

World Geography

Geography 240, Section 01

Hum 113, MTh 8³⁰-9⁴⁵

Contact information

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Description

World Geography introduces students to the field of regional geography through the study of distinctive features of the world's regions and countries, as well as the interaction of diverse groups in the process of global integration. We will address a range of themes, including economic development, population growth, migration, resource use, environmental issues, geopolitical issues and urbanisation. Both Western and non-Western ("developed" and "developing") regions will be included.

GE2: AALA, GE2A: AALA, GE3: WRLD, LA: LA

Purpose

Studying places, such as world regions and countries, is part of what is generally called *human geography*. Human geography is the study of how we relate to the environments where we live and how we experience and make space (*spatiality*) or, in this case, how we experience and contribute to making regions and countries. By studying people-environment relations and human spatiality, human geographers try to understand and explain why we create and/or experience different spaces/places and environments (for example, how did national boundaries come about, who really benefits from this boundary-making?). World regions and countries result from humans' collective interactions with each other and with different environments as well as from spatiality. The purpose of this course is therefore to provide a basic understanding of human geographical concepts, methods, and theories, especially as they pertain to the study of places.

Objectives

By the end of the semester, you are expected to become proficient in the following:

- (1) describing human geography and its main subfields;
- (2) defining principal human geography concepts (e.g., scale, place, space, spatiality);
- (3) describing the principal theories used in different human geography subfields;
- (4) accurately reading and critically interpreting cartographical, textual/graphical, and visual representations of space, using critical evaluative methods in human geography;
- (5) describing how spaces/places are made through social interaction and human-environment relations by using human geographical concepts and theories;

(6) summarising, relating, and analysing the interaction of diverse place-specific human communities in a global context.

Policies

- **ADA policy:** If you have documented disabilities, inform the professor privately during the first week of class and make the proper arrangements. Refer to the Student Handbook for SUNY New Paltz policies.
- **Attendance:** You are expected to attend lectures regularly. In case of absence, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from other students, *not* from the instructor. Absence from class may also entail missing class exercises, which cannot be rescheduled (a zero will be given instead) unless an adequate excuse is provided (see under “Rescheduling” below).
- **Class cancellation:** In case of inclement weather, call the department office (257-2995) to find out if classes will be held. Refrain from driving to campus if road conditions are hazardous. The course programme may otherwise be changed due to unforeseen circumstances.
- **Extra-credit:** No extra-credit assignments are given under any circumstance, but extra-credit questions may appear on exams.
- **Plagiarism:** Submitting material that is not your own work, including downloads from the Internet, is considered plagiarism, and will result in a failing mark and a report to the department chair and dean. Quoted material must be correctly cited. Refer to the Student Handbook section on Academic Integrity for a full discussion of policies on plagiarism, cheating, and forgery.
- **Rescheduling:** There is *no rescheduling* (missed exams and labs are marked with a zero) unless emergencies arise related to medical or family matters; rescheduling is contingent on the student presenting both documentation describing the reason(s) for the absence and contact information for the person providing the document(s).

Reading assignments

- **Course textbook readings**
Cloke, P., P. Crang, and M. Goodwin (eds., 2005). *Introducing human geographies. Second edition.* Oxford: Hodder Arnold.
- **Additional readings**
Additional reading assignments will be given periodically during the course of the semester as background information to assignments and documentaries shown in class. Such supplementary readings will be made available either through Blackboard or paper copies distributed in class.
- **Recommended reference books**
Merriam-Webster (2003). Merriam-Webster’s collegiate dictionary, 11th edition. Springfield: Merriam-Webster.
Rand McNally (2004). Goode’s world atlas, 21st edition. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Student workload

Colleges consider a 15-credit course load to be a full-time load, that is, 40 hours of work in and outside of class per week. For this course, this works out to 2.5 hours a

week in class plus 5.5 hours per week outside of class (about an hour each weekday). Students have been disappointed in their marks when they studied for many hours the day or two before an exam and did not fare as well as expected. Studying for several shorter periods every week will be a more successful strategy.

