

GEOG 401
Regional Geography of the Western World
Fall 2008

MWF 11:10-12, 208 McConnell Hall
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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 also important for understanding our immediate surroundings. This course is intended to introduce you to the people, places, and problems of six westernized regions of the world — Europe, Russia, Middle America, South America, North America, and Australia and New Zealand. Lectures will emphasize five themes: environmental geography, population and settlement, cultural geography, political framework, and economic and social development. A companion course, GEOG 402, Regional Geography of the Non-Western World, is offered every spring semester (and often in the summer as well).

Geographic literacy

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

Examinations and grading

There will be four exams, each covering roughly one-quarter of the course. Each of the exams will be worth 25 percent of your course 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. Exams will be computer graded, so be sure to bring a #2 pencil and an eraser.

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 awarded 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. Extra credit is not available.

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 class periods they miss.

Makeup exams will rarely be permitted and will only be considered when circumstances beyond a student's control prevent them from taking the exam during the scheduled class period. If you think you have a legitimate excuse, you must notify me 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.

Blackboard

The university's Blackboard computer system (<http://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://www.unh.edu/student/rights/srrr0809.pdf>

Textbook

H. J. de Blij and Peter O. Muller. *Geography: Realms, Regions, and Concepts*. 13th edition (other recent edition will also suffice). New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2006. Optional.

A full-color online atlas that includes many of the maps used in lectures is available on Blackboard.

Academic assistance

UNH's Center for Academic Resources in Wolff House (862-3698; <http://www.cfar.unh.edu/>) offers study skills assistance, help with computer applications, drop-in tutoring for specific courses, and other resources to help undergraduates fulfill their academic potential.

Tentative Schedule

September 3: Introduction to the course.
September 5-10: Introduction to physical geography.
September 12-24: Introduction to human geography. De Blij and Muller: Introduction.
September 26: Exam 1
September 29-October 8: Europe. De Blij and Muller: Chapter 1.
October 10-22: Russia. De Blij and Muller: Chapter 2.
 October 17: Fall break; no classes
October 24: Exam 2
October 27-November 5: Middle America. De Blij and Muller: Chapter 4.
November 7-17: South America. De Blij and Muller: Chapter 5.
November 19: Exam 3
November 21-December 3: North America. De Blij and Muller: Chapter 3.
 November 27-28: Thanksgiving break; no classes
December 5-12: Australia and New Zealand. De Blij and Muller: Chapter 12.
December 18, 10:30-11:30: Exam 4