

GGS 101-001 Major World Regions
Spring Semester 2020, T-Th (1:30-2:45pm), Innovation Hall 132, CREDIT HOURS:
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Office Hours: Exploratory Hall 2204 (M-W 1:00-2:00 pm & By Appointment)

'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?'
-- Poet Mary Oliver

I. Course Description:

This course will provide the student with an overview of the world's major regions as defined by their physical and cultural characteristics, examined through the approaches and concepts of modern geography. This course promotes international understanding through a survey of the world's regional differences and similarities in cultural and environmental factors such as landscape, population, customs, sports, language, religion, economies, cities, architecture, and political systems.

II. Objectives of the Course:

Major World Regions will provide you with a geographic skill set that will allow you to better understand the world as you live or travel through it, and also add to your ability to analyse how global phenomena can affect you and your country (or even your presidential election...). Because of the global interconnectedness of the world's political, economic, and cultural systems, geography and geographical principles are important, even if you have no intention of traveling outside of your home country tomorrow.

This course is *not* about memorizing countries and their capital cities, or where apples are grown, or where coal is mined. There will be some of that of course, because it can be fun! (Paris, anyone?) But the course will be taught in a thematic way within each major region – instead of looking at the world country-by-country (and memorizing statistics), we will look at Europe, East Asia, Africa, etc., by trying to understand *what makes places what they are*.

Secondarily, the course will hopefully whet the students' appetite for travel, adventure, and learning, as an understanding of the world can make the many experiences of your life to come more vivid and valuable. Your professor has visited more than 100 countries, and having the geographic knowledge to understand (at least some of) what he saw and experienced is what made him go beyond the first two countries he saw as a kid, "with mom and dad." Hence the Poet Mary Oliver quote above....

III. Mason Core: Global Understanding

This course satisfies the Mason Core: Global Understanding requirement.

Expected Learning Outcomes include:

The goal of the global understanding category is to help students see the world from multiple perspectives, reflect upon their positions in a global society, and be prepared for future

engagement as global citizens. While it may include a historical perspective, global understanding courses focus primarily on a contemporary understanding of one's place in a global society.

Courses in this category must meet a minimum of three of the following learning outcomes:

1. Identify and articulate one's own values and how those values influence their interactions and relationships with others, both locally and globally.
2. Demonstrate understanding of how the patterns and processes of globalization make visible the interconnections and differences among and within contemporary global societies.
3. Demonstrate the development of intercultural competencies.
4. Explore individual and collective responsibilities within a global society through analytical, practical, or creative responses to problems or issues, using resources appropriate to the field.

IV. Attendance Policy:

Regular attendance and active participation in class are essential to successful completion of this course, and will be reflected in the individual class participation portion of the course grade. *Students are allowed two (2) unexcused absences.* Each unexcused absence after the two permitted will reduce the participation grade by one point. Late arrivals will be penalized after the second late arrival. More than eight (8) unexcused absences will lead to a Withdrawal/Failure (WF) in the course. Personal situations and concerns may be addressed to me personally on a person-by-person basis.

V. Teaching Methods

Class participation is expected of all students. There will be an emphasis on lecture/discussion, demonstration, and question/answer. Part of each class will summarize key themes for the week, including themes treated in the textbook and supplementary readings. Part of each class will focus on discussion.

VI. Required Textbook:

Major World Regions

VII. Supplementary Readings:

Supplementary readings will be handed out in class, or will be available online.

I expect to make use of current/contemporary articles from *The Economist*, perhaps the English-speaking world's top news magazine, with a very geographical focus, co-published in the UK and the US. I will use relevant, current examples as much as possible.

A good atlas is invaluable as a supplement to any geography course, and you should have easy access to an atlas whenever you are reading, studying, or writing for this course. A physical "book" atlas often provides more information (including many varieties of thematic maps) than relying solely on electronic maps. You might be surprised. Check it out.

The publisher's website for textbook should offer numerous resources for exams, in-class discussion, and in-class presentations. Specific assignments will be announced.

VIII. Course Grading/Evaluation:

CLASS PARTICIPATION	10%
SHORT PROJECTS (“HOMEWORK”)	35%
EXAMS (TOP 2 OF 3)	55%
QUIZZES	VARIES (Included in EXAM %)

Grading Scale:

100–90%	A+, A, A-
89 – 80%	B+, B, B-
79 – 70%	C+, C, C-
69 – 60%	D+, D, D-
59 – 0%	F

Class Participation (10%):

Students can learn as much from each other as they do from the instructor, which means that each student also helps others learn. When you don't understand something, by asking about it in class you may help someone else understand – there are probably others who have not asked. However, your class participation grade is not just a measure of how many words you say, but also of your preparation, application of concepts, and willingness to ask clarifying questions. It is, of course, also a way for me to reward those who don't play on their phones in class....

Short Projects (“Homework”) (35%):

Short projects to be completed in class or at home will make up an important part of the student's grade. These might range from in-class group projects to analyses of short articles to short creative/opinion essays to video or movie reviews. These will be assigned throughout the semester, to follow student interests and course development.

Exams + Quizzes (55%):

There will be three (3) exams. Only the top two (2) grades will be counted toward the student's overall grade, worth about 25% each. There will be no make-up exams. If a student is satisfied with their first two exam scores, they need not Exam #3. If you miss an exam, you had best show up for Exam #3....

Each exam will cover concepts, principles, and places from the preceding term-section of classes. Although Exam #3 will not directly address topics from earlier term-sections (it will not be ‘comprehensive’), students will be expected to show the sum of knowledge and understanding they have learned throughout the year.

There will be at least one Map Quiz and probably other Quizzes.

VIII. Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism):

From the Council of Writing Program administrators (WPA): In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. This definition applies to texts published in print or on-line, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers.

Plagiarism can be unintentional, but often is not. Either way, don't do it, as today there is a veritable cottage industry of resources for discovering plagiarism – it will likely be discovered, and I will likely have no choice but to take very serious measures.