

Department: Geography

Course No: 1700 [160]

Credits: 3

Title: World Regional Geography

Contact: Alexander Vias

Content Area: CA2-Social Sciences

Diversity: CA4 International

Catalog Copy: GEOG 160. World Regional Geography Either semester. Three credits.

Study of geographic relationships among natural and cultural environments that help to distinguish one part of the world from another. Analysis of selected countries as well as larger regions, with specific reference to the non-western world.

Course Information: 1. Course goals, objectives, requirements, themes, issues etc.

- a. GEOG 160 is intended to provide students with a means of understanding both the similarities and profound differences that exist from place to place around the world. A variety of geographical characteristics are addressed - environmental, cultural, political and economic – both individually and in their interaction.
- b. Exam formats may vary with section size. They include multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay. Reading assignments are most often in the course text, but additional assignments may come from companion readers on special topics or periodicals such as The Economist or New York Times. A series of brief research/writing assignments is common to the course (see attached syllabus for an example).

Current GEOG 160 Assignments

Select a peripheral country (any country belonging to a region described in Chapters 3,4, 5, 6 (except Japan and Singapore), 8, or 10) to write about during the semester. Each of the written assignments is worth 2.5% of your course grade.

Assignment 1 – due February xx:

Physical geography: climate, topography, vegetation, interaction of people and environment

Assignment 2: - due March xx:

Population – population pyramid (diagram), characteristics re: demographic transition

Assignment 3 – due April xx:

Culture and politics: language, religion, ethnicities/nationalities, form of government

Assignment 4 – due May 11:

Economy: domestic economic structure and foreign trade patterns

Each of the assignments should be about 2 pages double-spaced, including a list of three references. Each of the assignments should also include a relevant map. For each assignment the list of references should use the same style as Bradshaw uses on pp. 584-585 in the text. There are many academic sources in the library that you may find useful, including the journals *Geography*, *Geographical Review*, *Focus*, *World Development*, and *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. Useful internet sources include www.economist.com, www.worldwatch.org, and www.cia.gov (click on World Factbook). The CIA is a good source of public domain maps. Additional, more specialized, maps can be found at www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html. All internet sources must be listed by URL and date of access (e.g. www.uconn.edu, accessed on 1/20/03).

c. GEOG 160 uses a variety of geographical principles and models to survey regional patterns of a variety of place characteristics, especially at the scale of sub-continent and individual country. Given the current state of the world, the course emphasizes the impact of interaction between western and non-western groups. The emphasis of the course is on the less wealthy regions of the South - often referred to collectively as the periphery to the richer regions of the North, or core. Perhaps the most important theme of the course is the tension that arises in places due to intercultural interaction. Such interaction can occur, for example, when western-based modernization policies are imposed in places with non-western traditions. It can also occur in various diasporas. Typically, the course provides a brief survey of the patterns in general and then takes up selected continental-scale regions and individual countries in turn for more specific investigation.

Order of Topics (related reading in text):

1. Introduction: location, region, geography (pp. 10-14, 28-36, 71-74) 2. World/Global Regions (pp. 1-9, 15-25, 37-70) 3. Americas South of the U.S. (Chapter 10) 4. Africa South of the Sahara (Chapter 3) 5. North Africa and the Middle East (Chapter 4) 6. South Asia (Chapter 5) 7. East Asia (Chapter 6) 8. Commonwealth of Independent States (Chapter 8)

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: 2. Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility – The course is integrative in nature, both in geographical ways (interaction between places) and non-geographical ways (cultural variations in environmental impact). The approach requires that students appreciate connections that underlie seeming independence.

3. Acquire critical judgment – The course surveys a series of explanations for the variations in key characteristics (e.g. economic) between places. Students are required to develop an understanding of the importance of historical and cultural context under which such explanations are developed and applied.

5. Acquire awareness of their era and society – The course surveys current environmental, cultural, political, and economic characteristics of most of the world. It consistently uses those characteristics as a background of explanation for issues of significant contemporary importance.

6. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience – Such acquisition is the primary goal of the course.

7. Acquire a working understanding ... continue to acquire and use knowledge – The course’s research and writing assignments should help student achieve this goal. Successful completion of the assignments requires the student to become familiar with useful sources of geographical information about the world in general and about individual countries and/or issues.

CA2 Criteria: 1. Introduce students to theories and concepts of the social sciences – The course introduces students to geographic concepts, such as distance decay, associated with similarities and differences among places. It introduces students to basic location theory at the micro scale, spatial interaction models with respect to interaction (such as migration) and more general geographical models of development such as core-periphery and related world systems.

2. Introduce students to methods used in the social sciences ... - The course introduces students to geographical data analysis in both cartographic and digital forms, as well as data evaluation common to all social sciences (interpretation in the context of modeled expectations). Ethical problems concerning individual identification/confidentiality in micro-scale analyses are introduced. The implications of the income-based digital divide are discussed in the context of the application of geographic information systems.

3. Introduce students to ways in which individuals, groups, behave and influence one another and the environment – The course emphasizes interaction among groups/societies (as in the core-periphery model) and also considers variations in human-environmental interaction that occur in different regions around the world (e.g. deforestation, desertification from overgrazing, urban air pollution) 4. Provide students with tools to analyze ... groups... and to examine social issues and problems ... international level – The course develops a foundation in the contemporary discipline of human geography for evaluating current cultural, political, economic, and environmental conditions around the world. It emphasizes the so-called Third World, and in doing so emphasizes issues of cultural, political, and economic interaction between its relatively poor countries and the world’s richer countries.

CA4 Criteria: 1. Emphasize varieties of human experiences – the variety of human experience is brought out in the course by its consideration of culture – faiths and philosophies, settlement patterns, livelihoods, etc. in different places around the world.

3. Consider the similarities that may exist among diverse groups – the course considers similarities (often resulting from so called “cultural convergence”) as well as differences among groups.

4. Develop an understanding of and sensitivity to issues involving human rights and migration – The role of migration and, especially, related diasporas in affecting cultural change in a place are emphasized in the course. Human rights issues are addressed in the context of political practices in countries as well as fundamental issues of variable access to resources among groups.

5. Develop an awareness of the dynamics of social, political, and/or economic power... Variations in resource access across countries, as well as within groups, is emphasized in the course. The foundations for such variation are examined in cultural, political, economic and environmental contexts.

International: 1. The course focuses on issues of diversity/multiculturalism outside the U.S. – The course concerns multiculturalism across countries at one scale and also multiculturalism within countries at a finer resolution.

2. The course focuses on cultural continuities and transformation of time and place – The course considers cultural stability and cultural change in both historical and, especially, geographical contexts.

Role of Grad Students: M.A. level graduate assistants attend class, aid in proctoring and grading tests, and grading assignments. They also tutor individual students. In addition to M.A. level duties, some Ph.D. level graduate students develop and deliver lectures in the course as part of their preparation (in GEOG 415) for delivering the course as primary instructor. As primary instructors, Ph.D. students are supervised both by their advisors and by the Geography 160 coordinator.