Geography 300: Global Awareness (Summer 2015, CRN 31126)

Instructor          Matthew Derrick
Class Meetings      Online
Office              Founders Hall 131
Office Hours        By appointment

Course Description

We have a lot of territory—literally and figuratively—ahead of us this semester, moving virtually around the world to explore, examine, and develop our understanding of an array of pressing global challenges. In this course we will investigate an array of pressing global challenges in a variety of places around the world. The issues we will address range from stresses put on the environment by a population growth and resource exploitation, the global political economy, territorial conflicts, efforts at transnational cooperation, and fundamental questions of values and visions for a future that will increasingly be shared by a global citizenry. While the primary focus of this course is examining crucial global issues that impact us in the 21st century, we will also investigate important historical-geographic processes that gave rise to the world we inhabit today, exploring and considering the enduring effects of phenomena such as colonialism and imperialism, the diffusion of the modern nation-state, and rise of the modern global economy. In the process, we will confront, consider, and evaluate fundamentally problematic concepts such as “modernity” and “globalization.”

General Education

This course is an Area D General Education Course, fulfilling your requirement for an Upper Division General Education course in the area of human social, political, and economic institutions and behavior and their historical background. Here is the official list of Student Learning Outcomes for Area D General Education classes:

AREA D – Social Sciences

Upon completing this requirement students will:

- apply the discipline-specific vocabulary, principles, methodologies, value systems and ethics employed in social science inquiry, to a specific instance
- explain and critically analyze human social, economic, and political issues from the respective disciplinary perspectives by examining them in contemporary as well as historical settings and in a variety of cultural contexts
- illustrate how human social, political and economic institutions and behavior are inextricably interwoven
Diversity and Common Ground

Global Awareness also fulfills the *Diversity and Common Ground* requirement (*International Focus*). Diversity and common ground courses are centrally organized around one or more of the themes of *Multicultural Studies, Identity Politics,* or *Differential Power or Privilege.* Global Awareness focuses on the theme of *differential global power and privilege,* in which regions that have successfully modernized and industrialized control the bulk of wealth and power on the planet. Meanwhile, the regions that have so far been left out of the bounty—most with legacies of European or American colonial control—are now struggling to catch up. These regions are also among the fastest growing in population. This dynamic among the wealthy, established “North” (in Europe, North America, and Japan), the struggling, demographically explosive “South” (in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America), along with emerging powers like China, India, and Brazil, propels most of the critical issues that will confront us as a global community in the coming decades.

Course Readings

The only required textbook is the most recent *Annual Editions: Global Issues,* edited by Robert Weiner. This textbook is complemented by a host of supplemental reading materials.

Grading

Your final grade for this course is based on your performance in the following Activities:

- Topic Forums (4 @ 5% each) 20%
- Tests (4 @ 10% each) 40%
- Regional News Forum 20%
- Regional Report 20%

*Grade calculation follows the percentage scale:*

- A 93-100%
- A- 90-92%
- B+ 87-89%
- B 83-86%
- B- 80-82%
- C+ 77-79%
- C 73-76%
- C- 70-72%
- D+ 67-69%
- D 60-66%
- D- 51-59%
- F 50% or lower

Course Learning Objectives

- To become familiar with important places and regions and the issues impacting them
- To develop a broad historical-geographical understanding of global issues
- To enhance comprehension of critical contemporary global problems
- To understand economic, social, economic, and political trends in selected world areas
- To recognize the interconnectivity of distant parts of the globe
- To develop critical thinking skills in interpreting and evaluating different perspectives on phenomena and events around the world
**Introduction to Activities: Evaluation and Grading**

The level of your success in the class will be evaluated based on your performance on three types of Activities, described in detail below. All Activities are due by 11:59 p.m. of the day indicated on the course schedule.

**Activity 1: 4 Topic Forums (20% of total grade)**

Each of the four Topic Forums scheduled this semester consists of two parts: your response to a prompt and your comments on others students’ responses to that same prompt. Drawing on assigned Resources, prompts are designed for critical interpretation and evaluation of different perspectives--those expressed in course materials as well as those expressed by classmates--on phenomena and events related to course topics.

Each response should be written in the form of a short essay (minimum 250 words), and will be assessed based on the following criteria: meeting minimum word count requirement, directly and fully addressing prompt, level of critical thinking, and quality of writing (including structure, grammar, mechanics, and style).

For each Topic Forum, you are required to comment on at least three of your peers' responses (you should read as many as you can). There is no word count requirement for comments, but they should be *substantive*; your comments should evaluate, challenge, and/or expand on ideas and assertions expressed in our classmates’ responses. While I encourage criticality in your comments, evaluation of your classmates' responses should always maintain a respectful tone.

Each Topic Forum accounts for 5% of your total grade.

Topic Forum responses are due on Fridays of Weeks 1, 3, 5, and 7; comments are due Mondays of Weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8.

**Activity 2: Tests (40% of total grade)**

Four Tests, each covering two course units, are scheduled at regular intervals to measure your level of engagement with Resources over the duration of the semester. Comprised of short answer question and essay prompts, Tests are designed for explanation and application of ideas and concepts from course materials, as well as critical interpretation and evaluation of Resources.

Each Test accounts for 10% of your total grade.

Tests 1-3 are due Tuesdays of Weeks 3, 5, and 7; Test 4 is due Monday after Week 8.

