the commonalities (climates, language systems, etc.) within and between regions and the disparities and inequalities that exist. Examples include: Human Development Index scores, carbon emissions, climate vulnerability, social indicators such as average life span of a person in a particular country or region, economic indicators (e.g. GDP) income inequality, gender disparities in education (as measured by mean years of schooling for boys and girls), and global displacement patterns (such as the flows of asylee seekers and refugees from different countries across the globe), environmental indicators (e.g. Carbon footprint, water scarcity, biodiversity loss), etc.

B. Examination (500 points)

- **Three Exams** will be administered. [Exam 1; Mid-Term and Final Exam]
- Exams will comprise of Multiple- Choice-Questions, True/False Questions and Fill-in-the blank questions.
- The final exam date is strictly fixed and cannot be changed for personal reasons. For unexpected emergencies, contact the instructor immediately for potential accommodations.
 - **EXAM I & Exam 2 (150 points each) = 300 Points**
 - **Final Exam [200 points]** NO MAKEUP EXAMS will be given without supporting documents.

C. Kahoot Games – 100 points

- This component will assess your active engagement in class activities. This includes:

D. Class Activities and Participation – 100 Points

- **Interactive activities:** Participating actively in interactive activities, country profile exercises, and debate on Global Issues.

Late/Make-up Assignments Policy**Due Dates & Flex Days**

All assignment due dates are listed in the syllabus and on Canvas. You get two flex days to use throughout the semester. You can use these to submit an assignment up to 48 hours late without a penalty, for any reason. These flex days do not apply to online class discussions.

Late Penalties:

- Late submissions will incur a penalty after all **flex days** have been used. Assignments turned in up to **seven days** past the due date will be subject to a **10%** grade reduction, based on either the final percentage or the total points allocated for the assignment.
- Assignments submitted one to two weeks late will receive a 25% grade reduction.
- Assignments submitted more than two weeks late will receive 0 points.
- A time extension for exceptional circumstances must be approved in advance.

Extra Credit

While I typically do not offer extra credit, I may occasionally provide opportunities for bonus points, such as through successful participation in Kahoot games or exceptional contributions to class discussions. If I decide to offer extra credit opportunities, I will announce them in advance. Any such extra credit opportunities will generally be awarded to the entire class rather than to individual students.

Assignments and Evaluation

Percentage Range	Grade Points Cutoffs	Letter Grade	Percentage Range	Grade Points Cutoffs	Letter Grade
>=98%	980 - 1000	A+	77 - 79.9%	770 - 799	C+
93 - 97.9%	930 - 979	A	70 - 76.9%	700 - 769	C
90 - 92.9%	900 - 929	A-	60 - 69.9%	600 - 699	D
87 - 89.9%	870 - 899	B+	<60%	0-599	F
83 - 86.9%	830 - 869	B			
80 - 82.9%	800 - 829	B-			<i>Note: There is No C-</i>

All students are expected to:

- Stay engaged with material, discussions, and deadlines.
- Respect classmates and express opinions courteously.
- Value and learn from diverse perspectives.
- Communicate clearly and professionally in writing.
- Emails: Strictly, use Mason Email Account. If you sent email from non-Mason account that email will not be read.

Recording and/or sharing class materials

All course materials posted to Blackboard are private to this class; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must NOT be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.

- Electronic video, image capture, and/or audio recording is not permitted during in- class meeting, or online, unless the student obtains permission from the instructor.
- As a faculty member who will spend a lot of time creating course material for classroom use, unauthorized sharing of any of my course materials outside the class would violate important ethical standards.

Tentative Course Calendar: *Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.*

Week	Date	Topic Description	Assigned Readings	Assignment due by specified date(s) 11:59 pm
1	8/25 & 8/27	Course Overview	NA	Self-Introduction & Group Bonding Activity
		Concepts of World Geography	Syllabus	
2	9/1	Labor Day – Holiday – 9/1		
	9/3	Mapping Our World & Geographic Tools Globalization	Chapter 1	Kahoot Game 1
3	9/8 & 9/10	Physical Geography & the Environment	Chapter 1	Kahoot Game 2
		The Global Environment & Climate Change	Chapter 1	
4	9/15 & 9/17	Europe	Chapter 5	
5	9/22	Europe	Chapter 5	Kahoot Game 3
	9/24	Exam 1		Exam 1 9/24
6	9/29 & 10/1	North America	Chapter 2	
7	10/6 & 10/8	Finish North America	Chapter 2	Map Exercise Quiz #1 – 10/5
8	10/13	Fall Break (no classes)		
	10/15	Middle America	Chapter 3	Kahoot Game 4
9	10/20 & 10/22	Middle America	Chapter 3	
10	10/27 & 10/29	South America Exam Review	Chapter 4	Kahoot Game 5
11	11/3 & 11/5	South America Exam 2	Chapter 4	Exam 2 – 11/5
12	11/10 & 11/12	Sub-Saharan Africa	Chapter 8	Map Exercise Quiz #2 – 11/16
13	11/17 & 11/19	Southwest Asia	Chapter 11	Kahoot Game 6
14	11/24	Southwest Asia	Chapter 11	
15	11/26	Thanksgiving Recess		
16	12/3 & 12/5	The Austral Realm & Pacific Realm	Chapter 12 & 13	Map Exercise Quiz #3 – 12/2
	12/8	Final Class – Final Exam Review		Final Exam 12/10 [1:30 pm – 4:15 pm]

