World Geography

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Geography 1300 is a survey course of the major regions of the world. The significant physical and cultural aspects of each region will be covered.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Be able to locate and describe the world’s major geographic realms as they are presently constituted and analyze how they have evolved over time
- Be able to identify and locate the world’s major physical features, cities and countries on maps of varying scales
- Be able to describe the current distributions of the world’s major climates, population clusters, language families, religions and economies
- Be able to classify the major environmental and cultural characteristics of today’s global village as impacted by technology, energy demands, and politics
- Be able to give examples of how different cultures have adapted to and transformed the globe’s natural landscapes over time

MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS: In this class, you will have three examinations worth 100 points each and a comprehensive final examination worth 100 points. Your final grade will be calculated by the percentage of the maximum 400 points you attain when all your grades are totaled. For example: 360 points plus are an A, 320-359 points are a B, 280-319 points are a C, 240-279 are a D and less than 240 points is a failing grade. No extra credit. Any make-up exams are given on the last class day. Only one make-up exam per student is allowed. A valid excuse (i.e. medical, familial or other emergency) and instructor approval are required before a make-up is scheduled. All regularly scheduled exams are multiple choice. At the discretion of the instructor, make-up exams may be short answer, “fill in the blank” and/or essay.

REQUIRED OR RECOMMENDED READINGS.


Recommended or supplemental reading: Print materials and URL’s may be provided by the instructor.
TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:

Students are expected to regularly check their TAMUCC email. In addition, online resources are available through the university web site: www.tamucc.edu.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Academic advising: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an academic advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The academic advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism: University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on a test may result in a failing grade for the test in question.

Dropping a Class: I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 10 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Classroom/professional behavior: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Grade Appeals Process
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College
of Liberal Arts website http://cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Disability Services
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.
If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

SYLLABUS
(Please note: The following course outline/schedule is to be considered tentative and subject to change as course progress and circumstances dictate.)

Week 1: January 21; Introduction to World Geography. The academic field of Geography is introduced to the class. Special topics include terms and concepts used in spatial analysis, maps and mapping, the evolution of the earth’s natural environment, and a segment on today’s global village and the distribution of its major cultural landscapes.

Week 2: January 28; Chapter One, Europe. Europe’s physical and historical geography will be discussed. Passages highlight the agricultural, industrial, philosophical and political revolutions that led to the creation of modern Europe. Europe’s five hundred year history of global colonization and its subsequent imperial decline in the twentieth century are featured.

Week 3: February 4; Chapter One, Europe, continued. An in-depth analysis of contemporary Europe follows. Themes include the creation and expansion of the European Union, Europe’s present-day economic and political geography, and the distribution of the continent’s diverse languages, ethnicities and religions.

Week 4: February 11; Chapter Two, Russia. This look at the world’s largest nation state addresses its complex history, climate and physical geography. Subjects include the expansion of Imperial Russia and the birth and death of the USSR.
Week 5: February 18; Exam #1 (covers Introduction through Chapter Two). Chapter Three, *North America*. The major geographic qualities of the world’s richest continent and its two highly-advanced societies, Canada and the United States, are introduced. Themes include the two countries’ geographic and social similarities and contrasts, North America’s rich physical geography, immigration history, and a survey of pre-contact America and its many indigenous nations. Key passages address the history of the civil rights movement and the growing Latino presence in today’s USA.

Week 6: February 25; Chapter Three, *North America*, continued. Contemporary North America’s various geographic regions are discussed with emphasis on their diverse landscapes, ethnicities, religions and economies. A primary focus is America’s recent transition from an industrial to a high tech/service economy and how this dramatic social change affects settlement patterns, jobs and lifestyles.

Week 7: March 4; Chapter Four, *Middle America*. Middle America’s fragmented geography is introduced, describing this far-flung realm of arid plateaus and islands troubled by natural hazards like earthquakes and hurricanes. Passages highlight the efflorescence of the indigenous Mesoamerica empires, the Spanish conquest of the New World and the profound and persistent African influence on Caribbean socio-economic development. Middle America’s four unique physical and cultural regions are discussed.

