Purpose of the course

In an increasingly interconnected world, knowledge about places beyond our own communities is not only essential for those who wish to work or travel on a national or global scale, it is often important for understanding our immediate surroundings. This course is intended to introduce you to the people, places, and problems of six Westernized regions. Lectures will emphasize five themes: environmental geography, population and settlement, cultural coherence and diversity, geopolitical framework, and economic and social development. A companion course, GEOG 402, Regional Geography of the Non-Western World, is offered every spring semester.

Geographic literacy

Commentators are fond of interpreting the ignorance of Americans about the location of places around the world as a symbol of the decline of American society. Though there is more to geography than memorizing the locations of countries and capitals, geographers believe that a first step in navigating the contemporary world is to know where key places are located. For this reason, part of the last three exams will test your knowledge about the locations of natural and human features in the regions covered. A list of places you should be able to locate will be provided. Blank outline maps to help you study for the map identification portion of each exam will be made available.

Examinations

There will be four exams, each covering one-quarter of the course. Each of the exams will be worth 20 percent of your semester grade. Exams will be composed of multiple choice, true-false, and map identification questions. The last exam will be given during the final exam period, but will not be comprehensive and will have the same format and length as the other exams. Study questions to help you prepare for each exam will be made available. Exams will be computer graded, so please bring a #2 pencil and an eraser to exams.

Map exercises

Students will be required to complete four short map exercises that are intended to develop your map-reading abilities and increase your knowledge about the world and the regions we will cover in the course. There will be one exercise for each exam unit. The exercises will be based on maps in Goode’s World Atlas and your textbook. The map exercises together will be worth 20 percent of your semester grade.
**Grading**

The four exams will together be worth 80 percent of your semester grade. The map exercises will be worth 20 percent.

Final grades will be assigned based on the traditional scale in which an A represents work of exceptional quality (90.0 percent or better), a B is considered good (80.0-89.9 percent), a C is satisfactory (70.0-79.9 percent), a D is poor (60.0-69.9 percent), and an F is unsatisfactory (below 60 percent). The instructor may modify that scale downward if the class as a whole performs below expectations. Plus grades will be awarded to any student in the B, C, or D ranges whose semester average is within two percentage points of the minimum score for the next highest letter grade. Minus grades will be given to any student in the A, B, C, or D ranges whose semester average is within two percentage points of the next lowest letter grade. No extra credit is available.

Students are required to complete a personal information card that will be supplied on the first day of class. Any student who fails to turn in their card by Wednesday, September 9 will be docked one percentage point from their semester average.

**Attendance, missed exams**

Attendance will not be taken, but students are responsible for obtaining notes from classmates for any classes missed. The instructor will not re-teach material or provide notes to individual students. Students are responsible for obtaining information about any announcements made during classes for which they are absent.

Makeup exams will rarely be permitted and will only be considered when circumstances beyond a student’s control prevent them from taking an exam during the scheduled class period. If you think you have a legitimate excuse, you must notify the instructor by e-mail or telephone before the exam begins, or, when that is logistically impossible, very soon afterwards on the same day. You must also be able to prove your excuse in writing. Conflicts with jobs, other classes, and your personal life are not satisfactory excuses. Exams cannot be taken early for any reason.

**Use of electronic devices**

Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices before entering the classroom for this class. Electronic devices cannot be used for taking notes during class because too often they are used for other purposes, which is distracting to other students.

Anybody caught using an electronic device during an exam will be assumed to be cheating and will receive a zero for the exam.

**Blackboard**

The university’s Blackboard computer system (https://blackboard.unh.edu/) will serve as the archive for course materials, will provide students access to their grades, and may be used as a method for distributing information between class meetings.
Academic honesty

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this course and will be severely punished when discovered. If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, ask the instructor or see the university’s Students Rights, Rules and Responsibilities handbook, available at http://unh.edu/vpsas/sites/unh.edu.vpsas/files/media/srrr1516.pdf

Textbook and atlas


Howard Veregin, editor. Goode’s World Atlas. 22nd edition. Chicago: Rand McNally, 2010. A copy of this book is available at the Dimond Library reference desk if you do not wish to purchase a copy. Please return the book to the reference desk as soon as you are finished using it so that other students can have access to it.

Academic assistance

UNH’s Center for Academic Resources in 201 Smith Hall (862-3698; http://www.cfar.unh.edu/) offers study skills assistance, help with computer applications, drop-in tutoring, and other resources to help undergraduates fulfill their academic potential.

Students with disabilities

The university is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you must register with Disability Services for Students (http://www.unh.edu/disabilityservices/). If you have questions about this process, please contact DSS at 862-2607 or disability.office@unh.edu. If you are registered with DSS, and eligible for accommodations that you would like to utilize in this course, please forward that information to me in a timely manner so that we can meet privately in my office to review those accommodations.

Tentative schedule

August 31: Introduction to the course.

September 2-14: Human geography. Read chapter 1.

September 9: Information card due.

September 16-21: Environmental geography. Read chapter 2.

September 23: Exam 1.
September 25-October 5: Europe. Read chapter 8.

October 7-16: The Russian domain. Read chapter 9.

October 19: Exam 2.


November 2-11: The Caribbean. Read chapter 5.

   November 10: Classes follow Wednesday schedule
   November 11: Veterans Day; no classes

November 13: Exam 3.


   November 25-28: Thanksgiving break; no classes.

December 2-11: Australia and Oceania. Read chapter 14.

December 17, 1-2: Exam 4.