

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**GGG 101: MAJOR WORLD REGIONS**

**GGG 101-DL4 Major World Regions**

**Spring Semester 2020, M,W (12:00-1:15pm) through Zoom, CREDIT HOURS: 3**

**Instructor: Jack D. May**

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**Office Hours: By Appointment through Zoom**

**Course Description:**

This course is about how the world works. It will provide students with an overview of the major forces shaping our world from global and regional spatial perspectives. 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.

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, your community, and your country. 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. These things are an important part of the study of geography of course, but in the same way that vocabulary is to literature. We will look at the world as a whole and region-by-region trying to understand what makes places what they are and take time to think how that makes the people from there how they are and how they see the world.

The course will hopefully also inspire you to learn more and travel to other places if you can to see and appreciate them in new ways. An understanding of the world can make the many experiences of your life become more vivid and valuable.

**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.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Regular attendance and active participation during the live class or on the discussion board 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.

Since this is an online course which may be subject to internet connection issues from time to time, please be patient in the event that a connection is temporarily lost. Courses will be recorded as well to ensure nothing is lost.

### **Teaching Methods**

This will be an online synchronous course, Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00pm-1:15pm. The course will use the optional text below along with additional material provided in class and online. The course will include a few homework assignments, quizzes, and 3 exams. My goal for each of these is to support learning, not to test how well you can take a test. If at any point during the course, you feel that you need anything additional from me, please let me know!

The course structure will take a similar approach to the text beginning with a global overview with subsequent weeks focusing on specific regions of the world, their physical, cultural, historical, and cotemporary geography, the environment, geopolitics, and other trends at work.

### **Textbook (Optional):**

Geography: Realms, Regions, and Concepts. 18<sup>th</sup> Edition (2020). Jan Nijman, Michael Shin, and Peter O. Muller; available in both electronic and hardcopy versions.

### **Supplementary Materials:**

Supplementary materials will be made 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.

### **Course Grading/Evaluation:**

CLASS PARTICIPATION	10%
SHORT PROJECTS ("HOMEWORK")	35%
EXAMS (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 or on the class discussion board, 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.

To help make this happen, I ask that each of you post at least 5 discussion board items and comment on at least 2 others during the semester as part of the participation grade. This could be a question or comment on the material covered in class, your own impressions of a place, a favorite book, movie or tv show set in another place, sharing your own experiences or something interesting you have found about a place or the topics we cover.

I want you to speak your mind, but please be kind and considerate of others. After all, being able to do that successfully is part of meeting the global understanding requirement.

### **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 short research questions 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.

- HW#1: Geography Documentary Essay (5 pts)
- HW#2: Short Answer Worksheet (5 pts)
- HW#3: Regional Documentary/Movie Essay (5 pts)
- HW#4: Regional Current Events Essay (5pts)
- HW#5: Regional Streetview Exploration (5 pts)
- HW#6: Travel Plan (10 pts)

### **Exams + Quizzes:**

There will be three (3) exams given during normal class time.

### **Honor Code:**

Students must follow the GMU Scholastic Honor Code.

### **Schedule:**

The course will begin with a global overview with subsequent weeks focusing on different realms of the world where we will look at the physical, cultural, historical, and contemporary geography and geopolitics of each. Schedule may be adjusted as needed.

Week	Topic	Exams/Homework
1 (Jan 25, 27)	Intro	
2 (Feb 1, 3)	Intro/Europe	HW#1 Due Feb 7, 11:59pm
3 (Feb 8, 10)	Europe	
4 (Feb 15, 17)	Russia	HW#2 Due Feb 21, 11:59pm
5 (Feb 22, 24)	North America	Exam 1 (Intro/Europe/Russia)
6 (Mar 1, 3)	Middle America	
7 (Mar 8, 10)	South America	HW#3 Due Mar 14, 11:59pm
8 (Mar 15, 17)	North Africa/Southwest Asia	
9 (Mar 22, 24)	Subsaharan Africa	
10 (Mar 29, 31)	South Asia	Exam 2 (Americas, Southwest Asia, Africa) HW#4 Due Apr 4, 11:59pm
11 (Apr 5, 7)	East Asia	
12 (Apr 12, 14)	Southeast Asia	HW#5 Due Apr 18, 11:59pm
13 (Apr 19, 21)	Austral	
14 (Apr 26, 28)	Pacific and Polar	HW#6 Due May 2, 11:59pm
15 (May 3)	Final Exam	Exam 3 (South Asia, East Asia, SE Asia, Austral, Pacific & Polar)