

GEOG 101: World Geography

Cornell Prison Education Program

Cayuga Community College

Fall 2021 | 3 credit hours | Auburn CF

Credits: 3 credit hours

Meeting times: Friday, 6:30 – 9:30 PM

Instructor: Shriya Rangarajan

Course Description

This course on world geography seeks to introduce students to major geographic regions in the world and understand predominant social, economic, political, and cultural characteristics. The course is designed to satisfy a general education requirement. One emphasis is on contextualizing regional outcomes in terms of their individual histories and relations to other regions. A second emphasis is on understanding contemporary challenges such as population growth, economic inequality, urbanization, climate change, environmental degradation, and political conflict, and their unequal influences on different regions of the world.

Learning Outcomes

- Identify different approaches within geography, subthemes within physical and human geography, and their interrelations.
- Delineate different regions of the world and identify key economic, cultural, and political features of each.
- Appreciate contemporary challenges and their dynamics in different parts of the world.

Course Materials

As a course textbook, we will be using the **16th edition of Geography: Realms, Regions, and Concepts by Harm J. de Blij, Peter O. Muller, and Jan Nijman**. The textbook will serve as the primary reference for this course. Aside from this, we will be using a course reader that includes supplementary readings, recent case studies, and mapping work.

Assessment

Assessment for this course will be as follows:

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|-----------------------------------|-------|
| - Prelim 1 | - 15% |
| - Prelim 2 | - 20% |
| - Final exam | - 25% |
| - 3 Perspective pieces (10% each) | - 30% |
| - Class participation | - 10% |

Examinations: Three examinations – two prelims and one final exam of increasingly greater weight - will be held during the semester. Content for the prelims and final examination will be cumulative i.e., questions may be asked from any of the material covered until then, but greater emphasis will be placed on new content that has not been covered in previous examinations.

Perspective Pieces: Imagine yourself writing an opinion column for a popular news outlet with the goal of engaging your readership with various nuances of some of the contemporary challenges we are experiencing in different parts of the world. Five writing prompts will be released over the course of the semester, approximately every other week after the first; you will be expected to select and respond to three of these.

Submissions are intended to be short essays of ~1000 words in length that are written in a persuasive, journalistic style. They should include both a well-researched summary and more importantly, your own position based on this research. You will be expected to do some additional reading outside of what we discuss in class and cite your sources appropriately (using preferably the APA citation style).

Class Participation: Class participation goes beyond attendance. Coming prepared for class, asking thoughtful questions, contributing to a positive class environment, and supporting your peers, all count towards class participation.

Schedule for assessments:

9/10	PP 1 given out (due 9/24)
9/24	PP 2 given out (due 10/15)
10/08	Prelim 1
10/15	PP 3 given out (due 10/29)
10/29	PP 4 given out (due 11/19)
11/12	Prelim 2
11/19	PP 5 given out (due 12/10)
12/17	Final Exam

Course Policies

Attendance: To fully engage with the material and to create a stimulating learning environment, your regular attendance and participation is essential. You are limited to a maximum of three absences in the semester. Although, these absences are sometimes unavoidable, I do ask that you let me know at the earliest of an inability to attend class and we can discuss mechanisms to catch up on a case-by-case basis. Regular absences will count against your participation grade.

Classroom atmosphere: In this class, we will be speaking about differences in societies and cultures across the globe. This is an opportunity to learn about people who come from diverse experiences and a place where we might find ourselves challenging our preconceived notions. Reconciling these differences involves creating space for diversity, inclusion, and respect, standards that we should hold ourselves and the classroom community accountable to. Integral also to learning, is the opportunity to engage in academic discourse, that can at times be uncomfortable. This classroom will provide room for respectful discussion and dissent where we learn to talk to each other with honesty and integrity despite our differences. If you feel at any time that these standards are being violated, speak up, or raise the matter with the instructor.

Academic Integrity: All work that is submitted for this course must be written exclusively for this course and authored solely by you, unless stated otherwise. All material that you source must be properly acknowledged and cited following standard academic citation styles, so as not to count as plagiarism. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask.

Students with disability: If there are any accommodations you require for disabilities or experience any other learning challenges, please reach out to the instructor as soon as possible. We will make attempts to provide reasonable accommodations to the extent possible.

Feedback: Feedback on any aspect of the course – content, assignments, classroom atmosphere etc. - is always welcome. I am committed to helping you learn by reducing any barriers to learning that you might face. The sooner you let me know, the sooner I can change course if necessary.

Course Schedule

Module 1: Introduction to World Geography

- A. Defining and situating geography within the social sciences
- B. Major regions of the world and their characteristics
- C. Basics of Geographic Information Systems

Movie screening: Baraka

Module 2: Europe (2 weeks)

- A. Overview of the region – economic, cultural, social, and political
- B. Europe through the ages: cultural, agrarian, and industrial revolutions
- C. Economic cooperation and social democracy
- D. Climate change and sustainability initiatives

Case study: European Union and Brexit

Module 3: Central Asia and Russia

- A. Overview of the region – physical features, climate, and resources
- B. Russia through the ages: economic, cultural, social, and political effects
- C. Central Asia at the crossroads of the world

Case study: Control of the arctic circle

Module 4: North America

- A. Overview of the region – economic, cultural, social, and political
- B. Industrial development and growth of the information economy
- C. Urbanization and urban-rural disparities

Case study: Industrialization of the American food system

Module 5: South and Central America

- A. Overview of the region – economic, cultural, social, and political
- B. Historical context: colonization and effects
- C. Income inequality and economic crises
- D. Environmental degradation and climate change

Case study: Venezuelan crisis

Case study: Environmentalism in Costa Rica

Module 6: North-Africa and the Middle East

- A. Overview of the region – economic, cultural, social, and political
- B. Oil economy and politics of oil
- C. Religion and culture in the region

Case study: Israel-Palestinian conflict

Module 7: Sub-Saharan Africa (2 weeks)

- A. Overview of the region – economic, cultural, social, and political
- B. Demographics: Population changes and ethnic groups
- C. Economy: agriculture and mineral wealth
- D. Poverty, international aid, and its effects

Case study: Cape town water crisis

Case study: HIV epidemic

Module 8: South Asia

- A. Overview of the region – economic, cultural, social, and political
- B. Physical features, climate, and resources
- C. Human settlements: population growth versus resource use
- D. Economy of South Asia

Case study: Language and religion in India

Case study: Microfinance in Bangladesh

Module 9: East Asia

- A. Overview of the region – economic, cultural, social, and political
- B. Physical features and natural hazards
- C. China: economic growth and political influence

Case study: Population decline in Japan

Module 10: Southeast Asia

- A. Overview of the region – economic, cultural, social, and political
- B. Climate and environmental resources
- C. Effects of globalization

Case study: The Rohingya crisis

Case study: Global waste management

Module 11: Oceania and Australia

- A. Overview of the region – economic, cultural, social, and political

Case Study: Forest fires and environmental degradation in Australia

This syllabus may be changed with reasonable notice.