Here are some ways that could help you obtain a final mark of B or above for this course. **Before class**, read actively by taking and organising notes (e.g., making outlines) from the text. Test your knowledge of the material by completing the activities suggested in the textbook or by devising self-tests, such as index cards with new terms on one side and definitions on the other. Consult a dictionary for unfamiliar vocabulary and an atlas for unknown locations for a full understanding of the readings. **During class**, ask for clarification regarding any term, concept, or theory that you have not understood. Take ample notes on both lectures and class exercise discussions and ensure that you have understood all the class exercise answers fully by asking *how* one arrives at the answer, rather than just focusing on what the correct answer is. **After class**, integrate your notes on the assigned readings with notes from class and review any supplemental course materials and class exercises. Learn to apply the technical terms and definitions by reviewing the textbook discussion points and class exercises and memorize any map locations emphasised in class.

Evaluation

- **Class exercises and participation (30 points)**

Evidence of assignment reading and understanding of the material is judged according to the results of class discussions, which will be sometimes derived from class exercises. There are therefore two ways of obtaining points through class participation: one through interventions during lecture time and another through written class exercises and related discussion.

Participation includes answering questions posed by the instructor about the exercise, asking questions that elicit clarification of matters related to the exercise, and sharing insights or commenting constructively about the content of the exercise. Any such intervention will be given one participation point, for a maximum of two points per class session.

Class exercises will not be announced and may be given at any class meeting, so consistent attendance will be crucial. If you miss a class exercise, you will receive no points for that exercise, unless you provide an acceptable excuse (see under "Policies" above) so that other arrangements can be made. Exercises will be typically carried out in groups. The written parts are to be completed either during or beyond class time, depending on whether the exercise involves topics beyond assigned readings. All group members working on the class exercise will receive the same mark according to the following point system: 0 = incomplete, 0.5 = more than five errors, 1 = three to five errors, 1.5 = one to two errors, 2 = no errors. Individuals that fail to participate in the ensuing discussions of the exercise results will receive 0.5 points less on the class exercise compared to other group members.

- **Examinations (70 points)**

Examinations are cumulative, covering any class material up until the exam date. They may consist of questions in multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and short-answer

formats. Some questions require problem-solving based on logic and arithmetic. The weight given to each exam is as follows:

- Exam 1: 10 points
- Exam 2: 15 points
- Exam 3: 20 points
- Final exam: 25 points

Each exam will be marked according to a 100 point scale. To determine how many actual points you have received, divide your exam score by 100 and multiply the result by the total possible points for the exam. For instance, if you receive 75% on Exam 1, you will actually receive 75% of 15 possible points, or $(75/100)15$, which is 11.25 points.

Marking system

Final mark	Points
A	90-100
A ⁻	88-89
B ⁺	86-87
B	75-85
B ⁻	73-74
C ⁺	71-72
C	60-70
C ⁻	58-59
D ⁺	56-57
D	45-55
F	0-44

Programme

Date	Theme	Lecture topic	Textbook reading
28 Aug	1. Introduction	Human geography	
31		Space, place, and spatiality	pp. vii-xvi
7 Sep	2. People-environments	What is natural?	pp. 8-14
11		Place and nonhuman agency	pp. 15-17
14	3. Space/place	Social relations and space	pp. 18-23
18		Making societies through space	pp. 23-33
21	Exam 1		
25	4. Scale	Local and global	pp. 34-42
28		Systems and networks	pp. 32-50
5 Oct	5. Agency and structure	Enabling and constraining spatialities	pp. 51-60
9	6. Constructing spaces	Imaginary and actually existing places	pp. 78-90
12		Gendered spaces	pp. 91-103
16	Exam 2		
19	7. Culture	Imaginary spaces, landscapes	pp. 139-167
23		Materialised culture	pp. 168-181
26	8. Development	Wealth distribution	pp. 183-199
31		Accumulation and revolt	pp. 200-222
2 Nov	9. Economy	Production	pp. 223-243
6		Capital flow and consumerism	pp. 244-266
9	10. Environment	Ecological effects of recent human impact	pp. 267-297
13		Reactions to human impact; "Trinkets and beads" documentary	pp. 298-310
16	Exam 3		
20	10. History	The capitalist world-system	pp. 311-313, 326-338
27		Capitalist ideologies and cultures	pp. 339-349
30	11. Formal politics	Geopolitics	pp. 351-364
4 Dec		Nationhood and citizenship	pp. 365-388
7	12. Identity	Exploiting, suppressing diversity	pp. 389-410
11		Exclusionary processes	pp. 411-421
18	Final exam, 8³⁰-10³⁰		

**Please note that this is not a contract and I thereby reserve the right to make changes as deemed appropriate during the course of the semester.*