

Syllabus: Human Geography
GES 102
Summer 2012

Class Meetings:	T & Th 9-12:10 May 29 – July 5	Class Location:	Sondheim 203
Professor:	Dr. Rob Neff	Email:	neff@umbc.edu
Phone:	410-455-3152	Office Hours:	Tuesday 1 - 2 Thursday 1 - 2 <i>Or By Appointment</i>
Office Location:	211 Sondheim Bldg.		

Text Book: Human Geography: Places and Regions in Global Context, 5th ed.
Paul L. Knox & Sallie A. Marston
Pearson/Prentice Hall Publishers
ISBN 0-321-58002-8

Course Description

Students will study the distributions of human activities at global and regional scales, and the causes and consequences of those distributions. Specific topics covered will include population, natural resources, agriculture, economic activity, urban and rural settlements, and cultural phenomena. Special attention will be paid to the role that globalization plays in altering patterns of human activity at multiple scales. Students will also learn about the tools that human geographers use to describe the world, and gain a basic understanding of how those tools are applied.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are to introduce you to human geography as a field of inquiry and teach you about the patterns of human activity that are most important at global and regional scales. By the end of the course, you should have a greater understanding of human activities at various scales, and how those processes can be viewed geographically. You also should have a solid understanding of what human geographers study, and how and why we study what we do.

Course Requirements

GEOG 102 consists of in-class lectures, assigned readings, exams, online quizzes, and other information provided through Blackboard. The readings are designed to compliment and enhance the lectures, but the exams will be based solely on material presented in lecture. The exams are designed to evaluate how well you have learned the course material, and the quizzes are designed to keep you current with the course material and identify any problem areas before the exams.

Attendance & Lecture Notes

Attendance in this course is not mandatory. However, students who regularly do not show up to class will miss a great deal of required material and will probably earn a poor grade in this class. Because the lectures may introduce material not covered in the book, regularly missing class means regularly skipping material that you will be tested on. Furthermore, I will NOT provide the PowerPoint slides for my lectures in Blackboard (although I will post the images online so that you don't have to copy diagrams). This is because I have found that student relying on downloaded PowerPoint slides tend to have very basic notes, if they have written notes at all. PowerPoint bullets are NOT sufficient notes for the material presented in class. Rather, they provide structure for the lecture so that students can follow along and *take effective notes* based that structure based on the lecture. This means that the only way to learn much of the required material is to show up and take notes.

You will live and die in this class by your notes. The best advice I have for you is to try to write down everything I say. Develop your own shorthand so that you can keep up, and recopy your notes later in the day while the information is still fresh in your mind. Do NOT assume that simply copying down PowerPoint bullets or reading the book will be sufficient to get a good or passing grade in this course.

While attendance is not required in this course, I will take roll call every session. **If you are late and come in after I have taken attendance, it is your responsibility to come up to me after class and make sure that I mark you as present.** See the section on Grading Procedures for details on how this information will be used during the assignment of your semester grade. *It is your responsibility to get the lecture notes from one of your fellow students.*

Readings

You are responsible for doing the reading in advance of the date it appears on the course schedule below. For instance, for the first day of class, you were to Chapter 1 in the Knox & Marston textbook. All lectures will assume that you have read *and thought about* the readings assigned for that day. While I will test you only on the material presented in class, the readings are designed to help you better understand the material presented in lecture. Thus, I strongly suggest that you keep current on the reading, and ask questions about it during class.

Exams

There will be three (3) exams, worth 50 points each, and one (1) final exam, worth 80 points. The dates of the exams are clearly posted in the course schedule. The final exam covers the last quarter of the class, and will include 30 questions on the material from previous units.

When calculating your grade, I will drop the lowest of your three exams. However, I will not drop your final exam grade. *Because I drop your lowest exam score, there will be no makeup exams* – if you miss one of the first three exams, for any reason, it will simply be dropped from your grade calculation. *If you miss two exams, you're out of luck.* Again, I will not drop the final exam from your grade calculation. The only exceptions to this rule are travel that is mandated by

the University (for instance, athletic competitions), hospitalization, or observance of religious holidays on the dates of those holidays. **Holiday and/or vacation travel that exceeds the allotted university breaks and holidays are NOT valid excuses for missing any exam, even if the vacation was scheduled by your parents.** Again, I will not drop the final exam from your grade calculation. Please see the university policies regarding religious holidays if a religious holiday will result in your missing an exam, and notify me well in advance of the exam date. You must provide documentation of your excuse (a doctor's note, a note from your coach, a receipt from your bail bondsman, etc.) if you expect to be able to make up the exams.

