

# Syllabus

## GEO 100: Geographical Perspectives and World Issues

Spring 2018

Tuesday and Thursday 3:30 – 4:50 pm

Fillmore 170

## Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change with advanced notice to the students. Unforeseen events will require adjustment to the syllabus.

Instructor: Xin Tao (xintao@buffalo.edu)

Office: Wilkeson 131

Office hours: Thu 5:00 – 6:00 pm & by appointment

## Course Description

This course examines the challenges and opportunities of globalization across regions of the world. We will see the interconnections, homogenizations across space, but also the uneven impacts across regions due to their diverse geographies and histories. By examining each region, we begin to understand the social, political, economic, and environmental similarities and differences across regions. The aim is to be able to contextualize current affairs and contemporary issues within the regional contexts and with a critical lens.

## Objectives

At the completion of this course students will be able to:

- Critically analyze and contextualize global issues and current events
- Connect local issues to global phenomenon and local phenomenon to global issues
- Take a regional approach to understanding contemporary issues
- Understand the concept of “regions” and the cultural, political, economic, environmental geographies of regions
- Understand relationships between people and places, and think geographically and critically about your place in the world.
- Develop the ability to synthesize material and construct well –thought out written arguments about current geographic issues

## Textbook (required)

**Marston Sallie et al. (2014) World Regions in Global Context: Peoples, Places, and Environments. 5<sup>th</sup> edition), Pearson**

ISBN-10: 032182105X

## Evaluation

Final grades comprise of the following:

Exam I	30 %
Exam II	30 %
Quizzes	18 %
Current Affairs Reaction	12 %
In-Class Participation and Activities	10 %

**Exams:** There will be two exams, worth 30% of your grade. These are **non-cumulative** (Exam II will contain material from midterm onward only). Exams comprise of multiple choice or true/false questions (same format as quizzes), and may contain a short written component. The Exam II is on May 8th as indicated on this syllabus. Make up exams may be in essay or short-answer format, and will only be given in extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the professor.

**Quizzes:** There are five quizzes, each will cover 1 or 2 chapters. Quizzes are **due on Thursdays indicated on the schedule** – they will open on Thursday after class and close before class on the Thursday they are due. Quizzes are administered on UBLearn. Late quizzes may not be accepted, if and when late submissions are accepted the grade may be capped. The time and date of quizzes will be announced in class as well as on the syllabus. It is your responsibility to complete the quiz. If you have technical problems, e-mail me straight away.

**Current Affairs Reaction:** This is a short written paragraph. For each chapter students must find two news articles from the past month that relate to issues discussed in lecture or the textbook chapter. These must be from reputable news sources such as the following:

- US news media: The New York Times, CNN, Forbes, Washington Post, Fox, NPR, PBS, local news web sites.
- World news media: BBC News, Reuters, The Guardian, Aljazeera, other countries' news websites.
- Science news: National Geographic, Science, Nature, etc.
- Economic news: The Economist, Financial Times, Bloomberg, etc.
- Technology news: Wired, MIT Technology Review, etc.

News sources such as BuzzFeed, Gawker, and The Onion, Yahoo, are not considered reputable. Students must provide a citation of the article (authors name, date of publication, title of article, publishing company, date accessed, and url). The first sentence should be an argumentative thesis or statement. The rest of the paragraph should be a summary of the articles and an explanation of how they support your argument. These will be graded out of 10 (7 points for completing the assignment, and 3 points for following the correct format, spelling and grammar, relevance, and including citations.) Please do not just copy sentences from articles. Please summarize with your own words. Current Affairs Reactions will be submitted online through UBLearns in the Assignments section. They are due **before class** on the due date. AS INDICATED on the syllabus schedule.

**In-Class Participation and Activities:** While attendance is not taken, you are strongly encouraged to attend class as there will occasionally be graded in-class activities. Furthermore, there will be opportunities to get points for participating in class by answering questions and participating in discussion. You are responsible for coming up to me after class to make sure I have noted your participation.

**Grading:** The plus/minus grading system will be used to assign student grades, which will be determined as follows:

93 – 100	= A
90 – 92.9	= A-
87 – 89.9	= B+
83 – 86.9	= B
80 – 82.9	= B-
77 – 79.9	= C+
73 – 76.9	= C
70 – 72.9	= C-
67 – 69.9	= D+
63 – 66.9	= D
60 – 62.9	= D
<60	= F

Minor adjustments to this scale might be made based on the performance of the class as a whole.

