



Fall 2016 – Geography of World Regions

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Course Description and Goals

What is geography? The common misconception of geography among many people is that geography simply deals with names and locations of places. In fact, geography goes beyond merely memorizing the capital city of each nation. Geography, as its name implies- “Geo” refers to the earth while “graphy” means “to write”- is the study of the earth. It is a very broad subject that includes both physical and human aspects of the world. In this course, we will look at the world from the lens of geographers. We will examine the physical characteristics of each region and how the physical environment provides a platform on which various cultures survive, evolve, and thrive.

Why should we study geography? While the question above concerns with the nature of this subject, this question invokes the value. As is important to know the historic period one lives in, it is essential to understand his/her geographic context. Jared Diamond, in *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, delivers a powerful message that geography is the destiny of civilizations. Why some civilizations are more advanced than others during a specific period of time? In other words, why is there inequality among different cultures? What should we do to address immense challenges on the global scale such as economic inequality and climate change? As a citizen, one has the obligation to understand how the physical world provides us materials and imposes constraints, and how we in return leave deep imprints on the face of the earth. More than grasping the facts of the world, I encourage you to think critically and independently of how humans’ interactions with the environment have profound impacts.

Therefore, the main purpose of this course is to introduce students to the basic concepts and common methods employed in the discipline of geography, and their applications into the examination of the twelve world regions: North America, Latin America, The Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southwest Asia and North Africa, Europe, The Russian Domain, Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Australia and Oceania. Specifically, five geographic themes are employed throughout this course to examine the defining characteristics of world regions in the broad context of globalization. These five themes include: physical geography,

population and settlement, cultural coherence and diversity, geopolitics, and the geography of economics and social development. Please refer to Figure 1 for the organization of this course.

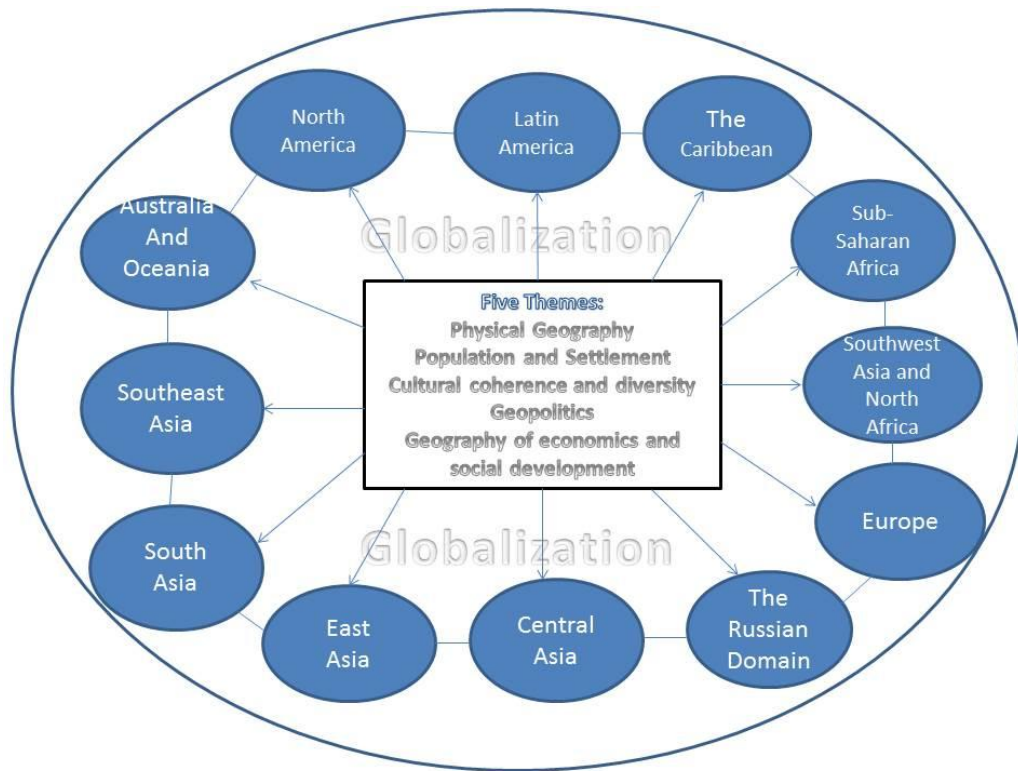


Figure1. Organization of this course

Required Text

Rowntree, Lewis, Price and Wyckoff

2015 Diversity Amid Globalization, World Regions, Environment, Development

ISBN: 9780321910066

*Additional handouts and articles will be posted on Blackboard

Recommended Text

Diamond, 1997 Guns, Germs, and Steel

Diamond, 2005 Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed

Friedman, 2005 The World is Flat

Taleb, 2007 The Black Swan

Student Learning Objectives and Outcomes

By the end of this course, your understanding of the world will be updated. You will be able to locate the world's regions, major countries, and important cities within them, and characterize physical, social, cultural, and economic aspects of each region. Moreover, you will be able to engage in discussions on how the force of globalization has been shaping the world and where it could lead the world to. By applying critical thinking, you will ponder whether globalization is a benevolent mechanism driving the human civilization.

