

Chaminade University
Geography 102 World Regional Geography (GE 102)
Online Course Syllabus 2009

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Office hours: contact by email

Textbook: deBlij, H. Geography: Realms, Regions and Concepts (preferably most recent edition)

Note: The syllabus does not identify specific page numbers for reading assignments to avoid confusion since students do not always have the same edition of the text. The discussion questions allude to information to be searched for in the text and other sources. Students can use the text's index to expedite the search for information and are encouraged to review the entire contents of each chapter, particularly maps and text boxes to appreciate the interdisciplinary approach to learning world regional geography.

Course description

This course introduces concepts and ideas designed to study physical and cultural diversity toward the purpose of increased understanding and appreciation of the world. Each week will combine readings, online investigation, and online group discussions concerning particular regions of the world. Readings prepare students for understanding landforms, climate, biogeography, human settlement patterns, cultural landscapes, historical periods and events, languages, religions, political and economic systems, and current events. The objective is to understand Geography as interdisciplinary with relevance to a wide range of academic subjects.

Course Requirements

Introduction:

Course evaluation: (A=90%, B=80%, C=70%, D=60%, F=below 59%)

Requirements:

Four 2-3 page essay assignment (20%), 1 research assignment (30%) Final Exam (50%)

Grading criteria

Grades are determined by a combination of factors. There is an emphasis on structure and organization for all written work, as well as the usage of correct grammar and spelling. Another factor is the level of detail in the responses as a result of conducting research on various topics. Is there clear evidence of linking the information to concepts, terms, and issues discussed or read about in the textbook? Does the content provide sufficient description for the reader to understand the topic/issue?

“A” work answers the above questions in the affirmative without any doubt. Student effort often goes well beyond the requirements to incorporate a variety of other information to link the issue/topic with others. “B” grades result from a level of achievement that is solid, meaning well done overall, but there are brief lapses of quality in either form or content. This could be due to a few inaccuracies in content, grammar or

spelling errors, or clearly less detail than in those awarded an A grade. "C" grades are the result of a minimum effort demonstrated by a satisfactory performance in terms of grammar and spelling errors, poor organization, confusing presentation of information, difficult passages of writing, inadequate editing, and/or lack of adhering to the suggested format. These lapses are evident throughout the work and is the reason for a C grade. "D" grades are due to unsatisfactory work being submitted on a regular basis. "F" grades result in the failure to complete sufficient work to warrant a D.

Course Competencies

Demonstrate an understanding of historical, social and environmental processes shaping the world's major cultural regions. Demonstrate knowledge of basic geographic terms, locations, concepts, theories, and methodology. Critically analyze international problems within the framework of the course using appropriate geographic methods and tools. Demonstrate the ability to perform designated tasks in an accurate, professional, scholarly and timely fashion. Demonstrate effective use of information technology.

Essay Assignments (20%)

Students will submit four 2-3 page essays due by the end of Weeks 4 and 8. These are responses to the discussion questions identified below in the weekly schedule. The essays provide the opportunity for students to further develop an understanding of world regional geography by writing a more expanded essay on topics of particular interest to each student. Required components of each essay are an introductory paragraph, main body of text, and concluding paragraph. References are not required. This is also an opportunity to express personal observations and opinions. The purpose of this assignment is to improve written communication skills. Submit all essays to the instructor by email and *do not* post to the Discussion page. Title the document with your last name and essay 1-4 (for example, *Your last name essay 1.doc*).

Research Project (30%)

Students will complete one 6-8 page (typed, double space, grammar/spell check) research paper and PowerPoint presentation based on the paper. The textbook provides some information and online resources, but students are expected to use at minimum three additional references. Examples of online sources include major newspapers with online editions, the United Nations and associated international organizations, the European Union and regional organizations, influential national and international think tanks, and others of interest to students. Submit the research paper and presentation with your last name and research project title to the instructor by email (for example, *Your last name Amazon River.doc*). In addition, post the presentation to the Discussion page for class members to view and comment on. The last slide of the presentation must include a series of relevant and thought provoking questions that students respond to and provide commentaries on the content of the research. The purpose of this assignment is to improve research skills. The research paper and Powerpoint presentation are both due by the end of Week 9. As with the essay assignments, submit the research paper and presentation to the instructor by email and post the PowerPoint to the Discussion page, as well.

Each student will select a research topic from the following list to write a research paper and prepare a Powerpoint presentation (one topic per student so please email your selection to the class). The research paper must include a title page, introduction, main body, conclusion, and reference list. The research paper introduces the reader to the place but focuses on the current status of the identified theme.

