

Name	:	Maction Komwa, PhD	Meeting Times	MW: 12:00 pm – 1:15 pm
Office	:	Exploratory Hall, Room 2414	Location	Horizon Hall - 5018
Email	:	mkomwa@gmu.edu	Office hours	T: 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm W: 10:30 am - 11:30 pm or by appointment
Phone	:	703-993-5646	Credits	3.00

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)

Name: Ethan Hopson
Email: ehopson2@gmu.edu Office: Exploratory Hall - TBA
Office Hours: TBA

Learning Assistant (LA)

Name: Meghan Drzewiecki
Email: mdrzewie@gmu.edu Office: Exploratory Hall - 2400 – Cubicle #D 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

Upon completing a Global Contexts course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain how patterns of global connections across nations and/or cultures have shaped societies to create interdependence and inequality.
- Use a disciplinary lens to demonstrate knowledge of how at least one nation and/or culture participates in or is affected by global contexts.
- Apply an understanding of one's own positionality within a globally interdependent and unequal world to analyze solutions to global problems.
- Compare and contrast different places or regions based on their geographic characteristics.

Mason Core: This course is part of the Mason Core curriculum and fulfills requirements for Global Contexts.

Global Contexts

The Global Contexts (GC) Mason Core requirement is to enable students to explore global connections through a disciplinary lens and to understand how global systems have created both interdependence and inequalities that engaged citizens must understand in order to work toward an equitable and sustainable future.

Required Textbook

Title: Nijman, Shin, and Muller, Geography: Realms, Regions, and Concepts, 18th edition, Wiley & Sons.

Assignments Procedures and Evaluation

Throughout the semester, your final grade will be determined by your performance on the

assignments listed below, totaling **1,000 points**. To maximize your success and avoid late-penalty deductions, please monitor the course schedule and Canvas regularly to stay informed of all deadlines.

A. Map Quizzes & Exercises (200 points)

- You will complete four map exercise quizzes that utilize visual data to analyze specific world regions. These assignments focus on identifying regional similarities and global inequalities by examining a wide range of social, economic, and environmental indicators, such as GDP, climate vulnerability, gender disparities in education, and refugee migration patterns. By interpreting these maps and charts, students will gain a deeper understanding of how resources and challenges are distributed across the globe.

B. Selected Chapter Quizzes (100 points)

- You will complete five online quizzes covering selected chapters to reinforce your understanding of core concepts. These assignments are designed to strengthen your comprehension of the course material and serve as a primary study tool to help you prepare for exams.

C. Examination (500 points)

- **Three Exams** will be administered. [Exam 1; Mid-Term and Final Exam]
- Exams will comprise of Multiple- Choice-Questions, True/False Questions and Fill-in-the blank questions.
- The final exam date is strictly fixed and cannot be changed for personal reasons. For unexpected emergencies, contact the instructor immediately for potential accommodations.
 - **EXAM I & Exam 2 (150 points each) = 300 Points**
 - **Final Exam [200 points]** NO MAKEUP EXAMS will be given without supporting documents.

D. In-class Kahoot Games – 100 points

- In-class Kahoot games serve as a dynamic, collaborative tool to help you master the complexities of world regional geography while fulfilling the requirements for Global Contexts. By working in teams, you will strengthen your communication and problem-solving skills while reinforcing your geographic literacy in a high-energy environment. These interactive sessions transform global data into an engaging experience, fostering active knowledge retrieval that helps solidify your understanding of regional trends, cultural diversity, and interconnectedness ahead of exams.

E. In-class Activities and Participation – 100 Points

- In addition to Kahoot games, students will earn up to 100 points through active participation in various in-class activities. These interactive sessions are designed to bring the curriculum to life through hands-on country profile exercises and structured debates on global issues. By engaging in these exercises, you will apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios, fostering a deeper understanding of the diverse political, social, and economic landscapes that define our global context.

Late Assignments Policy

Due Dates & Flex Days

- To ensure transparency and help you manage your schedule, all assignment due dates are clearly listed in the syllabus and on Canvas. To provide flexibility, you are granted two "flex days" per semester, which allow you to submit an assignment up to 48 hours late without penalty—no questions asked. Please note that while these days can be used for most coursework, they do not apply to in-class discussions/activities.

