GEO 3471
World Political Geography

Dr. Robert L. Bledsoe
CB1-308
9:30-10:20MWF
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OFFICE: Phillips Hall 302
HOURS: 12:00-3:00MWF

Course Outline

1. **Course Objectives.** This one semester course in world political geography is designed to:

(1) introduce you to the variables that help us understand how the global system functions in its physical, political, and human/cultural dimensions;

(2) gain an understanding of how those variables influence regional development;

(3) understand how these regions are interconnected;

(4) become aware of the debate over whether globalization has transformed the international system into convergence versus those who argue that it has intensified divergence.

The primary purpose of the course is to provide the basic tools for any student to better understand the world in which we live. Since this is likely to be the only course you will take in the field of geography, we will be doing a "cook's tour" of the field (i.e., you will be introduced to more than one course in geography). Much of the material presented during class meetings will not be in the textbook, so it is your responsibility to both attend class and thoroughly comprehend the material in the textbook.

2. **Course Requirements.** The course will consist of a series of lectures focusing upon the topics and issues outlined in Section 6. You are encouraged to ask questions, inject personal observations, and challenge the assertions of the professor. Attend all class meetings. While no formal record of attendance is kept, you will find that failure to attend class will soon be reflected in your course performance, as lecture material will often not be found in your reading assignments. **Read and master** the material in the assignments. These are found in the textbook for the course:

Les Rowntree, Martin Lewis, Marie Price, and William Wyckoff, *Diversity Amid Globalization: World Regions, Environment, Development.* 6th ed. Pearson. 2015.

This is the only textbook required for the course. Reading the assignments and keeping up with the lectures is your responsibility. No specific pages of readings will be given from one lecture to another. Pace yourself according to the topics under consideration during lecture periods.

3. **Examinations.** Since there is so much material to deal with, there will be four (4) examinations during the course. All will consist of short answer, true/false, and multiple

choice questions dealing with concepts, principles, themes, comparisons, trends, countries/regions, geographic features, etc. All four will have map identification questions. Examinations are **not cumulative.** Each exam will cover that portion of the material outlined in Section 5. Midterms are t**entatively** scheduled as follows and will be held at the normal class time and meeting place:

(1) **Monday, September 18**
(2) **Monday, October 16**
(3) **Monday, November 13**

The last examination (fourth midterm) will be held at the normal class meeting place from **7:00-9:50pm Friday, December 8**. You will not need Scantrons or blue books for exams. You will use the exam question sheets for your answers. **Attendance at examinations is mandatory. There are no makeup exams. In addition, after the first person has turned in their exam and left the room, no one who is tardy and arrives after that time will be allowed to take the exam – they will have missed the test.** Exams will be taken in **pen** (no pencils). Be prepared to remain for the duration once the exams have been handed out, so make sure you are prepared to remain in class for anywhere from 75 minutes to 3 hours (or until you are finished and have handed in your exam).

4. **Book Report.** You have the option of doing a book report on one of the following books as a substitution for one of the exams (see Section 5 below for grading scheme). Or if you have a specific book that interests you that is not on the list below, check with me ahead of time to see if you can do it. You are strongly encouraged to elect this research option, as it will help develop critical thinking and writing skills, as well as provide a learning experience in a substantive area in more depth than covered in class. Critical thinking and writing skills are necessary tools for you to succeed in your chosen career field and essential tools for pursuing advanced academic or professional degrees. The following steps are involved in this project:

a. e-mail me with your book choice no later than **Monday, Sept. 11.** I will not accept your choice after this deadline. You will have chosen not to do the optional project.

b. after completion of your reading and organizing of your notes and materials, develop an outline of how you propose to write your book report and send me a dated typed outline before you start serious writing no later than **Friday, Nov. 3.** No outline will be accepted after this date – you will have opted out of the option.

c. your final typed double-spaced footnoted report must include:

bibliographic citation
background of the author(s)
major themes of the book
the biases of the book
author(s) conclusions
an analysis of at least two scholarly book reviews on the book (including where you agree and disagree with the reviewers) **Book report is due by the end of class on Monday, Nov. 27**. I will not accept late book reports. For those books checked

out from a library, show respect for the book (no damage, no underlining, no notations, etc.):