Research project topics

Economic development in Shanghai, China
Sea level rise in Micronesia
Indigenous cultures in Papua New Guinea
Illegal immigration to Spain from North Africa
Piracy in Somalia
Civil conflict in Sri Lanka
Traffic congestion in London, England
Overfishing in the Philippines
Energy production in Russia and export to Europe
Environmental conservation in South Africa
Ecological restoration of Kaho‘olawe, Hawaiian Islands
Status of European Union membership for Turkey
Ethanol production in Brazil
Tourism development in the Maldives
Palm oil industry in Indonesia
Solar energy production in Germany
Railway infrastructure construction to Tibet from China
Scientific research on Antarctica
Labor shortages in Japan
Urbanization in India's new technology centers
Deforestation in the Amazon River basin
Global species extinction
Public health issues on the African continent
Unemployment in the United States
Middle East peace process
Global green workforce development
Invasive species impacts in New Zealand
Status of Aboriginal communities in Australia
Status of US-Iran relations
Economic activity in country of your choice
Public transit in US city of your choice

Online resources

Below are links to major media with online resources. These can certainly assist with informing your assignments and research papers, but I also share them in hopes that you find them of interest and worth reading on occasion outside of this class.

<http://nytimes.com/>

<http://www.latimes.com/>
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>
<http://www.csmonitor.com/index.html>
<http://www.thenation.com/>
<http://www.theatlantic.com/>
<http://www.cjr.org/>
<http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/>
<http://www.motherjones.com/>
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/0,6961,,00.html>
<http://www.iht.com/>
<http://www.grist.org/>
<http://www.truthout.org/index.htm>
<http://edition.cnn.com/>
<http://www.haaretz.com/>
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>
<http://www.smh.com.au/>
<http://www.scmp.com/>
<http://www.asahi.com/english/>
<http://www.mg.co.za/>
<http://www.c-span.org/homepage.asp>
<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/>
<http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/>
<http://cfr.org/>
<http://www.lavanguardia.es/>
<http://www.bloomberg.com/index.html?Intro=intro3>
<http://www.npr.org/>
<http://www.sfgate.com/chronicle/>
<http://www.jpost.com/>
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/portal/main.jhtml>
<http://www.worldchanging.com/>
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/>

Final Exam (50%)

The final exam is short answer responses based on the discussion topics identified in the weekly schedule. If the information has not been specifically identified or presented during the course then it will NOT appear on the final exam. There are no true/false or multiple choice questions. The exam requires students to provide sufficient information to demonstrate course competencies for world regional geography.

Online discussion contributions

In a classroom setting, contributions are generally based on attendance, participation, and preparation. The Discussion page is designed as a space for students to learn from one another based on responses to the study questions. Comments such as “good job” are not sufficient, neither is routinely posting redundant information that has already been posted. Students can post corrections, expanded definitions, observations, and/or current

events to the study questions. For example, if a definition of monsoon Asia has been provided, additional posts should expand on the information to discuss other aspects of monsoon Asia. The Study of Place outline provides clues for this expanded discussion. *The accumulation of these posts becomes a useful study guide for the final exam.* Do not post essay assignments or research project to the Discussion page, these are emailed to the instructor, however, do post your PowerPoint presentation in order for others to learn from your research project and participate in a discussion based on the questions you provide.

Study of Place outline

Below are the principal themes and concepts used to understand places and their cultural landscapes that entail an interdisciplinary approach to learning world regional geography. The concepts of environment, culture, resource, and development are informed by these themes and assist with the organization of the potentially large volume, and to many students, an intimidating amount, of information. This outline can be applied to regions and more localized places.

I. Physical

What are the dominant landforms (mountains, plains, rivers, drainage basins, and bodies of water)?

1. location
 - a. absolute (latitude and longitude)
 - b. relative to other features and regions
2. geologic features, history, and scale
 - a. continental or insular
 - b. mountain features and river systems
 - c. ancient or recent

II. Biogeography

1. Identify major climate types and associated natural vegetation.
 - a. biomes
 - b. plants
 - c. animals

III. Cultural

Who are the people, where did they migrate from and when, what languages are spoken, and what religious traditions do they follow?