You will find that I take exam day very seriously. While most students enjoy my classroom demeanor, I have been described by these same students as “paranoid”, “a hard case”, etc., on test day. While I do not enjoy playing the role of “enforcer,” I find it necessary. Recent statistics tell me that there is a high probability in a large class like this that several students will try to cheat on an exam if they find the opportunity to do so. I therefore take a very strict approach to examinations to eliminate opportunities to cheat. For instance, I make everyone remove their hats and sunglasses, and turn off all electronic devices, including phones and mp3 players. *I also don't allow bathroom breaks during the exams, so please plan accordingly.* I may issue other instructions, such as asking a student to move to a different seat. Please comply with ALL instructions given during test time, and we'll get along just fine.

Finally, once the first person has completed their exam and left the room, I will not seat late-comers under any circumstances. Traffic will NOT be accepted as an excuse. Plan to show up early for all exams to avoid the unpleasant consequences of being late.

Quizzes

In an effort to discourage procrastination, there will be four (4) online quizzes over the course of the semester, worth 5 points each. You may take the quizzes as many times as you like, and there is no time limit. *However, I will not provide the correct answers for the quiz questions and you will only receive one score for each quiz.* You must complete each quiz at least once by the start time of the subsequent exam. So, for instance, you must complete the first online quiz by 9am, June 9. Quizzes will be available online roughly halfway through each unit. This means that the first online quiz will be available on or around May 31.

The quizzes will present you with 5 randomly selected questions from a bank of 20 questions. You may take the quizzes as many times as you wish, and each time, you will get a different set of 5 questions. At least 10 of the 20 possible quiz questions will appear in some form on each subsequent exam.

Because the quizzes are completed out of class and at your convenience, *there will be no makeup quizzes, for any reason.* Do NOT leave the online quizzes until the last minute – the point of the quizzes is to keep you current on the material. Be warned – technical difficulties sometimes take Blackboard offline. If you wait until the last minute to complete the quiz and experience technical difficulties, personal emergencies, lapses of memory, or power outages that prevent

you from completing the quiz, I will have no sympathy for your plight, and will show no mercy. Take the quizzes early, and take them often.

Blackboard

It is your responsibility to log into Blackboard regularly and check for announcements and other required material, such as quizzes. I suggest that you check Blackboard *at least* every Tuesday and Thursday evening to make sure that you are up-to-date on all information relevant to the course.

You can log into Blackboard through myUMBC (<http://my.umbc.edu>). If you need help using the Blackboard tools, please refer to the online documentation and the University help desk.

Grading Procedures

There will be three (3) exams worth 50 points each, four (4) online quizzes worth 5 points each, and one (1) final exam worth 80 points. However, I will drop the lowest of the first three exam grades for each student, leaving 100 total possible points for the first three exams. The total number of points available in the course is 200. Thus, while the quizzes, on their own, do not make up a significant portion of your grade, when added together, they account for 20 points, or about 10% of your final grade. If you blow off the quizzes, that translates into a letter grade reduction.

Grades will be determined at the end of the semester by discarding the lowest exam score for each student, then totaling the points from the other 2 minor exams, the final exam, and the online quizzes. Grades will be assigned based on the percentage of the total possible 200 points each student has earned. Grades will be assigned based on the traditional 90/80/70/60 scale:

90 % - 100% : A
80 % - 89 %: B
70 % - 79 %: C
60 % - 69 %: D
< 60%: F

Every semester, there are many students whose earned points fall right on the borderline between one grade or another. In these cases, attendance and my own experience with the student will be used to determine whether or not the student made a good-faith effort to improve their grade. While poor attendance will not be used as a justification for lowering a grade earned through exams and quizzes (i.e., 90.1 % is an A regardless of attendance), good attendance will be viewed favorably when determining, for instance, whether someone with 89.7 % deserves a B or an A. Poor attendance will be viewed unfavorably. Likewise, disruptive and other uncivil behavior (e.g. eating, surfing the web, reading newspapers, etc. during lecture) will be viewed unfavorably when deciding these borderline cases. Good attendance means missing less than 10% of lectures. Conversely, poor attendance means missing more than 10% of lectures. Because there are only 11 lecture periods (the last day of class is the final), this means that you can only

miss one day of class if you expect me to bump up your borderline grade at the end of the semester.

