

World Regional Geography

Pols 104/Geog 101 (Sect. 1&2)

Fall 2009

Tuesdays and Thursdays

10:50-12:05/12:15-1:30

Maybank 307

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Office hours: Wednesdays 2-5
Or by appointment—don't be afraid to ask!

Class Syllabus

Course Description

You completed your homework on a computer made in Hong Kong using software written in India. You sent a letter to your uncle stationed in Afghanistan and went out for dinner at a Caribbean restaurant. You get home and sit down for Ethiopian coffee on your futon made in Sweden, drifting to sleep dreaming of skiing in the Alps. Even though you live in South Carolina, you've had a *very global day*. What do all of these places have to do with one another? What's going on here that they are so much a part of your daily life?

Geography is about much more than knowing **where** places are. The purpose of this course is to help you develop geographical skills that will enable you to better understand and appreciate the place where you live as well as places around the world. **This course is about understanding the fundamental politics of our interconnections.**

Geography offers an integrated way of understanding that is increasingly useful for addressing some of the world's most pressing political and economic problems. The terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, and the subsequent war on Iraq dramatically altered the geopolitical landscape, both at the scale of daily life and at the global scale. Pollution and environmental degradation threaten the health of ecosystems and human communities at local, regional, and global scales. Globalization creates increased interdependence among places, meaning that events in one city may have significant implications for places halfway around the world. As Hurricane Katrina and the flooding of New Orleans showed, uneven geographies of unprecedented wealth and abject poverty persist and worsen both at the global scale and at the local scale, even within the richest of countries.

On the other hand, our ability to solve these problems is potentially greater now than at any time in the past. The concepts and ideas we discuss in class will help you to make sense of the world we live in and may help you begin to formulate ideas about solutions to many of the problems we face at the beginning of the 21st century. The understanding you take away from this class will not only benefit you as a citizen, it will also be of use to you in a future vocation.

The class time will be divided between lectures and audio/films. You will be evaluated based on your ability to critically engage the media presented to you and the research conducted by you. By being 'critical' I mean to be able to critique a particular stance and understand multiple points of view. Being critical means to be able to articulate the assumptions of a particular argument or point of view. Students will receive feedback on both exams and written assignments.

Student Learning Goals

- Gain a basic understanding of major world regions and their distinct physical and cultural characteristics.
- Increase knowledge and understanding about how societies and environments vary across the world—the “unevenness” of geographical phenomena.
- Learn a geographer’s approach to understanding global politics and economics (political economy): processes such as “development” and “globalization.”
- Provide the opportunity to become a more informed world citizen.
- Gain skills in critical reading and research.

Course Relevance:

Of interest to students pursuing careers in geography, political science, business, economics, teaching, journalism, environmental or social activism, and anthropology.

Readings:

Readings are *preparatory*. That is, you will be expected to read the relevant chapter material *before* lectures and class discussion.

Required text, available at the CofC Bookstore:

Marston, S.A., Knox, P.L. and Liverman, D.M. 2008. *World Regions in Global Context: Peoples, Places, and Environments*. Prentice-Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ. ISBN: 0-13-022484-7 Third Edition.

Current Affairs: It is **strongly recommended** that you do **at least one** of the following:

(a) Visit the BBC News web site **daily** given its international focus, and its analytical quality (compared to CNN). The BBC site is available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>.

(b) Read *The Economist* **weekly**, either in the periodical section of the library, or visit <http://www.economist.com/index.html>. Students can also order a subscription at a reduced rate.

(c) Read a newspaper with a strong international (versus US) focus on a **daily** basis. The *International Herald Tribune* is recommended if you can only consider a free web site. It is available at: <http://www.iht.com>. If you can afford a newspaper subscription, consider reading the *New York Times* (which is also available in the periodical section of the library, or free of charge at: <http://www.nytimes.com>). The *Financial Times* is another option (accessible for free at: <http://www.ft.com>).

These current affairs resources will be used for exercises in the course, for exams and assignments, and to complement lecture material.

Class Communication:

The syllabus, assignment instructions, and all lectures in PowerPoint (including links to videos shown) will be available for downloading and/or printing from CofC's WebCT site.

Assignments are to be submitted to me **electronically**, to my email address: **WatsonAM@cofc.edu**. This is to minimize paper waste; if you do not use email or the web, you may request to hand in printed, paper copies of assignments. When an assignment is due, I expect to receive it in my inbox no later than midnight, and you must not assume that I received it—I **will always email you a confirmation** upon its receipt. Without a receipt from me, I will consider any assignment late.

Class policies:

Attendance: Attendance is **mandatory**. You are expected to be on time, participate in class discussions, and do the assigned readings. **Notices from the Absent Memo Office does not constitute an excused absence.** Unexcused absences may result in a failing grade. If you are required to participate in college-sponsored activities that will cause you to miss class, you must fill out the appropriate forms at 67 George St., or call Constance Nelson (953-3390). Of course, you must notify me as soon as possible of your absence.

Assignments are due by the end of the day they are scheduled to be due (i.e., midnight), unless otherwise noted. You will lose a full letter grade off of your grade for every class meeting that an assignment is late. **Missed exams are not excused**, unless the instructor is notified during the first week of the semester that an exam will be missed due to officially-sponsored activities as stated above.

