World Political Geography

GEO 3471 Spring 2017

Course Home

Instructor Contact:

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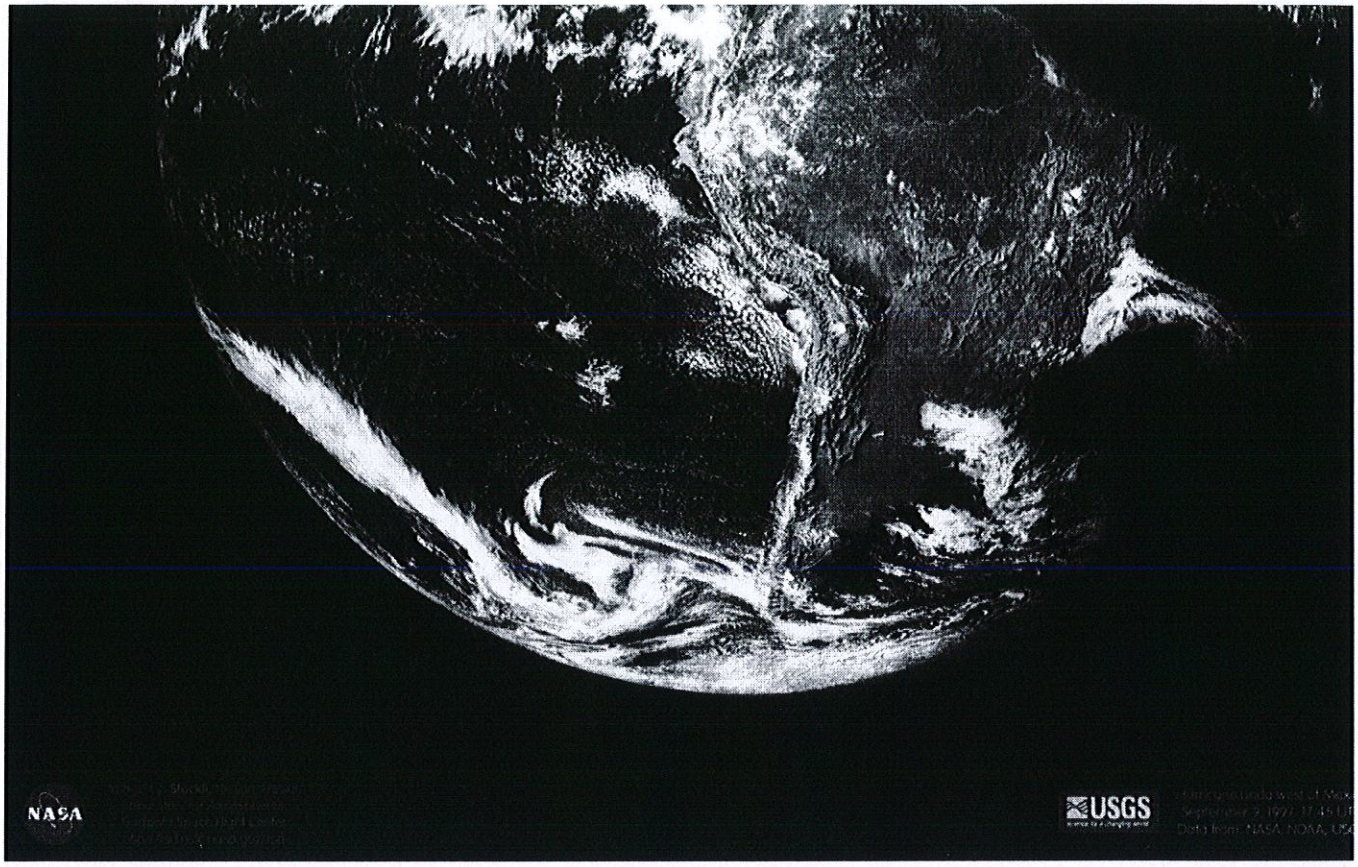
Course Overview:



From Earth orbit, the planet appears a singular entity in the mind's eye while from the lunar surface, a big blue marble, see above. Environmentalists and internationalists of various stripes speak of the human race existing on a fragile ecosystem in which cooperation should become the hallmark of our existence. The reality, however, is that of extreme diversity – peoples, religions, governments, cultures and life chances which differ dramatically across the globe. For example, migration of people across national borders remains a worldwide phenomenon as individuals and their families pursue improved life chances for themselves and their children. As a society of immigrants, Americans are particularly aware of this historical fact and its present day reality. Such movements often occur at great human cost and risk as can be seen in the flight of Syrians from their war torn state.. This course is an exploration into this diversity of the human condition across time and distance. The focus is upon the interaction between geographic factors and political processes resulting in differences in how life goes on in diverse societies. Politics being the art of the possible, geographic factors become one important set of variables which determines the limits of political possibility. For example, Israel surrounded by enemies and unfriendly neighbors is unable to ignore their neighbors.

