

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Department of Geography & Geoinformation Science
Fall Semester 2015

MAJOR WORLD REGIONS GGS 101 – 001 Course Syllabus

Instructor: Ian S. Ward

Office: Exploratory Hall, Rm 2222

Office Hours: Thursday, 9:00 – 10:00am, or by appointment

Mailbox: Exploratory Hall, Suite 2400 (MS 6C3)

Class Location: Merten Hall 1200

Meeting Time: 12:00-1:15pm TR

Email: iward@gmu.edu

Course Overview:

This course is designed as an introduction to the discipline of geography while providing the student an overview of the world's major regions as defined by their physical and cultural characteristics. It is also intended to present critical geographic concepts associated with applying a spatial perspective to understanding the world. The focus will be on developing a new frame of reference for integrating information in spatial terms.

Course Objectives: Based upon the readings, lecture notes, and independent study, students will be able to:

- 1) define a region;
- 2) describe world regions in terms of physical characteristics such as climate or landforms;
- 3) describe world regions in terms of cultural characteristics such as language or religion;
- 4) explain specific geographic concepts such as climate regions, or culture hearths;
- 5) and demonstrate how these concepts help explain regional differences and spatial patterns of distribution.

Mason Core: GGS 101 fulfills the Mason Core requirement in **Global Understanding**.

Text: 1) de Blij and Muller, *Geography: Realms, Regions, and Concepts, 16th edition*, John Wiley & Sons.

2) *National Geographic College Atlas of the World, 2nd edition*.

Student Requirements:

To successfully complete this course, students must complete all assigned readings and exercises as well as attend class; neither the textbook nor lecture notes alone will suffice. Students are encouraged to participate in class discussion, but may also be called upon at any time to offer their comments and views on class topics.

Examinations and Examination Policies:

- 1) Three examinations, plus a Final Exam, will be administered during the course of the semester (see attached schedule for dates). **Only your top 2 scores from the FIRST 3 exams will be recorded**. A mandatory **Comprehensive Final** will be given at the end of the semester. This last grade will count toward your overall score and will not be considered for elimination.

- 2) **NO MAKEUP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN.** Remember, you may drop one exam, so if during the semester you find yourself in a situation that will preclude you from making it to one of the regular semester exams, you may choose that exam as the one you drop.
- 3) **THE FINAL EXAM WILL NOT BE ADMINISTERED EARLY OR LATER;** please plan ahead.
- 4) Exams begin and end as indicated in the class schedule: No additional time for late arrivals.
- 5) **Exams will NOT be issued to those individuals arriving after the first person in the classroom has finished their test and has left the room. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- 6) Examinations will be multiple choice using SCANTRON® format. That means on test day, students will be expected to come to class with a #2 pencil and a SCANTRON® answer sheet (available in our campus bookstore). Note: Please purchase only the green and white SCANTRON® forms (as opposed to the red and white forms).
- 7) No books or notes or electronic devices of any kind may be used during any examination in this class. **All electronic devices, including all phones, must be turned OFF at all times.**
- 8) Hats with bills or rims cannot be worn during examinations.
- 9) Once your tests and projects have been graded and handed back to you, please retain them for your records. Do not lose track of them until after your final grade has been posted.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential and each individual is expected to do his or her own work; violations of the University Honor Code will not be tolerated and will result in course failure.

Classroom Expectations:

- 1) **NO LAPTOPS or TABLETS or PHONES** are to be used by students during lecture.
- 2) **CELL PHONES** must be **SILENCED** before class begins.
- 3) **NO TEXTING**, which is obvious given expectation #1. I want your full and undivided attention. This also means that if you need to sleep, stay at home.
- 4) **BE ON TIME** - Students are expected to be on time for class. Should circumstances arise that make you late, do not disrupt the class as you enter; take the first aisle seat that is available and do not walk across the room.
- 5) **CHIT-CHAT IS UNACCEPTABLE** during lecture. If you have a question or comment, raise your hand and let me know.
- 6) **KEEP THE ROOM CLEAN.** If you pack it in, pack it out; leave your seat better than you found it.

Note Taking:

- Lectures will be accompanied by the use of electronic slides, maps, and photographs. These slides are **NOT** available on Blackboard to strengthen class attendance and to abide by copyright regulations. However, students may come by during office hours to review and discuss any class material with me. I **STRONGLY** encourage you to stop by and meet with me especially if you've missed a class or find that you are having a little difficulty with any element(s) of the class.
- If at any point during the lecture you feel that I am changing slides too fast, please let me know and I will slow down.