It is assumed that all students will act with academic integrity and will not engage in behavior such as plagiarism, academic dishonesty, misrepresentation, or cheating. Please refer to the college's policy on academic honesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will result in an XF in the class. The entire purpose of this class is to acquire useful skills; to cheat is to lose the opportunity to improve these skills.

Plagiarism refers to the presentation of someone else's ideas, work, or words as your own, without attribution. If you use someone else's exact words, then you must use

quotation marks in addition to a citation; simply naming the source is not enough. If you completely paraphrase someone else's ideas in your own words, then you still have to cite the source, but you do not have to use quotations. When in doubt, cite the source. If you have questions about whether you have provided adequate citation for an essay, consult with me before the assignment is due.

Support Services:

Please take advantage of the College's Center for Student Learning; they have walk-in labs for writing—a skill you will need to improve (and be tested on!) during this semester. The Center for Student Learning is located in the Addlestone Library (953-5635).

The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the Center for Disability Services/SNAP located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before accommodation is needed.

Grading

General guidelines for grades:

A – achievement is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirement

B – achievement is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

C – achievement meets the course requirements in every respect.

D – achievement is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.

I (Incomplete) – assigned due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, which prevent the completion of work on time. Requires a written agreement between student and instructor.

This course will use +/- grades, allocated as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| A/A+ =92% or above | C =77-72% |
| A- =91-90% | C- =71-70% |
| B+ =89-88% | D+ =69-68% |
| B =87-82% | D =67-62% |
| B- =81-80% | D- =61-60% |
| C+ =79-78% | F =below 59% |

HINTS FOR EXCELLENCE:

1. Do the reading, take notes on it (and on lecture) in some form. Make sure you see the purpose of the reading and its relationship to class.
2. Make a conscious effort to incorporate the lexicon of the class into your own intellectual framework and be thinking of examples from your own experience and independent reading. Try those out on your peers sometimes.
3. Ask questions! If the time does not seem right, write them in your notes and then ask later when I pause for questions—do not be shy on this one. Email me, or come to my office hours if you simply cannot bring yourself to ask in class.
4. Stay on pace. Do not let several chapters or readings pile up.

Assignment Breakdown:

50% Three exams (including final): (15 pts. each, 20 pts for the final)

40% Two primary assignments:

27pts My Geography of Globalization

13pts Reporting Regional Current Events

5% Pop Quizzes (5 pts), based on the chapters, on material not covered in class

5% Participation (5 pts):

Attendance, participation in discussion, and/or
emailing me questions or comments

Class Outline

Week 1: Tues, Aug 25th and Thurs Aug 27th

Tues: Introduction to class

Thurs: Read Chapter 1: A World of Regions (pp. 1-7 & 20-28) and Appendix 1

Week 2: Tues. Sept 1st and Thurs Sept 3rd

Chapter 1: A World of Regions (fully read by Tuesday, pp. 8-20 & 28-52)

Introduction to My Geographies of Globalization project (due Thurs, Oct 29th)

Week 3: Tues Sept 8th and Thurs Sept 10th

Chapter 2: Europe (read entire chapter by Tuesday)

Week 4: Tues Sept 15th and Thurs Sept 17th

Chapter 3: The Russian Federation, Central Asia, and the Transcaucasus

Week 5: Tues Sept 22nd and Thurs Sept 24th

Chapter 4: Middle East and North Africa

Week 6: Tues Sept 29th and Thurs Oct 1st

Tues: in-class **Exam #1** (first 4 chapters); first hour of class only

Thurs: Chapter 5: Sub-Saharan Africa

Week 7: Tues Oct 6th and Thurs Oct 8th

Tuesday: Sub-Saharan Africa continued

Thurs: Chapter 6: The United States and Canada

Week 8: Tues Oct 13th and Thurs Oct 15th

Tues: Fall Break Holiday (no class)

Thurs: The US and Canada continued

Week 9: Tues Oct 20th and Thurs Oct 22nd

NO CLASS—work on Globalization projects

Week 10: Tues Oct 27th and Thurs Oct 29th

Chapter 7: Latin America

Thurs: Geographies of Globalization Project **Due**

Week 11: Tues Nov 3rd and Thurs Nov 5th

Chapter 8: East Asia

Thurs: **Exam #2** (through chapter 7)

Extra Credit: Attend Paul Robbins Lecture, Thursday, 3:30 pm., Stern Center Ballroom. "The Tyranny of the American Lawn"
1 point for attendance, + 1 points for a 1-page write-up

Week 12: Tues Nov 10th and Thurs Nov 12th

East Asia continued, and Chapter 9: Southeast Asia

Assignment: Current Events Report project (due Mon Dec. 7th)

Week 13: Tues Nov 17th and Thurs Nov 19th

Tuesday: Southeast Asia continued

Thurs: Chapter 10: South Asia

Week 14: Tues Nov 24th and Thurs Nov 26th

Tues: South Asia continued,

and Chapter 11: Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific;

Thurs: No Class for Thanksgiving

Week 15: Tues Dec 1st and Thurs Dec 3rd

Tues: Continue with Chapter 11

Thurs: **Exam #3** (through chapter 11)

Finals Week: Current Events Report **DUE** Monday Dec. 7th

NO Final Exam

Have a great break!