**Textbook:** The textbook is available at the UB Bookstore, and should be available online affordably from Amazon etc. Please buy the 5<sup>th</sup> edition, earlier versions will be too outdated. A newer 6th edition is available but this class will follow the 5th edition for affordability, lectures will include updated information where necessary.

## Class Policies

**UBLearns:** Class materials, course announcements, and grades will be posted to UBLearns. Quizzes and assignments will generally also be administered through UBLearns.

**E-mail:** All correspondence will be via UBLearns and via UB e-mail. Students are responsible for checking UBLearns and their UB e-mail. The professor may not always reply to emails after 6pm or on weekends. E-mails should be respectful and professional – do not use text speech, emojis, and consider the topic of your e-mail before sending.

**Weather:** In cases of extreme weather in the Buffalo/Rochester area, classes may be cancelled with prior notice.

**Professionalism:** Attendance is expected, if you miss class you are expected to cover the material on your own or by seeking missed material from your classmates. You are expected to be on time, lateness is disrespectful and disruptive. If you must arrive late or leave early, sit by the exit as to not disrupt the class. Cellphone use is discouraged.

## Academic Integrity

**Previously submitted work:** Submitting academically required material that has been previously submitted—in whole or in substantial part—in another course, without prior and expressed consent of the instructor will not be tolerated.

**Plagiarism:** Copying or receiving material from any source and submitting that material as one's own, without acknowledging and citing the particular debts to the source (quotations, paraphrases, basic ideas), or in any other manner representing the work of another as one's own will not be tolerated.

**Cheating:** Soliciting and/or receiving information from, or providing information to, another student or any other unauthorized source (including electronic sources such as cellular phones and PDAs), with the intent to deceive while completing an examination or individual assignment will not be tolerated.

# Course Calendar and Assignment Schedule

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Reactions due	Quizzes due	Reading
<b>1</b>	Tue	1/30	<i>Introductory Lecture</i>			Syllabus
	Thu	2/1	World Regions in Global Context			Ch. 1
<b>2</b>	Tue	2/6	Themes within World Regions			Ch. 1
	Thu	2/8	Europe		Quiz 1 (Ch1)	Ch. 2
<b>3</b>	Tue	2/13	Europe			Ch. 2
	Thu	2/15	US and Canada			Ch. 6
<b>4</b>	Tue	2/20	US and Canada	Current Affairs Reaction #1 (Ch. 2 or 6)		Ch. 6
	Thu	2/22	No Class (out of town)			
<b>5</b>	Tue	2/27	No Class (out of town)			
	Thu	3/1	Russia, Central Asia, and the Transcaucasus		Quiz 2 (Ch.2+6)	Ch. 3
<b>6</b>	Tue	3/6	Russia, Central Asia, and the Transcaucasus			Ch. 3
	Thu	3/8	Middle East and North Africa			Ch. 4
<b>7</b>	Tue	3/13	Middle East and North Africa	Reaction #2 (Ch. 3 or 4)		Ch. 4
	Thu	3/15	Review		Quiz 3 (Ch.3+4)	Study
<b>8</b>	Tue	3/20	No Class (spring break)			
	Thu	3/22	No Class (spring break)			
<b>9</b>	Tue	3/27	<b>Exam I</b>			Study
	Thu	3/29	Film and Discussion: Before the Flood			
<b>10</b>	Tue	4/3	Sub-Saharan Africa			Ch. 5
	Thu	4/5	Sub-Saharan Africa			Ch. 5
<b>11</b>	Tue	4/10	South Asia			Ch. 9
	Thu	4/12	South Asia	Reaction #3 (Ch. 5 or 9)	Quiz 4 (Ch.5)	Ch. 9
<b>12</b>	Tue	4/17	East Asia			Ch. 8
	Thu	4/19	East Asia		Quiz 5 (Ch.9)	Ch. 8
<b>13</b>	Tue	4/24	Capitalism, Democracy, and Development			
	Thu	4/26	Southeast Asia			Ch. 10
<b>14</b>	Tue	5/1	Southeast Asia	Reaction #4 (Ch. 8 or 10)		Ch. 10
	Thu	5/3	Review		Quiz 6 (Ch.8+10)	
<b>15</b>	Tue	5/8	<b>Exam II</b>			