

# **GEOG110-700 World Regional Geography**

## **Tentative Syllabus**

### **Spring 2015**

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**Office Location:** EST 422

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 8:00a-10:00a and Fridays 8:00a-11:00a by appointment.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:** This course is an introduction to geographical concepts as they apply to the world's regions. During the semester we will engage in a general survey of the political, social, economic, physical, and ecological systems of the world while applying the five main themes of geography: Location, Place, Human Environment Interaction, Movement, and Regions. The text and associated lectures are intended to help you develop an appreciation for the diversity and uniqueness of world's cultures as well as a deeper understanding of the complex geophysical differences of the world. Our goals are to explore world regions, understand how each of these regions relate to other regions in the world, and how we influence and are influenced by these seemingly distant places. You will be challenged to view the world in new and innovative ways and to think critically about current global issues. *This course fulfills a requirement for the Colonnade Explorations "Social and Behavioral" Category, General Education Category E, and is required for major and minor concentrations in the Geography and Environmental Studies program.*

#### **Required Text:**

Lydia Mihelic Pulsipher and Alex Pulsipher, World Regional Geography: Global Patterns, Local Lives (Without Subregions), 5th edition, W.H. Freeman, 2010.

ISBN: 978-1429232449.

A good world atlas is also suggested.

**IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO READ AND STUDY THE TEXTBOOK TO RECEIVE A GOOD GRADE IN THIS COURSE.**

**Course Topics:** The material for this course is divided into nine distinct sections or modules. Students will first be introduced to the basic geographic concepts and tools utilized in assessing the characteristics of the world's regions. Topics will include: the purpose of regions; significance of globalization; maps and geographic technologies; core vs. peripheral location; basic geologic processes; climate and vegetation classification; oceans and climate change; human-environment interaction; the agricultural and industrial revolutions; and demographic transition model and patterns of migration. These concepts will first introduced in Section 1, and the will be utilized throughout the course and applied to every one of the regions studied.

Following the introductory section, all remaining sections will cover the characteristics and concepts of the individual world regions in an effort to highlight the physical and cultural diversity which exists across our world. Some of the topics to be introduced are:

- world demographics, populations, and immigration
- economic development vs. resource protection
- role of distance, relative location, and physical obstacles on development
- socioeconomic problems stemming from changes in government
- international geopolitical conflicts
- water and natural resources
- colonialism and the situations of indigenous peoples
- the impact of non-native species on ecosystems
- natural resources and their effects on economic power

**Blackboard:** The use of Blackboard is absolutely required for this course. All assignments, tests, grades, and announcements will be made available to the class through Blackboard at [blackboard.wku.edu](http://blackboard.wku.edu). Students will also utilize the site for submitting assignments, posting messages, and holding discussions via the discussion board with fellow classmates. WKU email and Blackboard are the only means I have to communicate with you, so is vital that you check your WKU email account and Blackboard regularly (at least once per day).

**Technology Requirements:** You must have access to a reliable internet connection. It is suggested that Mozilla Firefox is used as the main browser, as Blackboard often has trouble with Internet Explorer.

## Course Policies

**Grading:** Students will be evaluated in the following areas: (1) Syllabus Quiz, (2) Section Quizzes, (3) Google Earth Assignments, (4) Map Quizzes, (5) Discussions, and (6) Final Exam.

All grades will be maintained through Blackboard under the “My Grades” tab. Please keep in mind that “-” means that your assignment wasn’t recorded, whereas “0” means that you received a zero on that assignment or that it is serving as a placeholder for a dropped grade. Grades will be based on a points scale as broken down below. A description of each assignment is provided below. A failing grade will be assigned if you do not login to the course; it is your responsibility to withdraw from the class. Your relationship with the registrar is your own, and I will not drop you from the class due to inactivity.

In the event that the university cancels classes, such as for severe weather, because this is a web course students will be expected to continue with readings, videos, and assignments as originally scheduled. Due dates for any assignments scheduled on canceled days will remain unchanged unless other instructions are posted on Blackboard.

Please keep in mind that the online grade book is a courtesy to you, and subject to errors. Therefore, I recommend that you do your own calculations when trying to figure out your grade and not trust the grade book final totals. If you see something that doesn’t make sense or is confusing with regards to interpreting your grade, contact me.

Also, keep in mind an “A” is a great honor and requires work above and beyond the average. Do not underestimate the amount of time you will need to devote to studying for this class and the amount of material that will be covered since it is online and 100 level. This is a

survey class, covering complex systems from all over the world. There is a lot of material you need to master to succeed in this course, and it will take a good deal of time and effort on your part to do so. Just because you are on the borderline between two letter grades does not mean you will automatically receive the next highest grade level. The points you earn will determine your grade. Do not expect to receive a grade higher than what you have earned. Do not ask for a grade higher than the grade you have earned.

