

George Mason University
Department of Geography & Geoinformation Science

Fall Semester 2022
MAJOR WORLD REGIONS
GGS 101 – 003
Course Syllabus

Name	:	Maction Komwa, PhD	Meeting Times	:	T 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm
Office	:	Exploratory Hall, Room 2414	Location	:	Enterprise Hall 80
Email	:	mkomwa@gmu.edu	Virtual Office hours	:	T R (1:30 pm – 2:30 pm)
Phone	:	703-993-5646	Credits	:	3.00

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Name : Szandra Peter (PhD Student)
Email : speter26@gmu.edu
Virtual Office hours: TBA

Course Description:

This course is designed as an introduction to the discipline of geography. Students will gain knowledge on the patterns, problems, prospects of the world's principal human-geographic regions and the role of geographic differences in interpreting world current scene. The course emphasizes a real differentiation, similarities of these world regions and how they interact/interrelate to another in today's globalizing world. The skills and knowledge gained from this course will become the basis for students to ask critical geographic questions about various geographic processes, features, patterns on the landscape at different scales.

Course Objectives:

This course is a global learning course. Upon course completion, a student will be able to:

- Define a region
- Demonstrate a foundational knowledge of the world's physical characteristics such as climate or landforms
- Describe world regions in terms of cultural characteristics such as language or religion.
- Identify and describe how humans interact with and adapt to their environment
- Distinguish between the different types of regional distinctions recognized in geography.
- Understand the spatial nature of geography and how each place or region is examined, analyzed and compared with other places or regions.
- Learn about the geographical tools and data sources geographers use to study the Earth's surface.

Throughout the semester, as we discuss on the suggested topics listed in the syllabus notice that each region is unique and possesses a special combination of historical, cultural, environmental, economic, and organizational qualities.

Mason Core: This course fulfills the Mason Core requirement in Global Understanding.

Required Textbook

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

Recommended Textbook

2. National Geographic Concise Atlas of the World. 4th edition.

Basic Course Technology Requirements:

Activities and assignments in this course will use the Blackboard learning system, available at <https://mymason.gmu.edu>. And to successfully complete this course, it is expected that you have the following:

- Internet Connection
 - Access to high speed connection such as Cable, DSL, or Satellite is recommended
 - Internet Browser Support include:
 - Internet Explorer latest version | Safari version latest version
 - Google Chrome latest version | Firefox latest version
- Access to software
 - You will need to have access to the most up to date:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>;
 - Windows Media Player: <https://windows.microsoft.com/enus/windows/downloads/windows-media-player/>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/
 - MS Word, Excel, etc.
- Required equipment necessary for this course thus including hardware and software (e.g. MS word, etc.), speakers, microphones, or webcams, etc. are the responsibility of the student.

Learning Management Systems

- Blackboard is our course management system which provides access to course materials, assignments, and class discussions. You will log in to Blackboard using your George Mason username and password through this link: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>.
- If you have computer problems, please contact ITS Support Center: <http://itservices.gmu.edu>; Email: support@gmu.edu; | Phone: 703-993-8870.

Safe Return to Campus:

All students taking this course are required to take Safe Return to Campus Training prior to visiting campus. Training is available in Blackboard (<https://mymason.gmu.edu>). Students are required to follow the university's public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage (www2.gmu.edu/safe-return-plan).

Similarly, all students in face to face and hybrid courses must also complete the Mason COVID Health Check daily, seven days a week. The COVID Health Check system uses a color code system and students will receive either a **Green**, **Yellow**, or **Red** email response. Only students who receive a "green" notification are permitted to attend courses with a face-to-face component. If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing.

Faculty are allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a Green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.

Course Activities

The course is designed to engage students with pre-class (online), in-person and post-class activities. These activities are graded and the instructor expects students to prepare well, read assigned materials before class meeting, participate in all assigned activities and work independently online to complete all assigned activities and discussions through the Blackboard by due dates. Some activities will require team work and such activities will be specified by the instructor.

