

George Mason University
Department of Geography & Geoinformation
Science

Fall Semester 2022
MAJOR WORLD REGIONS
GGS 101 – 005
Course Syllabus

Name	:	Maction Komwa, PhD	Meeting Times	:	T R 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm
Office	:	Exploratory Hall, Room 2414	Location	:	Exploratory Hall, Room L004
Email	:	mkomwa@gmu.edu	Office hours	:	R (1:30 pm – 3:00 pm)
Phone	:	703-993-5646	Credits	:	3.00

Learning Assistant Contact Details

Name: Katharine Perkin

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Office: Exploratory Hall - 2400 – Cubicle #

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.

Expected Learning Outcomes

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

- Understand the geographic approach to studying spatial distribution of Earth's phenomena.
- 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
- Understand the relationship and importance of people and places.
- 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.

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

Required Textbook

World Regions in Global Context: Peoples, Places, and Environments, 6th edition

By Sallie A. Marston, Paul L. Knox, Diana M. Liverman, Vincent Del Casino

Publisher: Pearson; 6th edition

Paul F. Robbins

ISBN-13: 978-0134183640 | ISBN-10: 0134183649

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 & COVID-19 Requirements

There are currently no Covid-19-related university-wide policies that will affect teaching and learning, however, students are encouraged to check the [Safe Return to Campus](#) site to keep track of any updates and changes.

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

Map Exercises [4] (250 points)

- 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

Examination [500 points]

- Two examinations, plus a Final Exam, will be administered during the course of the semester. The Lowest grade of these first two 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 -II [200 points each], will pick only the best 2 and Mandatory Final Exam will be worth 300 points**
- 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.

Quizzes (100 points)

- Quizzes will be administered both online through the Blackboard or in-class [Open Book]
 - These 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.

In-class activities, group discussion and Participation [Easy grade to get – show your willingness to learn!] (100 points)

- Group discussions, in-class participation

News and Events Contribution [50 points]

Find any news and events around the world regions and share that in class. I will call upon your name randomly and you should be well prepared and contribute to your news events to class. More details will be given in class.

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
980-1000	A+	Excellent/Extraordinary			
930 – 979	A	Excellent	770 - 799	C+	Above satisfactory
900– 929	A-	Very Good	700 - 769	C	Satisfactory
870 - 899	B+	Good with merit	600 - 699	D	Just OK
830 - 869	B	Good	0-599	F	Fail
800- 829	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.
- Read the assigned chapter/pages every week and associated lecture notes. It will be great for you to read the textbook first so that you can understand the concepts discussed in the Instructor’s lecture notes.
- 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.
- 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.*

Date	Topic description	Readings	Assignment short description and due date
8/22	Introduction Course Overview	Introduction	Self-introduction due 8/31
8/24	Why study Geography?	Chapter 1	
8/29	Thinking Geographically and Geographic Skills	Chapter 1	
8/31	Thinking Geographically and Geographic Skills	Chapter 1	News and Events Assignment – 8/31
9/5	Labor Day – No Classes		
9/7	Europe	Chapter 2	Practice Quiz -1 – 9/11
9/12	Europe	Chapter 2	
9/14	Europe	Chapter 2	Map Exercises #1 - 9/18
9/19	Sub-Saharan Africa	Chapter 5	
9/21	Sub-Saharan Africa Exam Review	Chapter 5	Practice Quiz 2 – 9/25
9/26	Exam I		
9/28	Finish Sub-Saharan African	Chapter 5	Map Exercise #2 - 10/2
10/3	Middle East and North Africa	Chapter 4	
10/5	Middle East and North Africa	Chapter 4	News and Events Assignment – 10/9
10/11	Middle East and North Africa	Chapter 4	
10/12	The United States and Canada		

Date	Topic description	Readings	Assignment short description and due date
10/17	The United States and Canada	Chapter 6	Map Exercises #3– 10/23
10/19	The United States and Canada	Chapter 6	
10/24	The Russian Federation	Chapter 3	Practice Quiz 3– 10/24
10/26	The Russian Federation	Chapter 3	
10/31	Exam II		Will drop the Lowest Exam [i.e. Exam I & II]
11/2	South Asia	Chapter 8	
11/7	South Asia	Chapter 8	Map Exercises #4 – 11/13
11/9	South Asia	Chapter 8	
11/14	Latin America	Chapter 7	Online Practice Quiz 4 – 11/18
11/16	Latin America	Chapter 7	
11/21	Latin America Start Oceania	Chapter 7	News Events – 11/21
11/23	Thanksgiving		
11/28			
11/30	Oceania	Chapter 11	
12/5	No Class – Reading Day		
12/7	Final Exam [Will not be dropped]		