Late Policy

- I strongly encourage all students to submit their assignments on time to stay on track. However, if circumstances beyond your control prevent a timely submission, you may still

submit your work for partial credit. A deduction of **5 points per day** will be applied to all late submissions. If you have a valid, documented reason for a delay (such as an illness), please communicate with the Instructor, TA, or LA as soon as possible to discuss your situation.

Extra Credit

- While I typically do not offer traditional extra credit, you can earn bonus points through high-impact engagement. Rewards are available for the top three Kahoot winners, students who provide consistently insightful contributions to class discussions, and those who demonstrate exceptional leadership during group activities. All bonus opportunities and point allocations will be determined by the instructor accordingly to recognize those who go above and beyond to enrich our classroom environment.

Assignments and Evaluation

Percentage Range	Grade Points Cutoffs	Letter Grade	Percentage Range	Grade Points Cutoffs	Letter Grade
>=98%	980 - 1000	A+	77 -79.9%	770 - 799	C+
93 – 97.9%	930–979	A	70 -76.9%	700 - 769	C
90 – 92.9%	900–929	A-	60 – 69.9%	600 - 699	D
87 – 89.9%	870 - 899	B+	<60%	0-599	F
83 – 86.9%	830 - 869	B			
80 – 82.9%	800-829	B-			

Note: There is No C-

All students are expected to:

- Stay engaged with material, discussions, and deadlines.
- Respect classmates and express opinions courteously.
- Value and learn from diverse perspectives.
- Communicate clearly and professionally in writing.
- Emails: Strictly, use Mason Email Account. If you sent email from non-Mason account that email will not be read.

Recording and/or sharing class materials

All course materials posted to Canvas 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.

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

Week	Date	Topic Description	Assigned Readings	Assignment due by specified date(s) 11:59 pm
1	1/21	Course Overview	NA	Self-Introductions & Team Building
		Concepts of World Geography	Syllabus	
2	1/26	Intro – World Regional Geography	Chapter 1	Team Building/Class Activity
	1/28	Intro – World Regional Geography	Chapter 1	Kahoot Game #1 – 1/28
3	2/2 & 2/4	Geographies of Development & Globalization	Chapter 1	In-class Activity Quiz #1 – due 2/7 [Online]
		Geographies of Development & Globalization	Chapter 1	
4	2/9 & 2/11	Europe	Chapter 5	Kahoot Game #2 Map Exercise Quiz #1 – due 2/15 [Online]
5	2/16	Europe <i>Exam Review</i>	Chapter 5	In-class Activity
	2/18	Exam 1		Exam 1
6	2/23 & 2/25	North America	Chapter 2	Kahoot Game #3 Quiz #2 – due 2/28 [Online]
7	3/2 & 3/4	Middle America	Chapter 3	Map Exercise Quiz #2 – due 3/8 [Online]
8	3/9 & 3/11	Spring Break	No assigned reading	None
9	3/16 & 3/18	South America	Chapter 3	In-class Activity Kahoot Game #4 Quiz #3 – due 3/21 [Online]
10	3/23	South America <i>Exam Review</i>	Chapter 4	
	3/25	Exam 2		
11	3/30 & 4/1	Sub-Saharan Africa	Chapter 8	In-class Activity Quiz #4 – due 4/3 [Online]
12	4/6 & 4/8	North Africa/Southwest Asia	Chapter 7	Map Exercise Quiz 3 – 4/5 [Online]
13	4/13 & 4/15	North Africa/Southwest Asia South Asia	Chapter 7 & Chapter 9	Kahoot Game #5
14	4/20 & 4/22	South Asia Southeast Asia	Chapter 9 & Chapter 11	In-class Activity Quiz #5 – due 4/25 [Online]
15	4/27 & 4/29	Southeast Asia Austral Realm	Chapter 11 & Chapter 12	Final in-class Activity Final Kahoot Game #6
16	5/4	Austral Realm <i>Exam Review</i>	Chapter 9	Map Exercise Quiz 4 – due 5/3 [Online]
	5/11	Final Exam – Final Exam – Please plan your travel schedule accordingly to ensure it does not interfere with the exam.		Final Exam 5/11 [10:30 am – 1:10 pm]

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.