Course Assignments and Grading Breakdown

Students are expected to submit high quality assignments during this course via the Blackboard. All assignments are to be completed according the dates outlined in the syllabus

Description	% grade
Map Exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will build your map literacy and ability to analyze spatial information through these assignments. Knowing geographical location, place, regions, movement of objects from one location to another, etc. are part of the geography themes that you will learn from these activities. You will then be able to understand the spatial nature of geography and how each place, or region is examined, analyzed and compared with other places or regions. We will be using physical maps, online map resources such as Google Maps There will be 7 Map Exercises and will drop the lowest grade of this assignment. 	20%
Examination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three examinations, plus a Final Exam, will be administered during the course of the semester. The lowest grade of these first three exams will be dropped. Final Exam will be COMPREHENSIVE and you will have the opportunity to apply concepts learned in class. Exam will comprise of Multiple-Choice-Questions, True/False Questions and Fill-in-the blank questions. EXAM I -III [20% each], will pick only the best 2 and Mandatory Final Exam will be worth 25%] NO MAKEUP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN. We'll take some time to talk about study strategies and answer any possible review questions you may have a week before the exam. 	65%
Quizzes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quizzes will be administered both online through the Blackboard or in-class [Open Book] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These exams are designed to make sure that you have read and understood the readings, practice and prepare you for exams, and help you revise the key points discussed in class or through the readings. 	10%
In-class activities, group discussion and Participation [Easy grade to get – show your willingness to learn!] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class assignments such as group discussions are designed to assess your understanding of the readings, your ability to apply course concepts learned in class and how you can interact with your classmates. 	5%

Late/Make-up Assignments Policy

- Due dates for all assignments are provided in the course schedule as well as the Blackboard. Unless otherwise specified all assignments are due on those dates. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the assignments are submitted by the established due date.
- Assignments turned in **within seven (7) days will result in a 25% deduction** for the assignment. Assignments **later that seven (7 -14 days) will result in a 50% deduction** and **after 14 days** will result into **75% deduction**.
- Technical excuses ("computer system error", "didn't submit correctly on Blackboard", etc.) will not be accepted as reasons for late work.
- In some subjects/assignments no late assignments will be accepted for credit. Such assignments include discussion forum and end of chapter quiz.

- No make-up Exams or extensions on assignments will be given without a valid reason that is supported by documented evidence.
- Work is NOT accepted via e-mail, unless the instructions specifically say otherwise. Submit your work through the Blackboard accordingly.
- Please do not wait until the last minute (11:59 pm – Eastern Time) for you to complete your assignment - computers are machines and sometimes they cannot be reliable (e.g. power outage, wireless connection problem etc.) and cannot be held accountable for your excuse.

A “Life Happens Pass”

You will be given a “Life Happens Pass” for only 1 written assignment. This kind of arrangement is due to the unprecedented period that everyone is going through (COVID-19). Therefore, an automatic 72-hour extension will be given as long as you inform your instructor in writing.

Grades will be assigned based on the distribution scheme below

Range	Letter Grade	Grade description	Range	Letter Grade	Grade description
>=98%	A+	Excellent and Extraordinary			
93 – 97.9	A	Excellent	77 - 79.9	C+	Above satisfactory
90 – 92.9	A-	Very Good	70 - 76.9	C	Satisfactory
87 - 89.9	B+	Good with merit	60 - 69.9	D	Just OK
83 - 86.9	B	Good	<60	F	Fail
80 - 82.9	B-	Above satisfactory			

All students are expected to:

- Review the course material and follow the course calendar.
- Work at full pace to avoid missing class activities.
- Be active participants in discussion forum throughout the course period.
- Communicate with you instructor to ask for help or clarification of an assignment or class activities.
- Respect the privacy of other classmates and the instructor in this virtual classroom.
- Re-read your responses in the discussion forum carefully before postings them.
- Express differences of opinion in a polite and sensible way.
- Keep an open mind to the constructive criticism from classmates and use it to improve your work.
 - We are in this class to share information and learning from each other.
 - By sharing and discussing each other's ideas, you will be able to examine your own thoughts and feelings hence, making the course interesting and enjoyable!
- Use good grammar and spelling in all your assignments and discussions.
- Write your messages in formal language.
- Be On-Time
- Get Involved and ask Questions
- Strictly, use Mason Email Account. If you sent email from non-Mason account that email will not be read.
- Strictly **NO** Texting, **NO** Chit-Chat during lecture
- **Cell phones** must be turned **OFF** at all times. If you are expecting an important call, you can take it outside classroom.