1. human history of the region
 - a. population
 - b. migration patterns
2. dominant and minority cultural elements
 - a. languages
 - b. religions

IV. Land Uses

What are historical and contemporary land uses, agricultural, industrial, and urban? What are the primary urban centers and where are they located, are they coastal or interior? What are major products produced for domestic use and/or export? What is the condition of the infrastructure (transportation, communication, and utilities)? Is it sufficient to provide relative access for all citizens or are there large areas and populations that are marginalized from modernization development projects?

1. dominant historical and contemporary land use patterns

a. rural - agricultural

b. urban - industrial

V. Historical

What is the legacy of colonialism? If a colony, what nation was the colonizer, and if a colonizer, what regions and countries were colonized? For what purpose or product was colonization, and what relationships do the colonizer and colonized have today?

VI. Economic

Identify the resources, natural and human, controlled or dependent on for economic activities. Are these sufficient to meet general societal needs, and is there a need to import basic necessities (this does not include luxury consumer items)? Are contemporary consumption patterns sustainable to improve the quality of life for future generations?

1. economic activities

a. primary - resource extraction

b. secondary - manufacturing

c. tertiary – services

VII. Political

Have political and economic institutions in the 1990s been strengthened or weakened? Why?

1. political systems and ideologies

a. historical

b. current

VIII. Environmental Issues

What is the present condition of environmental diversity? List some of the environmental problems or challenges. Explain how they came about and why they may be difficult to address or repair.

1. environmental impacts

a. negative and positive

b. land and water

IX. Globalization

What role does the place have in the process of globalization? Is there major resistance to the process or other civil conflict that impedes unification among members of society?

a. level of engagement in the process

b. benefits and impacts

Schedule

The first week, please post an introduction of yourself to Welcome and Introductions and begin to review the textbook contents. Week 1 Discussion questions are posted and can be responded to after reading the relevant sections of the textbook. Weekly discussion questions serve as a study guide to the final exam, so the more you prepare now the better prepared you will be for the final exam. Responses should be based on information provided in the textbook and elaborated upon with information based on current or historical events, personal observations and examples, as appropriate. As these are lecture themes, and therefore topics we would discuss in a classroom environment, they are intended to engage students conversationally. This is where students learn from one another and build on the information others have provided to the discussion. For example, if someone posts a definition of a term another student may post an example of the concept/issue/topic in a specific location or region of the world. If, on the other hand, someone posts incomplete or inaccurate information or perhaps an opinion, than others can post corrections and/or their own opinions. Keep in mind the difference from fact and opinion! And it goes without saying that all communication is to be respectful of others.

Students must review the contents of the textbook to familiarize themselves with the material, particularly maps if you are not confident in your knowledge of world geography. Also, select the topic of your research project and indicate your selection to the class by email.

Responses to the discussion questions are posted at your convenience during the corresponding week.

Week 1

1. What is an interdisciplinary approach to learning and how does Geography achieve this?
2. Which region(s) interest you and why?
3. How are the concepts of environment, culture, resource, and development relevant to the study of world regional geography?

Week 2

4. Identify the major geologic and climatic features of Pacific Islands.
5. Discuss the human migration pattern to Polynesia. Where did the people who originally settled these Pacific Islands originate?

Below are two useful outlines for understanding Pacific Island ecological zonation and the potential impacts of climate change.

- I. the ecosystem concept
 - a. causal factors of ecosystem formation
 - b. ecological zonation and latitudinal zonation

- c. classification of Pacific Island terrestrial ecosystems
 - 1. control factors: ocean, fluvial, climatic, topographic
 - 2. ecosystem types: marine, fluvial, terrestrial

II. terrestrial ecological zones

- a. strand
- b. mangroves
- c. freshwater
- d. lowland forest, lower montane rainforest
- e. montane forest, upper montane rainforest
- f. leeward
- g. subalpine, high elevation areas
- h. kipukas
- i. lava flows

III. classification of Pacific Island marine ecosystems

- a. physical substrates
- b. biota
- c. variability of underwater topography

IV. marine ecological zones

- a. marine pools: tidepools and anchialine ponds
- b. sandy and rocky beaches: shorelines
- c. estuaries: mix of fresh and marine waters
- d. fishponds and harbors: areas altered by human activities
- e. mangroves: introduced in early 1900s
- f. seagrass: tidal zone
- g. shallow waters: sunlit areas
- h. fringing reef: terrace-like
- i. barrier reef: important offshore fishing grounds
- j. atoll: vegetated island, protected lagoon, deep ocean waters outside reef
- k. offshore deep ocean reef: twilight zone
- l. offshore islands: eroded volcanic islets
- m. neritic water: open ocean to 200m
- n. pelagic ocean: deep open ocean
- o. deep ocean floor: midnight zone

