

George Mason University
Department of Geography & Geoinformation Science

Fall Semester 2022
MAJOR WORLD REGIONS
GGS 101 – DL3
Course Syllabus

Name	:	Maction Komwa, PhD	Meeting Times	:	Distance Learning
Office	:	Exploratory Hall, Room 2414	Location	:	100% ONLINE
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)
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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.

Course Structure

This course will be delivered **entirely online** through the Blackboard. To access this course, you will need to use your Mason account to login to the Blackboard: mymasonportal.gmu.edu/. Through the Blackboard, you will access online lessons/course modules, course materials and other resources which will be posted every week.

Online courses are **Self-paced**. This means you will have the opportunity of a flexible schedule while living your life as long as you stay focus. You will learn pre-loaded course content and additional concepts via video lectures, readings, announcements, weekly assignments, guided group discussions, and other media. Transcripts and other learning aids will be available through the Blackboard in the Weekly Lessons or other relevant folders.

Basic Course Technology Requirements:

One of the problems in taking online course is a lack of basic knowledge on the use of computer, especially on how to efficiently manage and organize computer files. 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
 - Spotty internet connection can cause minor disruptions and it is very important that you check these requirements to avoid frustration.
- 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.
- If you do not have any of the above skills, you will need additional help through the ITS/friends and you will need to plan extra time to develop those skills

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.

Course Assignments and Grading Policy

Students are expected to submit high quality assignments during this course via the Blackboard. All assignments are to be completed according to 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. Strategies on how to prepare for the exams will be posted a week before the exam date. 	65%
Practice Quizzes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quizzes 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%
Online Discussion Forum [Easy Points to get] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the semester, we will will have active discussions equivalent to classroom meeting time. Class discussion is an important part of any college experience. You will have a structured opportunity to interact with each other through guided questions related to class topics every week. A number of forums will be developed and posted under the “Discussions” tab. The instructor and the GTA will monitor the discussion and provide comments accordingly (initial posting and your responses). Requirements for this assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post your initial topic-related and thought-provoking comments that foster interaction and discussion early in the week. Then you will provide well-articulate response to a series of online discussions from you classmates to keep the discussion on-going throughout the week when the assignment is assigned. This will demonstrate your class participation as a whole including each week's assigned readings. Your postings will be evaluated according to the content and concept application including timing of what you have posted. 	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 than 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.
- Introduce yourself to the class during first week by posting a brief bio in the discussion forum tab.
- Take the practice Syllabus Quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with the Blackboard.
- 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.
- Strictly, use Mason Email Account. If you sent email from non-Mason account that email will not be read.

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	1/24 - 1/30	Introduction / Why study Geography? Weather & Climate	Introduction	Self-introduction due 1/30 Syllabus Quiz - 1/30
		Cartography / GIS / Remote Sensing	Introduction	
2	1/31 - 2/6	Introduction to Europe	Chapter 1	Online Practice Quiz 1 - 2/6
3	2/7 - 2/13	Europe	Chapter 1	Discussion Forum (Initial Posting by Thursday; Response by Sunday) Map Exercises #1– 2/13
4	2/14 - 2/20	Introduction to Sub-Saharan Africa	Chapter 6	Online Practice Quiz 2 – 2/20
			Chapter 6	
5	2/21 - 2/27	Sub-Saharan Africa	Chapter 6	Discussion Forum (Initial Posting by Thursday; Response by Sunday) Map Exercises #2– 2/27
		Exam I [Chapters, 1, 2 and 6]		
6	2/28 - 3/6	North Africa	Chapter 7	Map Exercise #3 - 3/6
7	3/7 - 3/13	North Africa	Chapter 7	Map Exercises #4– 3/13 Discussion Forum (Initial Posting by Thursday; Response by Sunday)
		South West Asia	Chapter 7	

Week In-class Meeting	Date	Topic description	Readings	Assignment short description and due date
8	3/14 - 3/20	Spring Recess		
9	3/21 - 3/27	South West Asia	Chapter 7	Map Exercises #5– 3/27
		North America	Chapter 3	
10	3/28 - 4/3	North America	Chapter 3	Discussion Forum (Initial Posting by Thursday; Response by Sunday)
			Chapter 3	Online Practice Quiz 3 – 4/3
11	4/4 - 4/10	Exam II	Chpt., 3, 4 & 7	Exam II - 4/10
		Middle America	Chapter 4	
12	4/11 - 4/17	Middle America	Chapter 4	Discussion Forum (Initial Posting by Thursday; Response by Sunday)
				Map Exercises #6– 4/17
13	4/18 - 4/24	South America	Chapter 5	Discussion Forum (Initial Posting by Thursday; Response by Sunday) Online Practice Quiz 4 – 4/24
14	4/25 - 5/1	South America	Chapter 5	Exam III - 5/1
		Austral Realm	Chapter 11	
15	5/3 - 5/8	Austral Realm	Chapter 11/12	Discussion Forum (Initial Posting by Thursday; Response by Sunday)
		Pacific Realm	Chapter 12	Map Exercises #7 – 5/8
16	5/9	No Class – Reading Day		
	5/12	Final Exam		Final Exam – due 5/12