

George Mason University
Department of Geography and Geoinformation Sciences
GGS 333-001: Geography of the Caribbean – Fall 2018

Class time: 4:30 – 7:10 pm (W)

Location: Exploratory Hall, Room 2103

Instructor: Ron Mahabir
Exploratory Hall, Room 2417
rmahabir@gmu.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays, 12:00 – 1:00 pm, Exploratory Hall, Room 2417, or by appointment

Textbook: None

ODS Notice: If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance: 1). please let me know; and 2) be sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 2500; 703-993-2474; <http://ods.gmu.edu>) so that they can make a determination about proper accommodations. As a matter of university policy, I cannot provide accommodations without documentation from the ODS.

Description: This course examines the physical and cultural landscapes within the Caribbean. The rich heritage of the regions' inhabitants, their social, cultural, economic and political life, as well as the effects of climate and geomorphology on their culture are reviewed. Students will also explore the cultural heritage and diversity of this region and its role in the global economy. From its rediscovery during the age of exploration, to that of the introduction of slavery and the many events that have occurred thereafter to help transform the region, the Caribbean represents a unique blend of people, culture, and community, which continues to evolve over time.

Goals:

- To explain the physical, social, cultural and economic features of the Caribbean region.
- To explain the Caribbean's role in the global economy
- To analyze various geographical aspects of the region, including, trends in urbanization and population dynamics, poverty, crime and economic geography.

Blackboard: Information for the course, to include assignments, will be disseminated via the course website on Blackboard.

GMU Email: GMU email is the only type of email communication that will be recognized for this course.

Grading: Grades for this course are based on individual performance versus a consistent standard. There is no curve – so if everyone earns an 'A', everyone will receive an 'A'. Grades will be based upon performance in the following areas:

Course participation:	10%	10 points
Assignment 1 (Article summary):	20%	20 points
Assignment 2 (Video reflection):	20%	20 points
Assignment 3 (Paper submission):	30%	30 points
Assignment 4 (Final presentation):	20%	20 points
Bonus points 1:	2%	2 points
Bonus points 2:	5%	5 points
Bonus points 3:	1%	1 point
Bonus points 4:	2%	2 points
Total:	110%	110 points

NOTE: If you are going to miss class due to medical or other important reasons please let me know ahead of time. You can send me an email.

Grades will be determined according to the following scale:

Range	Grade
98 – 100%	A+
93 – 97%	A
90 – 92%	A-
87 – 89%	B+
83 – 86%	B
80 – 82%	B-
77 – 79%	C+
73 – 76%	C
70 – 72%	C-
60 – 69%	D
0 – 59%	F

Grading policies

Incomplete grades policy: following the university policies, an “Incomplete” grade (IN) may be assigned to a student who is passing a course but who may be unable to complete scheduled course work due to a cause beyond reasonable control. Any requests for an incomplete grade must be submitted in writing during the last week of classes, and should clearly indicate the reason for the request. If an IN grade is granted, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor at the end of the semester to make proper arrangements for completing any missing work. For further details on the IN grade please visit: <http://registrar.gmu.edu/records/incomplete.html>

Late assignment submission: (1) Assignments submitted between 1 to 3 calendar days past the due date would result in a late penalty of **5% points per calendar day**. As a general rule, work submitted after **more than 3 calendar days will not be accepted** and incomplete assignments may not be completed after the due date. Exceptions to this policy may be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Instructor. (2) Deferral of course work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Please make sure you notify the instructor in writing as soon as you know you would like to request a deferral.

Student resources

The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>]. You can now sign up for an Online Writing Lab (OWL) session as well as face-to-face session in the Writing Center (see the Tutoring section in the link above).

Students with special needs: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474 for guidance on preparing an accommodation plan to suit your needs. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS - <http://ods.gmu>. Please do not hesitate to contact the course team regarding your special needs if you encounter any issues or have any concerns.

Counseling and Psychological Services: The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical

psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu>].

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the "Buckley Amendment," is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. [See <http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy>].

Schedule

Week	Date	Lecture	Notes
1	29-Aug	Course introduction	
2	5-Sep	Physical geography	
3	12-Sep	Economic geography	Student article presentation date submitted
4	19-Sep	Political geography	Student article presentation 1 and 2
5	26-Sep	A new world (part I) - Slave Trade	Group activity project given (Slave vs Plantation owner)
6	3-Oct	A new world (part II) - Indentureship	Group activity; Student article presentation 2 and 3
7	17-Oct	Population geography	Student article presentation 4 and 5
8	24-Oct	Cultural geography	Student article presentation 6 and 7
9	31-Oct	Natural resources and the Environment	Student article presentation 8 and 9
10	7-Nov	Poverty, crime and terrorism	Student article presentation 10 and others remaining
11	14-Nov	Video reflection	GIS Day at Center for Performing Arts (Bonus points)
12	21-Nov	No classes	Thanksgiving recess
13	28-Nov	Special topics I: Island Biogeography	Video reflection due
14	5-Dec	Special topics II: ???	Final papers due
15	12-Dec	Final student presentations I	
16	19-Dec	Final student presentations II	