**Grading Scale:** 90 - 100% = A, 80 - 89% = B, 70 - 79% = C, 60 - 69% = D, 0 - 59% = F (total points earned / 600)

Assignment	Syllabus Quiz	Section Quizzes	Google Earth Assignments	Map Quizzes	Discussions	Final Exam	Total Points
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	15	360	100	30	45	130	680

**Grades of Incomplete (X)** will only be assigned if all but a small portion of coursework is left incomplete and the inability to complete the course is due to circumstances beyond the control of the student. An “X” will be given **at the instructor’s discretion**.

### Chapter Quizzes:

Every section will contain a Chapter Quiz. These can be found in the ‘Tests & Quizzes’ tab on Blackboard. The quizzes will test the knowledge you have gained through completing the readings and materials for each section.

After completing all of the readings and watching any videos associated with each section, you will be expected to take a timed quiz to test your knowledge of the material. There will be a total of 9 quizzes in this course. You will **only be permitted to take each quiz once...** make sure you are prepared.

Each **timed** quiz will contain 30 multiple choice and 2 short answer questions. These questions are randomly generated from a test bank, so no two quizzes will be alike. Questions will consist primarily of multiple choice formats (including true/false and matching when appropriate). Short answer questions will also be included. Quiz questions will come from textbook chapters and additional materials provided by the instructor.

**Once you open a quiz, you must complete it**, so be sure to allot an appropriate amount of uninterrupted time. You **cannot log out and come back to the quiz later**. The deadlines for completing each quiz can be found on the tentative course schedule (*provided separately*) and under each of the section folders on Blackboard. If you have not completed a quiz by its deadline, you will receive a zero unless special arrangements are made with the instructor. If you exceed the time allowed for a quiz, **you will receive a zero for that quiz**. If you encounter technical problems while taking a quiz contact me **immediately**. However, please note that “computer problems” is not an acceptable reason for failing to complete a quiz by its deadline or within its **55 minute time limit**.

You are expected to take quizzes from a reliable computer with a reliable **high-speed** internet connection. You should not have other internet browser windows open while taking the quizzes. **Firefox** is the preferred browser for taking the quizzes. **Quizzes are to be taken**

**without notes, books, websites, help from other students, or any other outside assistance.**

Treat each quiz as though you were taking it in a regular classroom setting. Evidence of cheating may result in a grade of “F” for the course, and will indicate failure due to academic dishonesty. This grade will remain on your permanent academic record.

### **Google Earth Assignments:**

Not every section or module will have a Google Earth Assignment. These are found under the “Assignments” tab. These assignments will allow you to use Google Earth to explore world regions and their relationships with the physical environment, culture, and neighboring regions.

There will be **two** Google Earth Assignments (GEAs) **worth 50 points each** based on images from Google Earth, short articles and the five themes of geography. These assignments must be completed in your own words and must be your own work. Unlike quizzes, GEAs **are not timed**. You **will be able to log out of the assignments and finish at a later time** so long as it is submitted before its associated deadline. The deadlines for completing each GEA can be found on the tentative course schedule and under each module folder on Blackboard.

### **Syllabus Quiz:**

Found under the “Tests and Quizzes” tab. This quiz will ensure that you understand the syllabus and course policies.

You must complete one quiz designed to test your knowledge about the syllabus, course procedures, navigating the Blackboard site, and my expectations, amongst other topics related to the course design. This quiz will consist of **fifteen questions**, and you will only be permitted to take this quiz **once**, so make sure that you prepared and feel confident that you understand the class and my expectations. **This quiz is timed.**

### **Map Quizzes:**

Most modules will have map quizzes. These are found under the “Assignments” tab. These quizzes will test your understanding of where locations physically are in the region being tested.

You will be required to answer 20 questions about maps which will be provided. Each quiz will be worth 5 points. There will be a total of 6 map quizzes. You will have a week to complete these short quizzes, however, once started they cannot be saved and must be completed in 18 minutes. It is suggested that you use a world atlas or maps provided in the textbook to study locations of countries, cities, and physical features (such as rivers or mountains).

### **Final Exam:**

This will be found under the “Tests and Quizzes” tab.

Your final exam will consist of one long-form essay and two short essay questions. The final is worth 130 points, and will be used to assess your overall conceptual understanding of the course and your ability to compare different world regions.

### **Discussions:**

Every section will have a discussion. These are found under the “Discussions” tab. These discussions will introduce you to a current global issue in the world region we are studying, and will force you to think critically about these issues.

You will be required to take part in discussions for each section, worth 5 points each. Each discussion will be based upon a current event associated with the world region associated with that section. You will be required to read an article or watch a video, and answer questions provided. Your answers should reflect that you read the article or watched the video, and should be thoughtful and analytical. Personal experiences or knowledge gained outside of the course are perfectly acceptable to add into your answers. You may also provide thoughtful and courteous comments on other students' discussion comments for extra points.