**Activity 3: Regional News Forum (20% of total grade)**

The Regional News Forum is a semester-long project designed in tandem with Activity 4 (Regional Report, described below) to apply learning from course Resources to a sustained study of a defined region (you will sign up for a region during Week 1). For this project, you, along with other classmates signed to your region, will scour various media outlets to follow current events in your region for the duration of the semester. You will identify important news stories in the region that you will summarize as well as interpret and evaluate in short reports that you will post in a Regional
News Forum that will be created for your group (by Monday of Week 2). The reports collected on your Regional News Forum, which should be perused by all group members, will be very useful for Activity 4 (Regional Report, see below), which is a larger group project; thus, I encourage you to be diligent in your work on the Regional News Forum.

Although your work on this project will be conducted alongside other students in your regional group, you will be graded for this Activity as an individual based on the overall quality and quantity of your collection of reports.

When considering **quality**, keep in mind that reports should start with summary and be followed by an evaluative and/or interpretive discussion: Why is the story significant or interesting? Can you make connections to other stories, events, or phenomena in the region? What larger factors might be at play in the story? How does the story relate to the other dynamics within the region? How does it relate to dynamics occurring at larger scales beyond the region? I recognize that your ability to evaluate and interpret regional news will improve as your knowledge of the region increases over the course of the semester. Quality also applies to the news stories themselves: You should only report on stories of some significance, stories that provide insight into the region; and you should also consider the quality of the source.

Evaluation of **quantity** will take into consideration a mixture of the overall number of reports and length of reports. Your average report might be around 100-200 words, some necessarily shorter, some longer. You should aim for an average of 2-3 reports per week.

You should avoid writing reports based on sources on which others in your regional group have reported. This means you should be sure to read their reports regularly.

Be sure to include bibliographic information (author, title, source, date, along with a link to the original story) at the top of the report.

I will provide some general feedback on your progress later in the semester. Regional News Forums will be graded at the end of the semester.

**Activity 4: Regional Report (20% of total grade)**

You will collaborate with your group to produce a Regional Report on a digital publishing platform (ISSUU). Drawing from work conducted for Activity 3, the Regional Report will include overview and analysis of current issues affecting your region; it will also provide overview and analysis of historical dynamics defining the region. This semester-long project will require explicit application of themes and concepts covered in this course, and it will involve planning, research, and writing from all group members.

Half of your grade for the project will be based on your individual contribution; the other half will be based on the group as a whole.

To ensure timely progress, production of the Regional Report will proceed in four stages (see schedule). Detailed guidelines, as well as more detailed grading criteria, will be provided by in Week 2.
**Course Schedule**

The course schedule below lays out topics, reading and viewing materials, as well as activities for each week. Please keep up with the reading and viewing. Each activity listed is followed by its due date; activities must be completed by 11:59 p.m. of the day indicated, completed on this course’s online site; each activity will close precisely at 12 midnight.

Note: This schedule is subject to change with fair notice.

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Viewing</th>
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| 1    | Course Introduction/ The Emergence of the Modern World | National Academy of Sciences, “Understanding the Changing Planet: Strategic Directions for the Geographical Sciences”  
Kelleher & Klein, “Introduction to the Modern World”  
Fukuyama, “The End of History?”  
Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” |
| **Week 1 Activities** | | |
| | Sign Up for a Regional Group (Thursday) |  |
| | Topic Forum 1 Response (Friday) |  |
| 2    | An Overview of Global Issues in the 21st Century | Weiner, Unit 1  
Dittmer, “Geographer’s Revenge” |
| **Week 2 Activities** | | |
| | Topic Forum 1 Comments (Monday) |  |
| | Regional Report, Stage 1 (Friday) |  |
Weiner, Unit 2  
Various, “In Search of Shelter: Mapping the Effects of Climate Change on Human Migration and Displacement”  
Video: “This World Don’t Panic: The Truth About Population” |
| **Week 3 Activities** | | |
| | Test 1, Units 1-2 (Tuesday) |  |
| | Topic Forum 2 Response (Friday) |  |
| 4    | The Emergence of the Modern Global Economy | Wallerstein, “The Modern World-System as a Capitalist World-Economy”  
Video: “Commanding Heights, part 1: The Battle of Ideas”  
Video: “Commanding Heights, part 2: The Agony of Reform”  
Video: “A Place Called Chiapas” |
<p>| <strong>Week 4 Activities</strong> | | |
| | Topic Forum 2 Comments (Monday) |  |
| | Regional Report, Stage 2 (Friday) |  |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Authors/Readings</th>
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<td><strong>Week 5 Activities</strong></td>
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<td>Test 2, Units 3-4 (Tuesday), Topic Forum 3 Response (Friday)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6 Activities</strong></td>
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<td>Topic Forum 3 Comments, (Monday), Regional Report, Stage 3 (Friday)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7 Activities</strong></td>
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<td>Test 3, Units 5-6 (Tuesday), Topic Forum 4 Response (Friday)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Conclusion: Revisiting the Globalization Debates</td>
<td>Sen, “How to Judge Globalism”, Rodrik, “Has Globalization Gone Too Far?”</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8 Activities</strong></td>
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<td>Topic Forum 4 Comments (Monday), Regional Report, Stage 4 (Friday)</td>
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<td><strong>Test 4, Units (Monday after Week 8)</strong></td>
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