Map Exercises:

Two Map Exercises (250 points) will be assigned during the semester. The exercises will be made available on Blackboard at least two weeks prior to the due date. Due dates can be found on the semester schedule located at the end of this syllabus. You will provide all answers on

SCANTRON® forms for both exercises, which will then be submitted in class. You must use the *National Geographic College Atlas of the World* to complete the exercises.

Late Policy on Map Exercises:

A maximum of a one week extension with a minimum of a two letter-grade deduction beginning at the start of class the day it is due. To receive the highest credit possible, assignments must be turned-in on-time (at the beginning of class the day it is due). It is best to begin work on assignments as soon as possible to allow yourself plenty of time to prepare a well-researched product. These exercises are not meant to be difficult, but they do require a bit of thought, time, and effort.

Grading Scheme and Policy:

Your combined score of the following will determine your grade in this course:

Exam I	→	25%	=	250 points	}	(Only the 2 best scores counted)
Exam II	→	25%	=	250 points		
Exam III	→	25%	=	250 points		
Final Exam (mandatory)	→	25%	=	250 points		
1 st Map Exercise	→	12%	=	120 points		
2 nd Map Exercise	→	13%	=	<u>130 points</u>		
				=	1,000 points	

Point Translation:

980 - 1000 = A+	800 - 819 = B-
920 - 979 = A	780 - 799 = C+
900 - 919 = A-	720 - 779 = C
880 - 899 = B+	700 - 719 = C-
820 - 879 = B	600 - 699 = D
	0 - 599 = F

Grading Scales for Individual Course Activities:

1st Map Exercise:

108 - 120 = A
96 - 107 = B
84 - 95 = C
72 - 83 = D
0 - 71 = F

2nd Map Exercise:

117 - 130 = A
104 - 116 = B
91 - 103 = C
78 - 94 = D
0 - 77 = F

Semester & Final Exams:

225 - 250 = A
200 - 224 = B
175 - 199 = C
150 - 174 = D
0 - 149 = F

Key Dates:

9 / 1 Class begins	11 / 26 Thanksgiving (<i>No Class Thursday</i>)
9 / 8 Last day to drop with no tuition liability;	12 / 10 Last day of class
Last day to add course - must be enrolled for a grade!	12 / 17 FINAL EXAM 10:30AM – 1:15PM
10 / 2 Last day to drop without dean’s permission	
10 / 13 Columbus Day recess (<i>No Class Tuesday</i>)	

Tentative Class Schedule

(as of 1 September 2015)

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
1	9 / 1	Introduction / Why study Geography?	Introduction
	9 / 3	Weather & Climate	Introduction
2	9 / 8	Weather & Climate / History of Cartography	Introduction
	9 / 10	Cartography / GIS / Remote Sensing	Introduction
3	9 / 15	Introduction to Europe	Chapter 1
	9 / 17	Europe	Chapter 1
4	9 / 22	Europe	Chapter 1
	9 / 24	Europe	Chapter 1
5	9 / 29	Europe	Chapter 1
	10 / 1	Subsaharan Africa	Chapter 6
6	10 / 6	EXAM I	STUDY!
	10 / 8	Subsaharan Africa	Chapter 6
7	10 / 13	NO CLASS	Chapters 6 / 7
	10 / 15	North Africa	Chapter 7
8	10 / 20	North Africa / Southwest Asia	Chapter 7
	10 / 22	SW Asia	1st Map Exercise Due Chapter 7
9	10 / 27	Southwest Asia / North America	Chapter 3
	10 / 29	North America (Urban Design)	Chapter 3

Tentative Class Schedule

(as of 1 September 2015)

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
10	11 / 3	North America (Cultural Mosaic)	Chapter 3
	11 / 5	North America / Middle America	Chapter 3 / 4
11	11 / 10	EXAM II	STUDY!
	11 / 12	Middle America	Chapter 4
12	11 / 17	Middle America	Chapter 4
	11 / 19	Middle & South America	Chapter 5
13	11 / 24	South America 2nd Map Exercise Due	Chapter 5
	11 / 26	NO CLASS	Chapter 5
14	12 / 1	South America	Chapter 5
	12 / 3	South America	Handout
15	12 / 8	EXAM III	STUDY!
	12 / 10	Australia / NZ / Pacific Realm	Chapter 11 / 12
16	12 / 15	NO CLASS	STUDY!!
	12 / 17	FINAL EXAM	Exam Time: (10:30am to 1:15pm)