**Extra Credit:**

Extra credit opportunities will be available throughout the semester. Before each section, an extra credit opportunity will be available for 12 points each. The instructions for these opportunities will vary, but they can be found under the "Discussions" tab within the "Extra Credit" forum. These will not be accepted late.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. **If an assignment is accepted late, 10 points of the grade will be deducted for each day after the original deadline.**

**Feedback to assignments will be provided within 2 weeks at most.**

**Class Etiquette:**

A class is a contract between two parties in which one agrees to learn and participate, and another to teach and guide. Any contract or partnership relies on certain etiquette or rules which all parties must abide by. As an online class, we must all observe special types of online etiquette, or 'netiquette'. Without facial expressions or tone of voice to express the true meanings of our words, we must all attempt to ensure that what we type will be understood accurately. We must observe certain rules to achieve clear communication. The following are some rules which are expected of all participants.

- Fulfillment of work responsibilities and on-time submissions of assignments
- Respect for others. Respect is crucial for any course, as the sharing of opinions and ideas are crucial to the learning experience. This aspect is especially important in online classes, as sarcasm and jokes don't often translate well in text (it is suggested that these be avoided completely). It is completely unacceptable to make judgmental or rude comments about any person's race, gender, religion, age, appearance, sexual orientation, or opinions. We are all here to learn from one another. Such comments will have negative results on your learning experience and possibly on your grade. In addition, it is probably helpful to re-read what you are to submit before sending it, for both grammatical and spelling errors and to ensure that your language reflects what you hope to convey.
- Use of Formal Language. The widespread use of text messaging and slang specific to electronic communication means that many students are tempted to use slang and abbreviations in online classes. This is NOT appropriate for online academic classes. It is expected that you will use formal language, grammar, and spelling in this class. Not writing in this manner suggests a lack of respect for the class and will likely result in a loss of points.

- **Participation.** Because this class does not meet face to face, it is expected that students participate in forums and other forms of communication. Participation can often aid in understanding of the course.
- **Communication.** If you need to email the professor, please compose a professional, respectful email to describe your problem, concern, or question. A quick response will be provided as possible.

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism and cheating is completely illegal in all academic work. It is unacceptable to copy material from a book, website, or other medium and submit it as your own original work. Similarly, your comments should be entirely your own. For example, in an online discussion, do not use the ideas or words of another as your own without attribution to the original source. This constitutes cheating, and can result in severe academic penalties.

**Class Schedule:** The Department of Geography and Geology strictly adheres to University policies, procedures, and deadlines regarding student schedule changes. It is the sole responsibility of the student to meet all deadlines in regard to adding, dropping, or changing the status of a course. Only in exceptional cases will a deadline be waived. The Student Schedule form requires a written description of the extenuating circumstances involved and the attachment of appropriate documentation. Poor academic performance, general malaise, or undocumented general stress factors are not considered as legitimate circumstances.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act:** You will be able to check your grades in an online grade book. You can ask me about grades via email, but in accordance with the federal law I am not allowed to reply in any detail using email, unless I have your written permission. Furthermore, if you are 18 years old or older, I cannot discuss your grades or participation in the course with your parents.

**Student Disability Services:** In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center A-200. The OFSDS telephone number is (270)745-5004; TTY is (270)745-3030. Per university policy, please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

**Technical Support:** Technical support can be obtained through the WKU IT Department, which can be linked to here (<http://www.wku.edu/it/>) and can be contacted by phone at 1-270-745-7000. This department can help you with email, Blackboard, or other technical issues.

**Student Assistance and Tutoring:** Should you require academic assistance with this course, or any other General Education Course, there are several places that can provide help. The Learning Center, located in the Academic Advising and Retention Center, DUC A330, has tutors in most major undergraduate subjects and course levels throughout the week—they can also direct you to one of many tutoring and assistance Centers across campus. To make an appointment, or request a tutor for a specific class, call (270)745-6254 or stop by DUC A330. Log on to TLC's web site at <http://www.wku.edu/tlc> for tutoring for students at a distance or to learn more. The hours for TLC are: Mon-Thurs 8am-9pm, Fri 8am-4pm, and Sun 4pm-9pm.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:** WKU adheres to a strict policy against plagiarism and cheating (see Scholastic Dishonesty Code in your Handbook). Academic dishonesty of any type will not be tolerated and appropriate penalties will be faced by anyone who violates this policy. Student work may be checked using plagiarism detection software.

When working on your critical thinking assignments, please keep in mind that representing written work taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. The academic work of a student must be his/her own. One must give any author credit for source material borrowed. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage without reference to the source after having changed a few words is also plagiarism. Other examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to cheating on an exam, allowing other students to copy your work, using work from previous semesters, and plagiarism.