GGS101-Major World Regions DL4
SYLLABUS

Course Information
Course Number: GGS101DL4
Course Title: Major World Regions
Term: Spring 2026 2nd Term (March 23rd-May 3rd)
Class Meetings: ONLINE (Asynchronous)
Location: Canvas

Professor Contact Information
Professor: Piash Debnath, M.S.
Email: pdebnat2@gmu.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment/Zoom

Course Description:
Patterns, problems, and prospects of the world's principal human-geographic regions. Emphasizes areal differentiation and role of geographic differences in interpreting current world scene.
Course Prerequisites: None

This course is part of the **Mason Core** curriculum and satisfies the requirements for Global Contexts and Global Understanding.

Mason Core Learning Outcomes for Global Understanding

By completing this course, students will be able to:

- Describe how cultural, political, social, and economic factors influence the lives of people in different regions of the world.
- Interpret global patterns and connections, recognizing how events or processes in one area can affect others.
- Reflect on the diversity of human experience and consider how their own perspectives are linked to global systems.
- Apply geographic and regional approaches to better understand current global issues.

Course-Specific Outcomes (GGS 101 – Major World Regions)

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Locate major countries, cities, and physical features within the world's regions.
- Summarize the defining cultural traits of regions, including languages, religions, and traditions.
- Explain how humans adapt to and shape their environments in different parts of the world.
- Distinguish between different ways geographers define and compare regions.
- Demonstrate the use of geographic tools and data to analyze spatial patterns.

Required Textbooks (Available Free Online)
Title: World Regional Geography
Author: Caitlin Finlayson
https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/world-regional-geography

Grading Policy:

Mid-Term Exam (1)	20 points	20%
Final Exam (1)	20 points	20%
HW Exercises (3)	4 points each	12%
Discussion Board (3)	5 points each	15%
Map Quizzes (8)	each varies	6%
Final Project (1)	27 points	27%
Total Possible Points:	100	100%

Grading Scale:

A+	97 –	100%
A	96 –	90%
B+	87 –	89%
B	80 –	86%
C+	77 –	79%
C	70 –	76%
D	60 –	69%
F	59 –	0%

Course & Instructor Policies

Map Quizzes: There will be a map quiz for each region of the week. Students are expected to study and memorize the countries of the region before taking the quiz. The quizzes will consist of fill-in-the-blank questions and will account for 6% of the total semester grade. You will be provided with the outline or shape of each country relative to its region and must correctly identify it. It will be done via the lockdown browser.

Exams: There will be a Midterm and Final exam consisting of multiple choice and/or short answers, open notes. Both Exams are worth 20% of the total grade.

HW Assignments: There will be 3 HW Exercise assignments worth 4 points each.

Discussion Board: The Discussion Board assignments will take place on Canvas and should be completed in essay format. There will be a total of **three (3) discussions**, each worth **5 points**. (will go through AI detection).

Assignment Breakdown:

- **Essay Portion (3 points):**
  Write an essay of **750 words minimum**, double-spaced, and include **at least 2 references**. You may attach a Word file or write directly in the discussion board.
- **Peer Replies (2 points):**
  Respond to **at least 2 peers**. Each reply must be a minimum of **4 sentences** and should directly address specific points or ideas from the peer's essay.

Individual Itinerary Project:

The Final Project will be worth a total of **27 points** and will involve creating an individual itinerary project.

- **Topic Selection:**
  Students will select a country of their choice, limited to **Europe or Asia (except Italy)**.
  The completed project must be submitted as a **Word file**.
- **Step-by-Step Process:**
  - **Steps 1 & 2 (2 points):**
    Early in the semester, students will complete and submit Steps 1 and 2 of the project. These will serve as preparatory tasks for the final submission.
- **Further Instructions:**
  Detailed guidelines and instructions will be provided on Canvas under the "Syllabus & Docs" section.

Assignment Submission Policy: Assignments must be submitted on time. Late submissions after 11:59:00 Sundays will incur a 0% grade.

In case of emergencies, students must provide appropriate documentation or proof. As this is a fully asynchronous online course, extensions for emergencies are not guaranteed. Students are expected to notify the professor via email as soon as an emergency arises, rather than waiting until a few hours before or after the due date. Extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Online Conduct and Communication: Students are expected to maintain a respectful and professional online environment. Interactions with classmates should be appropriate and courteous.

When emailing the professor, please follow proper email etiquette. Include:

- A greeting (e.g., "Good afternoon, Professor"),
- A clear subject line (e.g., "Exercise 2 Help"),
- A signature (e.g., "Best regards, Jane Doe"),
- The course number (e.g., "GGS 101 DL3").

All email communication must be sent using your university email account. Direct messages via Canvas are permitted but discouraged.

Technical Requirements and Responsibilities: Students must ensure they have a stable internet connection throughout the semester and a very reliable computer with a webcam required. Any tests or quizzes interrupted due to connection issues may result in automatic submission and a grade of zero. Technical issues, such as laptop malfunctions or battery failure, are not valid excuses for resubmitting quizzes, exams, or assignments.

When submitting assignments, it is the student's responsibility to preview the submission to ensure the correct format and file have been uploaded.

The following software is required for this course: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Google Earth. All assignments must be submitted in Word format (.doc or .docx) unless otherwise specified. Files submitted in unsupported formats, such as .pages, will not be accepted.

Important Dates:

Last day to drop with a tuition refund	Mar 23rd
Unrestricted withdrawal last day	Apr 12th
Selective withdrawal last day	N/A
Last day of class	May 3rd

Plagiarism, Honor Code, and AI Policy: Plagiarism is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Students are expected to complete their own work. When citing sources, please use APA format and refer to the school's plagiarism policy for guidance.

The use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, is strictly prohibited for completing assignments. Violations of this policy will be treated as academic dishonesty. Additionally, providing false information, such as fake doctor's notes or misleading emails to gain special accommodations, constitutes a violation of the honor code.

Assignments are opportunities for personal growth, critical thinking, and applying your acquired knowledge. Your individual effort and creativity are essential in demonstrating your understanding of the course material. Dependence on AI undermines these objectives and compromises the integrity of the learning process. We appreciate your commitment to academic honesty and dedication to upholding this course's principles by refraining from using Generative AI in your assignments.

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 upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. 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 Ombudsperson.

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Date Every Week starts Monday morning 6am to Sunday 11:59:00pm	Topics	Readings	Graded Assignments/Tasks All Weekly Assignments due <mark>Sunday 11:59:00pm</mark>
Week 1 Mar 23rd- 29th	Syllabus, Geo Intro Europe Russia	Chapter 1-3	Orientation Quiz, Intros, Exercise 1, Final Project Step 1 Map Quiz
Week 2 Mar 30th-Apr 5th	North America. Middle/South America	Chapter 4-5	Exercise 2, Discussion 1, Map Quiz
Week 3 Apr 6th- 12th	Midterm (Weeks 1-2) (Open April 9-12th)	Review	Midterm, Final Project Step 2
Week 4 Apr 13th- 19th	Sub-Saharan Africa SW Asia (Middle East)/North Africa	Chapter 6-7	Discussion 2 Map Quiz
Week 5 Apr 20th-26th	South Asia East/SE Asia Oceania	Chapter 8-10	Exercise 3 Discussion 3 Map Quiz
Week 6 Apr 27th- May 3rd	Final Project (May 3rd) Final Exam (Open April 29-May 3nd) (Week 4-6)	Review	Final Project Final Exam