Grade System

- (1) Reflection quiz: during each class, I expect you to get engaged in all class activities such as discussions and debates, etc. After each class, you will be given an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned from that class. I will post a few questions on Blackboard after each class. Each quiz accounts for 5 points.
- (2) Student report: you will be assigned to group projects to explore several world regions by applying the five themes outlined in the class. Furthermore, I expect you to examine these regions beyond the textbook. You need not only describe the characteristics of the region but also analyze this region's contribution to globalization and impacts brought by globalization. The report needs to be 5-page double-spaced word file.
- (3) Essays: I want you to write two essays with the same title "My Understanding of Globalization." The first essay will be assigned at the beginning of this class and the second one approaching the end of this class. The first essay is worth 30 points while the second essay accounts for 90 points.
- (4) Final exam accounts for 100 points. Attendance will account for 30 points. Participation in class activities will be worth 20 points as extra credits.

Reflection Quiz: 30	150 pt.
Student Report: Presentation	20 pt.
Report	40 pt.
Essays: 1 one-page	30 pt.
2 three-page	90 pt.
Final Exam	100 pt.
Attendance	30 pt.
Participation (extra)	20 pt.
Total:	460 pt.

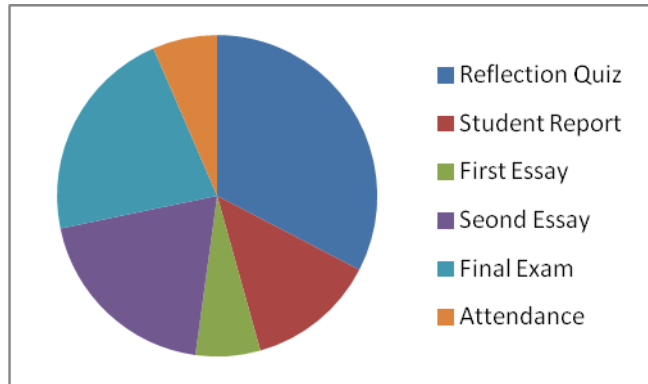


Figure2. Distribution of the Grade

Note: students are required to take all the exams and complete all assignments. Failure to complete all of the required assignments may result in a grade of F for the course. Points will be deducted for any work that is turned in late. 25% of the entire points for that particular assignment will be taken off if one day late. 50% of the entire points will be deducted if two-seven days late. You will get 0 for that assignment if you submit your work over a week late. A make-up quiz or essay will be considered only upon receipt of a written explanation for an absence.

Grade Scale

90-100%=A

80-<90%=B

70-<80%=C

60-<70%=D

<60%=F

Letter grades are based on the following guidelines

A: Demonstration of exceptional understanding of the subject and critical thinking.

B: Above average work that exceeds minimum course requirements.

C: Satisfactory completion of course requirements

D: Failure to meet course requirements satisfactorily

F: Reserved for those who show no commitments to this course

Email:

I WILL NOT respond to messages sent by any email service other than AUM Outlook Campus E-mail. AND ALWAYS PUT the course number on the subject line.

Disability Accommodations

Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours to discuss your accommodations. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. If you have not registered for accommodation services through the Center for Disability Services (CDS), but need accommodations, make an appointment with CDS, 147 Taylor Center, or call 334-244-3631 or e-mail CDS at [cgs@aum.edu](mailto:cds@aum.edu).

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is a very SERIOUS and UNFORGIVABLE offence under AUM policy. It includes but is not limited to cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism generally refers to unauthorized collaboration on research papers and use of unreferenced Internet materials. For every paper you submit, I will use a system called Turn it In to check if there is any evidence of plagiarism. Academic dishonesty will result in an automatic "F." A student may be denied an academic degree if found guilty of academic dishonesty. This is noted permanently on the student's educational record. Please refer to the AUM Student Handbook on Academic Dishonesty or feel free to contact me for further clarification.

Conduct In the Classroom

In the classroom, I expect you to show respects for me and your classmates. All students need a comfortable, safe, and distraction-free learning environment. If you engage in any behavior that can be disruptive or disrespectful, I will ask you to discontinue immediately or leave the classroom. I have NO tolerance for cell phone use in the classroom. If you have to use your iPads or laptop to take notes, you are not permitted to engage in activities that are irrelevant to the class.