Common Policies Affecting All Courses at George Mason University

Updated August 2025

These four policies affect students in all courses at George Mason University. This Course Policy Addendum must be made available to students in all courses (see Catalog Policy AP.2.5) or click the link: [GMU Common Course Policies - Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning](#)

Academic Standards:

Academic Standards exist to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution's goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourage continued ethical behavior of faculty and students to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment forward into professional practice.

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, co-authored pieces, and project reports.
- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is outlined in [the university's procedures](#). Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for understanding how these general expectations regarding academic standards apply to each course, assignment, or exam they participate in; students should ask their instructor for clarification on any aspect that is not clear to them.

Accommodations for 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, please visit <https://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500.

Email: ods@gmu.edu. Phone: (703) 993-2474.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for registering with Disability Services and communicating about their approved accommodations with their instructor *in advance* of any relevant class meeting, assignment, or exam.

FERPA and Use of GMU Email Addresses for Course Communication

The [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) governs the disclosure of [education records for eligible students](#) and is an essential aspect of any course. **Students must use their GMU email account** to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. Instructors will not respond to messages sent from or send messages regarding course content to a non-GMU email address.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for checking their GMU email regularly for course-related information, and/or ensuring that GMU email messages are forwarded to an account they do check.

Title IX Resources and Required Reporting

As a part of George Mason University's commitment to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. Accordingly, **all non-confidential**

employees, including your faculty member, have a legal requirement to report to the Title IX Coordinator, all relevant details obtained directly or indirectly about any incident of Prohibited Conduct (such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based stalking, dating/domestic violence). Upon notifying the Title IX Coordinator of possible Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator will assess the report and determine if outreach is required. If outreach is required, the individual the report is about (the “Complainant”) will receive a communication, likely in the form of an email, offering that person the option to meet with a representative of the Title IX office.

For more information about non-confidential employees, resources, and Prohibited Conduct, please see [University Policy 1202: Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#). Questions regarding Title IX can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator via email to TitleIX@gmu.edu, by phone at 703-993-8730, or in person on the Fairfax campus in Aquia 373.

Student opportunity: If you prefer to speak to someone **confidentially**, please contact one of Mason’s confidential employees in Student Support and Advocacy ([SSAC](#)), Counseling and Psychological Services ([CAPS](#)), Student Health Services ([SHS](#)), and/or the [Office of the University](#)

Additional Policies

[Digital Interventions – AI](#)

Generative AI tools, such as large language models, are powerful tools that can support your learning by helping with tasks like brainstorming and generating ideas. However, they can also interfere with the learning process. This means you must explicitly disclose when and how you've used AI in your work, including the specific platform and date of use. Treat AI-generated material like any other source—it must be properly cited, and you are not permitted to submit it as your own original work. Failure to follow this policy is a serious academic integrity violation and will be punished accordingly. Additionally, George Mason University's Academic Standards Policy prohibits students from cheating, plagiarism, stealing, and lying in academic work.

Diversity

Diversity is an important in an academic environment, and is a priority for George Mason University. See: <http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement/>

“George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals.

Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.”

Absences & Accommodations

- **Religious Holidays:** Please refer to George Mason University's calendar of religious holidays and observations (<http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>). It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments.
- **Absence for documented illness:** Students who miss multiple virtual classes due to prolonged illness should seek medical care and provide documentation of such to the Dean's Office, which will communicate with the student's professor(s). A prolonged absence may necessitate the student's withdrawal from the course or from the University for the semester.
- **At the discretion of the professor:** There may be cases where an absence is undocumented but is, nevertheless, excused by the professor (e.g., absence due to a death in the family). Students should initiate a conversation with their professors about the nature and duration of the absence, in advance of the absence whenever possible.

When absences are excused, students remain responsible for all assigned work, and shall be provided with the opportunity to make up, without penalty, any work that they have missed.

University Resources

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

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