Pacific Islands and Climate Change

I. Definitions

- a. climate variability – defined as part of the global system of energy distribution.
- b. climate change – driven and associated by greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere.
- c. El Nino – ocean-surface warming in central and eastern Pacific Ocean occurs every 4-7 years. Impacts global weather patterns due to the surface area of the Pacific (oceans cover 72% of the planet). Creates a horseshoe pattern of drier than normal conditions arching from Melanesia to SE Asia to the Hawaiian Islands and wetter than normal

conditions from California to Florida.

d. Southern Oscillation – shifting of atmospheric pressure and wind patterns across the Pacific Ocean.

e. ENSO – thermocline (boundary of colder, deep ocean water) lowers in depth in the eastern Pacific Ocean. The change in wind direction and warmer surface water slows the normal upwelling currents that control nutrient availability. This loss of nutrients affects the phytoplankton and food chain, depriving many fish, marine mammals, and predator birds of nourishment.

II. Projections

- a. general global warming trend
- b. changes in rainfall patterns
- c. changes in natural variability
- d. increased ocean temperature
- e. potential changes in tropical storm intensity
- f. changes in sea level

III. Pacific Island Assessment

- a. look at vulnerability rather than impacts: how exposed are Pacific Islands to climate change? How sensitive are the islands and how capable are island residents to respond effectively to plan ahead?
- b. enhance ecological and social resiliency

IV. Key Issues

- a. educate the public and be proactive now
- b. improve water capture, storage, and delivery infrastructure
- c. evaluate existing ground and surface water assets
- d. look for alternative sources of freshwater and improve conservation
- e. integrate climate forecasting into policy decision making
- f. encourage public-private partnerships to improve management
- g. emphasize integrated water and land management
- h. utilize indigenous technical knowledge (ITK)
- i. plan for climatic extremes

Week 3

- 6. What is the monsoon and what are its impacts in Asia?
- 7. What European countries were involved in the colonization of Asia and what was the purpose of their colonial activities?
- 8. Compare and contrast the current global economic positions of China and India.

Week 4

Submit two 2 page essays this week (due Sunday midnight) in reply to any of the discussion questions from Weeks 1-3. These essays are based on information in the text and additional resources and must have an introduction, main body and conclusion.

Week 5

9. What helps explain Western Europe's historical success as a globally dominant regional power?

10. What are some of the challenges posed by expansion of the European Union and NATO into Eastern Europe and countries linked to the former Soviet Union?

Week 6

11. Identify the regions of the African continent and describe the general physical and cultural patterns of each region.

12. What are the major public health and safety concerns that currently impact many African societies?

Week 7

13. Review the physical geography of North America and discuss links to human settlement patterns, agricultural land use practices and urbanization.

14. As in Asia, European powers colonized Caribbean islands. What countries were involved and what island(s) did each dominate? How does that history influence contemporary island societies in terms of dominant contemporary language, religion, and economic activities?

15. Compare and contrast the physical geography of countries in South America, particularly the influence of the Amazon River basin and the Andes mountains on natural resources and economic activities.

Outline of the Americas

I. the natural environment: north to south

- a. landforms
- b. climatic diversity

II. cultural regions and influences: rural and urban

- a. indigenous
- b. European
- c. African
- d. Asian

III. ethnic and linguistic diversity

- a. Canada
- b. United States
- c. Caribbean islands

d. Latin America

IV. agricultural land uses: past and present

V. population geography

- a. U.S. population pyramid
- b. Latin American population growth projections
- c. contemporary population distribution
- d. migration patterns

VI. political geography

- a. colonial
- b. contemporary

VII. economic geography

- a. regional groups
- b. regional trade

VIII. geopolitics: strategic alliances

IX. environmental conditions

- a. conservation
- b. degradation

Week 8

Submit two 2 page essays this week (due Sunday midnight) in reply to any of the discussion questions from Weeks 5-7. These essays are based on information in the text and additional resources and must have an introduction, main body and conclusion.

Week 9

Submit research paper and Powerpoint presentation as attachments (due Sunday midnight). Please be sure your name and title are in the document titles that you attach.

Week 10

The final exam is short essay responses to questions related to the weekly discussion questions. The exam is closed book/note.

Please make your own arrangements with a Chaminade representative on the date, time, and location for the final exam.