Please note that it is not necessary to contact me if you are going to miss class – I will assume that a conscientious student will occasionally have a conflict (illness, medical appointment, legal appointment, etc.), but will find a way to attend 90% of class periods. If you miss more than 10% of the class, it is an indication that you did not make this class a priority.

Other than attendance and civility, there is no way to improve your grade beyond the points you have earned in the course. In other words, there are *no do-overs*, and *no extra credit*. Please don't ask – the answer will be “no.”

Suggestions for Success

Studying/Workload

You will do best in this course, and in all of your courses, if you treat your college education as a full-time job. This means that you should plan to spend at least 40 hours per week “on the job,” either in class, or studying and working on assignments. As a general rule, you should study 2-3 hours for every hour spent in class. Since this course meets for the equivalent of 6 hours per week, you should spend between 12-18 hours outside of class every week studying your readings and notes, and the material on Blackboard.

This is an accelerated course. We cover in 6 weeks what we normally cover in 15 weeks of a regular semester. That means that each day of class is equal to more than 1 week of material during the regular semester. As a result, you can expect to study more than 2-3 times as hard in this class as you do for regular semester courses.

Notes

In this class, you will live and die by your notes. Do NOT rely on the PowerPoint slides to be sufficient to prepare you for the exam. Most of the material that you will be tested on will come in verbal form, not from the PowerPoint slides. I strongly suggest that you take detailed notes, recopy and reorganize them, and study them at length. If you have notes that you don't understand, refer to the text book or come to my office hours and ask about them.

Readings

I will only test you on the material presented to the class during lecture. However, your understanding of the material will be enhanced if you keep current on the assigned readings. If you sell your book for pizza money before the course ends, you will be less hungry for a night or two, but will be less knowledgeable about the material covered on the exams.

Online Quizzes

The online quizzes are designed to help you in this class, both by preparing you for the exams, and by shoring up your exam grades. If you take the time to do well on the online quizzes, you

will improve your grade by: 1) Earning points on exercises that you complete at your own pace and 2) Gaining insights into the questions that will appear on the exam. If you blow off these exercises, you will lose points needlessly and will be at a disadvantage when it comes time to take the exams.

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC Directory.

In this course, acts of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to): Cheating on tests, discussing the answers of an online quiz with anyone before the quiz period is over, signing another student's name on the attendance sheet, signing the attendance sheet and leaving early without prior approval, falsifying documents used to obtain excused status for an absence, or helping anyone else to commit any of these acts.

Disciplinary action will be taken in all cases of academic dishonesty. Every semester at least one student learns this the hard way – I always catch at least one person, and usually catch several students committing various acts of academic dishonesty. If you think you can cheat without me catching you, you are probably wrong.

Course Schedule

T	May 29	Human Geography: Why Geography Matters	Syllabus, Chapter 2
		Global Context: History and the Present Day	
		Global Context: The Periphery & Globalization	
Th	May 31	Film: Guns, Germs and Steel	Chapter 1
		Human Geography: Basic Tools	
		Human Geography: Spatial Analysis	
T	Jun 5	Population Geography: Tools, Dynamics, Debates & Policies	Chapter 3
Th	Jun 7	Exam I	Chapters 1-3; Quiz 1 due
		Nature/Society: What is Nature?	Chapter 4
		Nature/Society: Global Environmental Change	
T	Jun 12	Cultural Geographies: Culture & Geography	Chapter 5
		Cultural Geography: Systems & Complexes	
		Film: Africa	
Th	Jun 14	Cultural Geographies: Religion & Language	Chapter 5
		Film: Mecca	
T	Jun 19	Cultural Geographies: Nationalism & Identity	Chapter 5
Th	Jun 21	Exam II	Chapters 4-5; Quiz 2 due
		Economic Development: Patterns, Pathways and Globalization	Chapter 7
T	Jun 26	Agriculture and Food Production	Chapter 8
		Film: Future of Food	
Th	Jun 28	Exam III	Chapters 7-8; Quiz 3 Due
		Urbanization	Chapter 10
T	Jul 3	City Spaces	Chapter 11
Th	Jul 5	Final Exam	Chapters 1-5, 7-8, 10-11; Quiz 4 Due