Within this course, the basics involve discussing the evolution of the nation state – the building blocks of the present day international system and the context within which most

people live and work on a daily basis. States have geographic dimensions while nations may be more indistinct geographically speaking since they reflect cultural parameters. This incongruity has definite effects upon world politics – witness the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union and conflicts in the Mid East over the Palestinians and Kurds in their quest for political recognition and autonomy. Kurdistan in northern Iraq is an expression of Kurdish nationalism, a concept fiercely resisted by Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. The collapse of Syria into civil war and insurrection has fostered the possibility of another Kurdistan within Syria with unknown potential for change in the realm. The West Bank and Gaza remain as symbols of Palestinian aspirations which compete with Israeli desires.

Conceptually, after the delineation of the basic theoretical framework, the course will shift into a realm or regional mode of analysis. Realms in this course are part of a conceptual map for helping to think about the world in systematic terms. Neighbors help determine what a particular nation state is capable of doing so regions become one avenue to understanding the larger world context. The world becomes even more complex each day as economic systems and communications networks grow increasingly intertwined. The patterns, however, are not random but at a fundamental level reflect the influence of geographic factors. Modern technology has dramatically reduced the effects of distance and geography but never eliminates them, as we will discuss. The edition of the book being used in this course illustrates the conceptual part of realms in that Central Asia has moved from the realm of North Africa and the Middle East to the Russian realm. This change reflects the reality that those states in Central Asia are still grappling with the reality that the former Soviet Union (now defunct) controlled their development for 70 plus years and that legacy is still being processed within those states.

The **only extra credit** given in the course is completed within the first weeks of the course; there will not be any other opportunity for extra credit later. You are not required to complete the extra credit assignment, that is your choice but understand this is your only opportunity. Other materials are presented through the use of content modules which you are responsible for accessing and completing the required readings and/or assignment.

Learner Objectives

- You will understand the concepts defining what geography is and its 5 major themes
- You will be able to discuss what makes a realm and how within the realms regions states and peoples are interconnected
- You will understand development of nation states and the processes through which they add or loss territory along with the rise of multi-nation states

- You will be able to discuss how economic and social development is impacted by geography and how societies cope with their physical environment
- You will understand what realms and regions exist presently and their composition and major changes that are occurring in each including environmental changes that do not observe national boundaries.

Required Texts and Materials:

Jan Nijman, Peter O. Muller, & H.J. de Blij - *The World Today: Concepts and Regions in Geography* (7th Edition)

The text provides basic information in the course especially regarding concepts used in regional geography. Exam materials will come from the text and modules along with readings linked in the modules. **Readings from the textbook are identified in the modules at the beginning.**

Course Grade Structure:

Examinations: Total of 3 examinations, each is weighed **200 points**, for a total weight of 60% of the course grade.

Module Assignments: Total of 2 module assignments, each weighed **200 points**, total weight of 40% of the course grade.

Participation: Students are expected to participate in several discussion forums. No points are assessed. **Participation is counted if a student's grade falls between one letter grade and another; remember there are no plus/minus grades. Active and positive participation will lead to the higher grade. as demonstrated over previous semesters.**

*****If you receive financial aid through UCF, you must also complete the course enrollment verification module; failure to do so may lead to you being forced to repay your financial aid immediately or have it cancelled.**

Extra Credit: 50 points, completed as part of module 0 on line, **this is the only extra credit available in this course**

Communicating within the Course

In this class our official mode of communication is through the course email located inside Canvas and email to the instructor at roger.handberg@ucf.edu (mailto:roger.handberg@ucf.edu) , Individuals with a personal issue should email the

instructor at roger.handberg@ucf.edu (mailto:roger.handberg@ucf.edu) using their knightsmail account. All communications between student and instructor and between student and student should be respectful and professional. It is the student's responsibility to check the "course mail" tool frequently. You must also create a Knight's Email account at www.knightsemail.ucf.edu for separate official communications from the university. Under university policy, the instructor is prohibited from communicating official information about student performance in the course except through Knight's email (the email system is free). To repeat, students should use Knights email to contact the instructor outside the course at roger.handberg@ucf.edu (mailto:roger.handberg@ucf.edu) .

