

World Regional Geography

Pols 104 (Sect. 1&2)

Fall 2008

Tuesdays and Thursdays

12:15-1:30/1:40-2:55

Maybank 307

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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. On the way home you stopped for a newspaper at a local convenience store run by a family of Russian immigrants. You sit down for Ethiopian coffee on your futon made in Sweden and drift 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, discussions, active learning exercises, 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 oral participation 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, oral presentation, 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 proof of my doing so, I will consider any assignment late that is not in my inbox the date it is due.

Class policies:

Attendance: You are expected to attend class, be on time, participate in class discussions, and do the assigned readings. 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. Please refer to the campus honor code for questions about academic dishonesty.

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 and speaking—two skills 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:

These are not meant to displace your own well-developed methods, they are just things I have picked up over the years.

1. Do the reading, take notes on it 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% Two exams: midterm and final (25 pts. each)

45% Four primary assignments:

- 24pts My Geography of Globalization
- 13pts Reporting to a CEO on Regional Current Events
- 5 pts Take-Home Quiz
- 3pts Current Events report in class (1 time, one article)

5% Participation (5 pts):

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

Class Outline

This is a tentative schedule, though I do not anticipate changes. Please always check for announcements on the course's WebCT site! It will also show the assignments and their instructions, as well as deadlines for these assignments.

Week 1: Tues, Aug 26th and Thurs Aug 28th

Tues: Introduction to class

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

Week 2: Tues. Sept 2nd and Thurs Sept 4th

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 16th)

Week 3: Tues Sept 9th and Thurs Sept 11th

Chapter 2: Europe (read entire chapter by Tuesday)

Week 4: Tues Sept 16th and Thurs Sept 18th

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

Week 5: Tues Sept 23rd and Thurs Sept 25th

Chapter 4: Middle East and North Africa

Tues: Take-Home Quiz distributed

Thur: Take-Home Quiz **Due**

Week 6: Tues Sept 30th and Thurs Oct 2nd

Chapter 5: Sub-Saharan Africa

Week 7: Tues Oct 7th and Thurs Oct 9th

Tuesday: Sub-Saharan Africa continued; and any review you wish

Thursday: in-class **MIDTERM**

Week 8: Tues Oct 14th and Thurs Oct 16th

Tues: Fall Break Holiday (no class)

Thurs: Chapter 6: The United States and Canada

Thurs: Geographies of Globalization Project **Due**

Week 9: Tues Oct 21st and Thurs Oct 23rd

The United States and Canada continued

Week 10: Tues Oct 28th and Thurs Oct 30th

Chapter 7: Latin America

Week 11: Tues Nov 4th and Thurs Nov 6th

Chapter 8: East Asia

Assignment: CEO Report project (due Tues, Nov 25th)

Week 12: Tues Nov 11th and Thurs Nov 13th

Chapter 9: Southeast Asia

Week 13: Tues Nov 18th and Thurs Nov 20th

Tuesday: No Class, work on CEO Report project

Thurs: Chapter 10: South Asia

Week 14: Tues Nov 25th and Thurs Nov 27th

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

CEO Report **Due**

Thurs: No Class for Thanksgiving

Week 15: Tues Dec 2nd and Thurs Dec 4th

Continue with Chapter 11

Final Exam= December 11th, 12-3 pm for Section 1

December 16th, 12-3 pm for Section 2

*Note: the Final is for the whole course, not just for the second half of the semester.

No one will be allowed back in for an exam that has left the room.