Note: The instructor reserves the right to assign graded class activities with due dates that are not listed on the syllabus



Common Policies Affecting All Courses at George Mason University

Updated August 2025

These four policies affect students in all courses at George Mason University. This Course Policy Addendum must be made available to students in all courses (see Catalog Policy AP.2.5) or click the link: [GMU Common Course Policies - Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning](#)

Academic Standards:

Academic Standards exist to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution's goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourage continued ethical behavior of faculty and students to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment forward into professional practice.

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, co-authored pieces, and project reports.
- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is [outlined in the university's procedures](#). Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for understanding how these general expectations regarding academic standards apply to each course, assignment, or exam they participate in; students should ask their instructor for clarification on any aspect that is not clear to them.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit <https://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu. Phone: (703) 993-2474.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for registering with Disability Services and communicating about their approved accommodations with their instructor *in advance* of any relevant class meeting, assignment, or exam.

FERPA and Use of GMU Email Addresses for Course Communication

The [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) governs the disclosure of [education records for eligible students](#) and is an essential aspect of any course. **Students must use their GMU email account** to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. Instructors will not respond to messages sent from or send messages regarding course content to a non-GMU email address.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for checking their GMU email regularly for course-related information, and/or ensuring that GMU email messages are forwarded to an account they do check.

Title IX Resources and Required Reporting

As a part of George Mason University's commitment to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. Accordingly, **all non-confidential**

employees, including your faculty member, have a legal requirement to report to the Title IX Coordinator, all relevant details obtained directly or indirectly about any incident of Prohibited Conduct (such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based stalking, dating/domestic violence). Upon notifying the Title IX Coordinator of possible Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator will assess the report and determine if outreach is required. If outreach is required, the individual the report is about (the “Complainant”) will receive a communication, likely in the form of an email, offering that person the option to meet with a representative of the Title IX office.

For more information about non-confidential employees, resources, and Prohibited Conduct, please see [University Policy 1202: Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#). Questions regarding Title IX can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator via email to TitleIX@gmu.edu, by phone at 703-993-8730, or in person on the Fairfax campus in Aquia 373.

Student opportunity: If you prefer to speak to someone *confidentially*, please contact one of Mason’s confidential employees in Student Support and Advocacy ([SSAC](#)), Counseling and Psychological Services ([CAPS](#)), Student Health Services ([SHS](#)), and/or the [Office of the University](#)

Additional Policies

Digital Interventions – AI

Generative AI tools, such as large language models, are powerful tools that can support your learning by helping with tasks like brainstorming and generating ideas. However, they can also interfere with the learning process. This means you must explicitly disclose when and how you've used AI in your work, including the specific platform and date of use. Treat AI-generated material like any other source—it must be properly cited, and you are not permitted to submit it as your own original work. Failure to follow this policy is a serious academic integrity violation and will be punished accordingly. Additionally, George Mason University’s Academic Standards Policy prohibits students from cheating, plagiarism, stealing, and lying in academic work.

Diversity

Diversity is an important in an academic environment, and is a priority for George Mason University. See: <http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement/>

“George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals.

Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.”

Absences & Accommodations

- **Religious Holidays:** Please refer to George Mason University’s calendar of religious holidays and observations (<http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>). It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments.
- **Absence for documented illness:** Students who miss multiple virtual classes due to prolonged illness should seek medical care and provide documentation of such to the Dean’s Office, which will communicate with the student's professor(s). A prolonged absence may necessitate the student’s withdrawal from the course or from the University for the semester.
- **At the discretion of the professor:** There may be cases where an absence is undocumented but is, nevertheless, excused by the professor (e.g., absence due to a death in the family). Students should initiate a conversation with their professors about the nature and duration of the absence, in advance of the absence whenever possible.

When absences are excused, students remain responsible for all assigned work, and shall be provided with the opportunity to make up, without penalty, any work that they have missed.

University Resources

George Mason University has several academic support and other resources to facilitate your success. Some of these resources are presented below:

- i. University Libraries: see <http://library.gmu.edu/for/online>.
- ii. Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://caps.gmu.edu/>
- iii. The Writing Center [<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
- iv. University Policies: <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>
- v. University Catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu/>
- vi. Learning Services, University Career Services: <http://careers.gmu.edu/>