Assignments: The assignments referenced above must be posted on the course website with your response submitted through the web. The assignments will involve reading text materials, researching materials on the web and in the media (electronic or print), and then answering the question posed in the form of an essay. Please note the deadline listed on the syllabus provided on the website and on the submission site. Grades for this assignment like all other course grades are posted to the course grade book to which students enrolled in the course have access. **You are expected to format assignments and references according to the instructions at the end of this document.**

Assignment topics are discussed in the modules. **Each assignment must be a minimum of 1200 words, maximum of 2,000 and in MS Word format; otherwise, I am unable to open the document.** This may lead to a delay in grading the materials while you resubmit the assignment. A second occurrence will result in a "zero" grade for the assignment. This restriction means no Word Perfect, MS Works or other word processing programs are acceptable. Each assignment should have a **minimum of 5 references, text and course module materials do not count as a reference but can be used where applicable and properly cited. See section at the end of this link for formatting for assignments. Note that if you quote materials, there must be a citation identifying where the quote came from, failure to do so will result in lost points. Wikipedia is not an acceptable reference; first use reduces your grade the equivalent of one letter grade; second use, failure of the assignment. In addition, entries taken from Encyclopedia Britannica and dictionary entries to define terms are not counted as references.**

Exams:

The examinations can incorporate both essay and short answer formats but most likely essay format. Students will be queried as to their understanding of the processes and

concepts in world political geography. Assignments will test student understanding of different information and concepts discussed in the modules and in the readings. The instructor grades all exams and assignments which are not machine graded which takes time.

Extra Credit:

Extra credit comes in two components in Module 0, one must complete the entire assignment to get full credit. The Introductory Assignment involves students completing a course-related biography and demonstrating certain techniques related to successfully completing the course. The Web Link Annotation as part of the Extra Credit involves students locating an Internet link not already identified in the course. Their assignment becomes annotating (describing and evaluating) in general terms the particular web site's content, usability and then make some assessment as to its validity, usefulness and reliability as a possible source of information. Simply put, is the link worth accessing or not? Much of the material on the Web is of dubious reliability, becoming a critical content evaluator and consumer of information is an important part of the course. In addition, you must answer two questions concerning the syllabus, those are included in your web annotation. **This is the only extra credit assignment available during this course so please do not ask for additional extra credit opportunities.**

Academic Purposes and Conduct:

Please consult The Golden Rule online at http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu for guidelines. Students should only present material that they can demonstrate they have studied and learned from course documents and approved activities. Cheating, dishonesty, or plagiarism is grounds for grade reduction or failure in this course.

Plagiarism is presenting someone words or work as if they were your own. Do not cut-and-paste others' material into your discussions or essays. All of the writing assignments in this class require you to produce your own informed thinking about the assigned topics. When you integrate your research and secondary literature into your arguments, you must provide sufficient attributions and citations to protect the intellectual property of others. To learn more about plagiarism, see http://www.plagiarism.org. This course requires original work on writing assignments. If you wish to write about a topic that you have previously done in another course, you must contact me before hand to work out an acceptable project.

UCF faculty members have a responsibility for your education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary respond to

infringements of academic integrity. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a "Z Designation" on a student's official transcript indicating academic dishonesty. For more information about the Z Designation, see http://z.ucf.edu/.

For more information about UCF's Rules of Conduct, seehttp://issuu.com/ucfsdes/docs/goldenrule 2014-2015 (http://issuu.com/ucfsdes/docs/goldenrule 2014-2015) . Be advised that instructors at UCF are required to report alleged cheating or plagiarism with the Office of Student Conduct.

Course grading: Grades in this course will employ only standard letter grades A, B, C, etc. with no "minuses" or "pluses."

Participation in Class Discussions: Several Class Discussions are posted for students to discuss questions related to the course. Constructive participation in such forums will count in determining final grades. If a student is on the border between one grade and another, participation will be assessed as the tie breaker as to whether the higher letter grade is assigned. Remember there are no plus/minus grades in this course. Constructive refers to comments adding to the discussion not tirades regarding some issue that the individual is emotional concerning and wishes to vent on others in the class.

N.B. The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus and course schedule due to changing circumstances and other problems that arise during the semester. Changes will be posted to the course website. The forums are linked to specific questions identified in the modules. Those announcements can include changes in the course requirements or other items of interest.