Recording and/or sharing class materials

All course materials posted to Blackboard are private to this class; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must NOT be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.

- Electronic video, image capture, and/or audio recording is not permitted during in-class meeting, or online, unless the student obtains permission from the instructor.

As a faculty member who will spend a lot of time creating course material for classroom use, unauthorized sharing

of any of my course materials outside the class would violate important ethical standards.

Academic integrity:

- *The following statement is adapted from the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code, which you can read fully at the Office for Academic Integrity (<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>). The Honor Code Pledge reads as follows:*
 - *To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University Community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set for this Honor Code: Student Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.*
- It is expected that you understand these definitions. If you have any doubts about what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, stealing, or lying in the academic context, please see your professor. *Acts of academic dishonesty in this course may be penalized with failure of either the work in question or the entire course.*

Students with Disabilities

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474.

GMU Nondiscrimination Policy

George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, pregnancy status, or genetic information. George Mason University shall adhere to all applicable state and federal equal opportunity/affirmative action statutes and regulations.

TITLE IX

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

Student Support Services

George Mason University has several academic support and other resources to facilitate your success. Some of these resources are presented below:

- i. Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://caps.gmu.edu/>
- ii. Learning Services, University Career Services: <http://careers.gmu.edu/>
- iii. The Writing Center <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
- iv. University Catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu/>
- v. University Policies: <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>

Tentative Course Calendar: *Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.*

Week In-class Meeting	Date	Topic description	Readings	Assignment short description and due date
1	1/25	Introduction / Why study Geography? Weather & Climate	Introduction	Self-introduction due 1/30
	1/27	Cartography / GIS / Remote Sensing	Introduction	
2	2/1	Introduction to Europe	Chapter 1	Online Practice Quiz 1 - 2/6
	2/3	Europe	Chapter 1	
3	2/8	Europe	Chapter 1	In-class Group Discussion – 2/10
	2/10	Europe	Chapter 1	Map Exercises #1– 2/13
	2/15	Introduction to Sub-Saharan Africa	Chapter 6	Online Practice Quiz 2 – 2/20
	2/17	Sub-Saharan Africa	Chapter 6	
5	2/22	Sub-Saharan Africa	Chapter 6	In-class Group Discussion – 2/22
	2/24	Exam I [Chapters, 1, 2 and 6]		Exam I -2/24 [In-class Exam through the Bb. Desktop computers or you can bring your own laptop. Map Exercises #2– 2/27
6	3/1	Introduction to North Africa	Chapter 7	Map Exercise #3 - 3/6
	3/3	North Africa	Chapter 7	
7	3/8	North Africa	Chapter 7	Map Exercises #4– 3/13
	3/10	Introduction to South West Asia	Chapter 7	In-class Group Discussion

Week In-class Meeting	Date	Topic description	Readings	Assignment short description and due date
8	3/14 - 3/20	Spring Recess		
9	3/22	South West Asia	Chapter 7	Map Exercises #5– 3/13
	3/24	Introduction to North America	Chapter 3	
10	3/29	North America	Chapter 3	In-class Group Discussion
	3/31	North America	Chapter 3	Online Practice Quiz 3 – 4/3
11	4/5	Exam II		Exam II -4/5 [In-class Exam through the Bb. Desktop computers or you can bring your own laptop.]
	4/7	Introduction to Middle America	Chapter 4	
12	4/12	Middle America	Chapter 4	In-class Group Discussion
	4/14	Middle America	Chapter 4	Map Exercises #6– 4/17
13	4/19	Introduction to South America	Chapter 5	In-class Group Discussion
	4/21	South America	Chapter 5	Online Practice Quiz 4 – 4/24
14	4/26	South America	Chapter 5	Exam III [On-line – through the Blackboard – Check Exam folder or any additional info in the course schedule/announcements - Bb]
	4/28	Introduction to Austral Realm	Chapter 11	
15	5/3	Australia/NZ and Pacific Realm	Chapter 11/12	In-class Group Discussion
	5/5	Australia/NZ and Pacific Realm	Chapter 11/12	Map Exercises #7 – 5/8
16	5/9	No Class – Reading Day		
	5/12	Final Exam		Take Home Final Exam – due 5/12

