Class Syllabus

Course Description

You completed your homework on a computer made in Hong Kong using software written in India, shipped through Singapore. You sent a letter to your uncle stationed in South Korea and went out for dinner at a Thai restaurant. You get home and sit down for Ethiopian coffee on your futon made in Sweden, drifting to sleep dreaming of surfing near the Great Barrier Reef. 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 these places 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 contemporary politics, economies, and cultures—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 attack of September 11th, 2001, and the 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 increases 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 your own ideas to solve 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 more than just to critique a particular stance. **Being critical means to be able to articulate the assumptions of a particular argument or point of view, or be able to articulate different points of view.** Students will receive feedback on both exams and written assignments.

**Student Learning Goals**

- Students can apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions [CofC learning outcome; will be assessed in the commodity chain project (30%) and all exams].
- Explain what geographers do, the geographical approach to understanding global politics and economics (political economy): processes such as “development” and “globalization.”
- Identify and describe the world’s major geographic regions and their distinct physical, economic, and cultural characteristics.
- Apply geographical concepts and the spatial perspective (geographer’s approach) to study global interconnectedness and interdependencies among places, as well as the resulting politics and economics in these places.
- Interpret and extend current news events through a geographical lens, to become a more informed world citizen.
- Gain skills in critical thinking, critical reading and research.

**Course Relevance:**
Of interest to students pursuing careers in government, business, teaching, journalism, environmental professions, social activism, and non-profit development.

**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:


Current Affairs: It is strongly recommended that you do at least one of the following (this will be of use to you for class assignments):

(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).

**Class Communication:**

The syllabus, assignment instructions, and all lectures in PowerPoint (including links to videos shown) will be available on OAKS. Assignments are to be submitted via OAKS.

**Class policies:**

**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 do not constitute an excused absence**, unless it is a required college-sponsored activity. Present to me directly your evidence of your absence if you wish to be excused. Unexcused absences may result in a failing grade. Of course, you must notify me as soon as possible of your absence. Only illnesses that require hospitalization will constitute appropriate medical excuses for absences.

You may NOT use cellphones, computers, or other electronic devices to “chat” or to browse the internet. I will ask you to place your equipment at the front of the room if you are using such a device for any reason other than to take class notes.

**Assignments** are due by the end of the day they are scheduled to be due (i.e., 11:59 pm), unless otherwise noted. You will lose a full letter grade for every class meeting that an assignment is late. **Missed exams are not excused**, nor given the opportunity to be made up, unless the instructor is notified during the first week of the semester that an exam will be missed due to officially-sponsored activities, or if you are unexpectedly hospitalized, 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, even when from an unattributed source from the internet, then you must use quotation marks in addition to a citation; simply naming the source is not enough. If you 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 assignment, consult with me before the assignment is due.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php
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 at least 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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A/A+</td>
<td>92% or above</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>87-82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81-80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79-78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>71-70%</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>69-68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>67-62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>61-60%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 59%</td>
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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. You might print the lecture slides out ahead of that lecture, and take notes right on the page!

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. Also, join (“like”) the “Geography at CofC” Facebook page, whose postings will help you better understand geographic analysis (and lead you to job prospects!). This will help you do better on tests.

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:

60% Four exams (60 pts): (three in-class exams, one take-home final)

30% Project (30pts):
  Economic Geography: My Geography of Globalization

10% Participation (10 pts):
  Attendance, participation in discussion, and/or emailing me questions or comments. Your participation grade can easily make the difference between an A and a B, or between a C and a D…!

Class Outline

Week 1: Tuesday and Thursday, August 20th and 22nd

  Tues: Introduction to class, begin Chapter 1
  Thurs: Read Chapter 1: A World of Regions (pgs 1-12, and Appendix)

Week 2: Tuesday and Thursday, Aug 27th and 29th

  Tues: Chapter 1: A World of Regions (fully read)
  Thurs: continue Ch 1
Week 3: Tuesday and Thursday, September 3rd and 5th

   Tues: complete Ch 1
   Thurs: Chapter 2: Europe (read entire chapter)

Week 4: Tues/Thurs Sept 10th and 12th
   Tues: in-class Exam #1 (Chapter 1 only)
   Introduction to My Geographies of Globalization project
   Thurs: Europe continued

Week 5: Tues/Thurs Sept 17th and 19th
   Tues: Chapter 3: The Russian Federation, Central Asia, and the Transcaucasus
   Thurs: finish Ch 3

Week 6: Tues/Thurs Sept 24th and 26th

   Tues: Chapter 4: Middle East and North Africa
   Thurs: finish Ch 4

Week 7: Tues/Thurs October 1st and 3rd

   Tues: begin Chapter 5: Sub-Saharan Africa
   Thurs: finish Chapter 5

Week 8: Tues/Thurs Oct 8th and 10th
   Tues: Chapter 6: The United States and Canada
   Thurs: Exam #2 (Chapters 1-5)

Week 9: Tues/Thurs Oct 15th and 17th
   Tues: NO CLASS, FALL BREAK
   Thurs: finish Chapter 6

Week 10: Tues/Thurs Oct 22nd and 24th
   Tues: begin Chapter 7: Latin America
   Thurs: finish Chapter 7

Week 11: Tues/Thurs Oct 29th and Oct 31st

   Tues: begin Chapter 8: East Asia
   Thurs: finish Chapter 8
Week 12: Tues/Thurs November 5th and 7th
  Tues: begin Chapter 9: South Asia
  Geographies of Globalization Project Due (by 11:59 pm on OAKS)
  Thurs: finish Ch 9; begin Chapter 10: Southeast Asia

Week 13: Tues/Thurs Nov 12th and 14th
  Tues: finish Chapter 10; begin Chapter 11: Oceania
  Thurs: finish Ch 11

Week 14: Tues/Thurs Nov 19th and 21st
  Tues: Exam #3 (Ch 1-9)
  Thurs: NO CLASS

Week 15: NO Class, Thanksgiving

Final Exam: Take home Exam #4; due December 10th, 11:59 pm on OAKS

Have a great Winter Break!