Formatting for Assignments, proposals and papers in this Course:

All quotes within your assignment must show a reference identifying where the quote came from, failure to do so will result in lost points, this should include page number from where the quote came from if applicable. Students should use end notes (footnotes placed at the end of the paper or assignment, use the footnote tab within Word for proper placement) with references in the following format within the end notes:

Book: author name(s), book title (publisher name, year published), pages cited (required if a quote)

Article journal: author name(s), "article title in quotes," Journal title complete, volume number of journal (date published including month if available), pages in article, if quote page required from whence the quote was obtained.

Newspaper/periodical article: author name(s), "article title," newspaper name (date published), **if web based provide complete URL (date article accessed).**

Government document or report: author name(s) or committee or group author name, "report title," name of agency for which report done, **if web accessed provide complete URL (provide date website accessed and report read),** provide pages quoted or accessed (required if quote used).

Website: author name(s) or organization home of website, title of website or applicable tab within the website, **provide complete URL (provide date website accessed and read).** For the Introductory Assignment, you are expected to adhere to this format for reporting on the website you selected.

Proper citation is important especially since I reserve the right to check on your cite as to relevance and accuracy. Do not list references you have not read.

December 2016

Course Syllabus

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GEO 3471 Spring 2017 Assignments

Module #	Module name	Date Open	Date Close	Assignment
Module 0	Getting Started	January 9th	January 16th at 11 pm	Complete assignments in Module 0 including introductory assignment (extra credit); also complete verification assignment
Module 1	Physical and Human Factors in regional Geography	January 9th	January 17th at 11 pm	Read Materials, Start Assignment 1
Module 2	Geo-strategic Approaches including Acquiring & Losing Territory	January 17th	January 24th at 11 pm	Read Materials and respond to Discussion Group: "Geo-Strategic Approaches"
Module 3	Economic Development and Migration	January 24th	January 30th at 11 pm	Read materials, respond to Discussion Group: "Poor v. Rich," work on Assignment 1
First Exam	First Exam	January 31st	February 2nd at 11pm	**Complete exam on line**
Module 4	North American Realm	February 3rd	February 11th at 11pm	Read materials and **Complete Assignment 1**

Module 5	Middle American Realm	February 11	February 18th at 11 pm	Read materials,
Module 6	South American Realm	February 18th	February 25th at 11 pm	Read materials
Module 7	European Realm	February 25th	March 2nd at 11pm	Start Assignment 2
Module 8	Russian/Central Asian Realm	March 2nd	March 8th at 11pm	Read text materials, work on Assignment 2
2nd Exam	2nd Exam	March 9th	March 11th at 11pm	Complete 2nd Exam
Module 9	North African/Southwest Asian Realm	March 19th	March 25 at 11pm	Read text materials,
Module 10	Sub-Saharan African Realm	March 25th	April 2nd at 11pm	Respond to Discussion Group: "Colonialism Still?"
Module 11	South Asian Realm	April 2nd	April 9th at 11pm	Read text materials & Complete Assignment 2; and Finish discussion group
Module 12	East Asian Realm	April 9th	April 15th at 11pm	Respond to Discussion Group: "Asia, both East and South East is where America's future interests lie."
Module 13	South East Asian Realm	April 15th	April 20th at 11pm	

Module 14	The Austral Realm	April 20th	April 24th at 11pm	Read text materials, respond to discussion group: "Climate change is impacting these states."
Module 15	Pacific Realm & Polar Futures	April 20th	April 245h at 11pm	
Third Examination	Third exam	April 24th	April 27th at 11pm	Complete exam on line

Assignments Summary:

Date	Details	
Sun Jan 15, 2017	Financial Aid Verification assignment (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1201553/assignments/5022380)	due by 11pm
Mon Jan 16, 2017	Introductory Assignment (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1201553/assignments/5022381)	due by 11pm
Thu Feb 2, 2017	Exam 1 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1201553/assignments/5022377)	due by 11pm
Sat Feb 11, 2017	Assignment 1 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1201553/assignments/5022378)	due by 11pm
Sat Mar 11, 2017	Exam 2 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1201553/assignments/5022376)	due by 11pm
Sun Apr 9, 2017	Assignment 2 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1201553/assignments/5022379)	due by 11pm
Thu Apr 27, 2017	Exam 3 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1201553/assignments/5022375)	due by 11pm