J. Michael Adams and Angelo Carfagna, *Coming of Age in a Globalized World*. Kumarian Press. 2006.
Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail.* Crown. 2012.
John Agnew and Luca Muscara, *Making Political Geography.* Rowman and Littlefield. 2012.
Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2017.
Saul Cohen, *Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations*. Rowman & Littlefield. 2014.
Niall Ferguson, *Civilizations: The West and the Rest*.
Jeffrey Frieden, *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century*. Norton. 2006.
Thomas Friedman, *Hot, Flat and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution – and How It Can Renew America*. Picador. 2009.
Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux. 1999.
Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat*.
Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*. Rodale. 2006.
Paul Hopper, *Understanding Cultural Globalization*. Polity Press. 2007.
Robert Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography.* Random House. 2012.
Robert Kaplan, *Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End to a Stable Pacific.* Random House. 2014.
Henry Kissinger, *On China*. Penguin. 2011.
Henry Kissinger, *World Order*.
Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Simon & Schuster. 2014
Baldev Raj Nayar, *The Geopolitics of Globalization.* Oxford. 2005.
Thomas Piketty, *Capitalism*. Harvard. 2014.
Dani Rodrik, *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*. Norton. 2011.
Mark Schapiro, *Carbon Shock: A Tale of Risk and Calculus From the Front Lines of the Disrupted Global Economy*. Chelsea Green. 2014.
Ken Silverstein, *The Secret World of Oil*. Verso. 2014.
Joseph Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work*. Norton. 2007.
Jonathan Tepperman, *The Fix: How Nations Survive and Thrive in a World in Decline.* Random House. 2015.
Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*. Norton. 2008.

5. **Grades.** There are five possible grades for the course:

Exams	(4 x 25%)	= 100%
Book Report	25%	= 125%

Each student must have **four** grades to equal 100% of the course. This can be the four examinations or three examinations and the book report (thus you can skip an exam, including the final) or do everything and drop the lowest of the five grades. Be very careful how you decide upon your options, as there are **no makeup exams** (either midterms or final). In no case is it wise to miss the first examination. This is the one that lets you know what is important to study for. Make your vacation plans for **after** finals week.

Letter grades:	90-100 = A	(Note: there will be no +/- grades)
	80-89 = B	
	70-79 = C	
	60-69 = D	
	< 60 = F	

6. **Assignments.**

I. GEOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND THEMES — Chptr 1 (pp. 2-29)
REGIONS
- North America — Chptr 3
- Middle and South America — Chptr 4

---First Midterm (**Monday, September 18**)---

II. GEOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES AND THEMES — Chptr. 1 (pp. 29-47)
REGIONS
- Caribbean — Chptr 5
- Sub-Saharan Africa — Chptr 6
- Southwest Asia/North Africa — Chptr 7
  - http://www.vox.com/a/maps-explain-the-middle-east

---Second Midterm (**Monday, October 16**)---
Note: withdrawal deadline is Monday, October 30

III. GEOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES AND THEMES — Chptr. 2 (pp. 50-65)
. REGIONS
- Europe — Chptr 8
- Russia — Chptr. 9
  - www.vox.com/cards/ukraine-everything-you-need-to-know
- Central Asia — Chptr 10

---Third Midterm (**Monday, November 13**)---

IV. GEOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES AND THEMES — Chptr. 2 (pp. 66-79)
REGIONS

East Asia	Chptr 11
South Asia	Chptr 12
Southeast Asia	Chptr.13

---Fourth Midterm (**Friday, December 8**)---

WELCOME TO WORLD POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY AND MAY
YOU HAVE A SUCCESSFUL FALL SEMESTER

Some Ground Rules:

(1) Classroom

no food or drinks (water is ok)
no smoking
turn off beepers, pagers, cell phones, etc.
tape recorders and laptops are permitted
if you are late, please come in anyway but try not to be disruptive when entering the room

(2) Communications

feel free to email me
office – robert.bledsoe@ucf.edu
home - drbled@aol.com (this one is public domain, so any confidential communications should use office or Webcourses)
call me at the office but not at home
Main campus (407-823-2608)
see me during office hours or by appointment (see telephone number above)

(3) Exams

if you are late on an exam day and a student has already turned in their exam and departed before you arrive, you are too late and I will not let you take the exam
once the exam has started, you may not leave the room until you have finished and turned in your exam (thus, be prepared to stay in the classroom from 75 minutes to up to 3 hours)
final grades are not posted on my office door nor will they be given out over the telephone/e-mail nor by the Office staff. I will be happy to return any course materials you may want if you provide me a stamped, addressed large envelop. Midterm grades will not be posted on MyGrades (only your final grade at the end of the term).
. Midterm grades are returned in class with your exams

Note: syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor