

Chaminade University  
Geography 102 World Regional Geography (GE 102)  
Online Course Syllabus 2010

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Office hours: contact by email (this is the most efficient means to contact me if you have a question or comment)

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 combines readings, online investigation, and online student 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**

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

Online Discussion participation (10%), mid-term exam (30%), 1 research project (30%), Final Exam (30%)

### **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.

### **Mid-term exam (30%)**

Students will complete an open book mid-term exam in Week 6. The mid-term requires students to write two (2) two page essays in response to questions posted by the Instructor. The essays provide the opportunity for students to further develop an understanding of world regional geography by writing on topics of particular interest to each student that are related to the regions covered in the first part of the term. Required components of each essay are an introductory paragraph, main body of text, and concluding paragraph. Evidence of using material in the textbook and a minimum of three online news sources is mandatory. Submit the mid-term to the instructor by email and *do not* post to the Discussion page.

Format: Title the document with your last name and essay 1-6 (for example, *Your last name essay 1.doc*).

### **Research Project (30%)**

Students will complete one 6-8 page (1.5 space, 12 font, grammar/spell check) research paper and PowerPoint presentation based on the paper due at the end of Week 9. An outline of the research project is due by the end of Week 4 and a draft of the research project is due at the end of Week 8. The outline and draft are worth 10% of the Research Project final grade. The textbook provides some information and online resources, but students are expected to use at minimum three additional references and provide citations. 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. *Wikipedia* and similar sites are not allowed as the information can not be independently verified. Any indication of plagiarism will result in no credit for the assignment so be cautious in citing sources, use quotations, as appropriate. Contact CUH advising if you are unsure of how to prepare a research paper.

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*). The last slide of the presentation must include 3-4 relevant and thought provoking questions based on the content of the research. The purpose of this assignment is to improve research, written communication and visual media skills. The research paper and Powerpoint presentation are both due by the end of Week 9. As with the mid-term, submit the research paper and presentation to the instructor by email.

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 and use section headings to guide the reader through the content. 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  
Genocide in Darfur  
Health care reform in the United States  
Priorities for G-20 nations  
Illegal immigration to Spain from North Africa  
Piracy in Somalia  
Civil conflict in Sri Lanka  
Overfishing in the Philippines  
Energy production in Russia and export to Europe  
Environmental conservation in South Africa  
Status of European Union membership for Turkey  
Ethanol production in Brazil  
Impacts of sea level rise 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  
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  
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 (30%)**

The cumulative 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. Students are encouraged to use the Discussion board to discuss the weekly study questions to better prepare for the final exam. Students are responsible for scheduling the location for the final exam on the final Saturday of the term. Students not on the main campus are

responsible for scheduling a day and time and appropriate proctor as required by CUH.

### **Online discussion contributions (10%)**

In a classroom setting, contributions are generally based on attendance, participation, and preparation. The Discussion board is 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 could expand on the information to discuss other aspects of monsoon Asia. The Study of Place outline provides clues for this expanded discussion.

### **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 study questions are posted and can be responded to after reading the relevant sections of the textbook. Weekly study questions serve as a guide to the mid-term and final exams, so the more you prepare on a weekly basis the better you will be prepared for the exams. 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. The Discussion 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 and instructor 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. Define environment, culture, resource, and development and discuss their relevance to the study of world regional geography.

**Week 2**

4. Geologically, Pacific Islands are generally divided into volcanic high islands and coral-based low islands. Compare and contrast high and low islands in terms of climate and biological diversity and economic activities.
5. Polynesians purposefully migrated from Southeast Asia to settle Pacific Islands over a period of thousands of years. Identify the islands that make up the Polynesian Triangle and discuss a current event on one of the islands.

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. The monsoon is the seasonal reversal of wind patterns experienced in many parts of Asia. Discuss the importance of the monsoon to agricultural activities in an Asia country of your choice.

7. Identify the European countries involved in the colonization of much of Asia and discuss the specific purpose of their colonial activities in a country of your choice.

8. China and India are rising global economic powers based on the outsourcing of industries and export-oriented trade of manufactured goods. Select a city in either country to discuss the pros and cons of rapid economic development.

#### **Week 4**

Research Project Assignment: Submit to instructor by email a one page outline of your research project, including proposed title, keywords to be used to research in text and online sources, potential focus of research, and sources of information.

#### **Week 5**

9. The central location of Western Europe in terms of global economic trade has provided a geographic advantage for the region. Discuss the current state of transportation infrastructure (maritime, rail, road and air) in a European country of your choice.

10. The European Union has expanded its boundaries into the former Soviet Union. Select one of the new countries to discuss the pros and cons of EU membership.

#### **Week 6**

11. Africa is a vast continent of many political jurisdictions that do not generally adhere to linguistic and religious boundaries. Identify the regions of the African continent and describe the general physical and cultural patterns of one particular region of the continent.

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

#### **Week 7**

13. North America includes major mountain ranges, interior plains, deserts, and lengthy coastlines. Identify the natural resources used for economic development in the region and select one resource and one country/location to discuss the environmental impacts of resource extractive industries in the last century.

14. Several European powers colonized Caribbean islands and left behind diverse cultural traditions. Select one island to discuss the colonial experience and provide examples of contemporary cultural diversity.

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 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**

Research Project Assignment: Submit by email to the instructor a research project draft as an expanded outline of work to do or progress to date. Due at the end of Week 8.

**Week 9**

Submit research paper and Powerpoint presentation as attachments. Please be sure your name and title are in the document titles that you attach. Due at the end of Week 9.

**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.