



George Mason University
Geography and Geoinformation Science
Course Syllabus
GGS 101-004: Major World Regions
Fall 2017

Instructor:

Name: Jonathon Hathaway
Office: Exploratory Hall, Rm 2219
Email: jhathawa@gmu.edu
Phone: 703-850-6821

Course Basics:

Meeting times: Tuesday/Thursday, 3:00-4:15pm
Location: Merten Hall 1200
Web Location: Blackboard
Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 1:30-2:30
By appointment

Required Text:

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

Optional Text:

National Geographic College Atlas of the World. 2nd edition.

Mason Core:

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

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.

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.

Course Schedule (subject to change):

Week	Date	Lecture	Homework and Reading
1	8/29	Introduction/Why study Geography	Introduction
	8/31	Climate and Demography	Introduction
2	9/5	Cartography / GIS / Remote Sensing	Introduction
	9/7	Introduction to Europe	Chapter 1
3	9/12	Europe	Chapter 1
	9/14	Europe	Chapter 1
4	9/19	Europe / Russia	Chapter 1 / 2
	9/21	Russia	Chapter 2
5	9/26	Subsaharan Africa	Chapter 6
	9/28	Subsaharan Africa	Chapter 6
6	10/3	Subsaharan Africa	Chapter 6
	10/5	EXAM 1	
7	10/10	NO CLASS	
	10/12	North Africa Assignment #1 Due	Chapter 7
8	10/17	N. Africa SW Asia	Chapter 7
	10/19	North Africa / Southwest Asia	Chapter 7
9	10/24	East Asia	Chapter 9
	10/26	East Asia / South Asia	Chapter 9 / 8
10	10/31	South Asia	Chapter 8
	11/2	South East Asia	Chapter 10
11	11/7	South East Asia	Chapter 10
	11/9	EXAM 2	
12	11/14	North America	Chapter 3
	11/16	North America	Chapter 3
13	11/21	North America Assignment #2 Due	Chapter 3
	11/23	NO CLASS	
14	11/28	Middle America	Chapter 4
	11/30	Middle America / South America	Chapter 4 / 5
15	12/5	EXAM 3	
	12/7	South America	Chapter 5
16	12/12	NO CLASS	
	12/14	Final Exam	Exam Time 1:30-4:15pm

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.

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 isle 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.

Assignments:

Two Assignments (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 in this syllabus.

Late Policy on Assignments:

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.

Class Participation:

Student participation is a critical component of this course. Students bring a wealth of knowledge and individual experiences that will help fellow students in shaping their mental framework for assessing global issues and constructing their own viewpoints. Students are responsible for reading the assigned “required” chapters and articles before class. In order to receive maximum credit for participation, students must demonstrate mastery of the concepts in the “required” readings.

Attendance at Academic Conference/Think Tank/Cultural Event (Extra Credit)

Students may attend up to three conferences, cultural activities or think tank events related to Major World Regions during the course of the semester and receive extra credit. The instructor must approve the events prior to attendance. Students will not be excused from any class to attend an event for the purpose of receiving extra credit. Students must prepare and submit a 1-page (12pt font, single spaced) summary of the key discussion points within 1 week of the event to receive the extra credit. Each 1-page summary will add 1% credit towards the final class grade (up to a maximum of 3%).

Grading Scheme and Policy:

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

Exam 1	20%	=	200 points	} (Only 2 best scores counted)
Exam 2	20%	=	200 points	
Exam 3	20%	=	200 points	
Final Exam	25%	=	250 points	
Assignment 1	12%	=	120 points	
Assignment 2	13%	=	130 points	
Participation	10%	=	100 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

Academic Integrity:

GMU has an Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/>) with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification.

Office of Disability Services:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Resources:

The Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>
 University Libraries, Ask a Librarian: <http://library.gmu.edu/ask>
 Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://caps.gmu.edu>
 University Catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu>
 University Policies: <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>