Week 8: March 11; Chapter Five, *South America*. South America’s physical and historical geography are introduced, showcasing the massive Andes Mountains and the single greatest repository of life on Earth – the Amazon rainforest and its delicate ecologies. The rapid urbanization of South America’s poor and its ramifications for successful economic development is also a focus. South America’s four geographic regions are presented. Themes include the growing political clout of the Andean West’s indigenous peoples, Colombia’s historical struggle with drug cartels and revolutionary groups, and the growing world power that is today’s Brazil.

Week 9: SPRING BREAK

Week 10: March 25; Exam #2 (covers Chapters Three through Five). Chapter Six, *Subsaharan Africa*. Geologically the oldest continent and the evolutionary home to all mankind, Africa is still a mystery to much of the outside world. After an introduction to its physical geography, flora and fauna, this week’s lecture examines the cradle of humanity’s rich and varied cultures, colonial history, continuing conflicts in the Sudan and Congo, and its vast natural resources that are beginning to attract more and more international attention in a challenging era of diminishing fuels and minerals.
Week 11: April 1; Chapter Seven, North Africa/Southwest Asia. The birthplace of three major world religions, the site of ongoing political conflict, instability and strife, and a major storehouse for natural resources, especially oil, this ancient realm is never far from today’s headlines. Themes for this week include the physical and cultural geography of this vast, dry realm, development and historical impact of the ancient culture hearths of Mesopotamia and Egypt, the birth of Islam and its spread by conquest, the creation of the State of Israel, and oil’s critical geographic impact on the global economy.

Week 12: April 8; Chapter Eight, South Asia. Predicted to be the most populous region on Earth in coming decades, India, the world’s largest democracy, and its surrounding neighbors are epicenters of both rapid economic growth and the direst poverty. Themes include the region’s multifaceted hydrography and physical geography, its history of colonial domination, the birth of Hinduism and Buddhism and religion’s powerful presence as a force in the area’s political and economic life, the diverse cultures spanning this far-flung region, and India’s simmering conflict with Pakistan and its slow but steady emergence as a global economic power.

Week 13: April 15; Chapter Nine, East Asia. Encircled by snowcapped mountains, vast deserts, cold climates and Pacific waters, East Asia was one of the world’s earliest culture hearths and China may be the world’s oldest continuous civilization. This week takes a look at the history of the mighty colossus and brings it up to date with a look China’s recent debut on the world stage as an economic and political superpower. The unit also examines Japan, the historic economic giant of the realm, with its history of colonial expansion and wartime conduct that still affects its international relations. Special attention is paid to East Asia’s flashpoints that can generate conflict at any moment, the Korean peninsula and the island of Taiwan. We’ll also look at the Pacific Rim’s physical and political geography, its burgeoning economic profile, its position as the world’s most populous geographic realm and the implications of that for its future.

Week 14: April 22; Exam #3 (covers Chapters Six through Nine). Chapter Ten, Southeast Asia. Themes this week include an in-depth consideration of the environmental and cultural aspects of China’s many neighbors found in Southeast Asia, examining such themes as the area’s fragmented physical and political geography, its intricate linguistic mosaic, and its troubled historical relations with the West, including the emergence of an independent, oil-rich Indonesia and the long series of French and American interventions in Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia).

Week 15: April 29; Chapter Eleven, The Austral Realm. This lecture looks at Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania’s amazing biogeography, arid interior
landscapes and the more lush environments of their continental island peripheries. Themes include the realm’s indigenous Aboriginal history, colonial experience and integration into the economic framework of the western Pacific Rim. Chapter Twelve, *The Pacific Realm*. Our final discussion centers on the largest of all the geographic realms on Earth, the Pacific islands and archipelagos with their wide expanse of water and numerous islands. The main cultures of this highly fragmented Pacific realm, Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia, are all considered. Review for final exam (make-up exams will be given after the lecture).

Week 16: May 6; READING DAY (no class).

Week 17: May 13; Comprehensive final exam (4:30-7:00 pm).