

# Introducing World Regions

Geography 110 03  
2:15-3:40 Centennial 2102

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or by appointment.

Class blog: Blog:  
<http://geo110uwl.blogspot.com/>

This course teaches students to think critically and spatially about the connections among places. Thinking spatially involves recognizing relationships between peoples and places. A place can be many things—an ecological niche or [biosphere](#), a person's body or a household, a city, a nation or a continent. For a course introducing world *regions*, the primary places that concern us are areas that are understood as having some or all of the following internal relationships:

- Major physical-geographic factors, such as overlapping or contiguous physical environments;
- Similar or shared political or social histories relative to groupings of people in other regions;
- Significant internal interaction and cultural exchanges over a long period of time;
- Shared forms of government (including dominance by an empire) either now or in the past;
- Related demographic characteristics or traditions, such as language or religion, or a combination of both.

North America, for instance, consists of two countries that share an historic cultural and political association with the British Isles and they share a continental climate and some [geomorphological](#) aspects.

But is important to recognize that 'region' is a loose term that can be disputed—what belongs in one region and why? What makes a region called East Asia so distinct from SE Asia? The fact is that regions are best defined by the connections *among* them not by their distinct character. The wealth of the US in the cartoon above was created through complex economic relationships that impoverished Sub Saharan Africa. Failing to focus on these connections would give as a very narrow understanding of global places. Cultures, in particular, are not bounded by these regions. Culture is a set of practices including language, mode of government, social norms (what should women and men do?), and customs like what to eat and what to wear. This class will delve into specific aspects of each region but will emphasize *linkages* because the world is *not* a mosaic of distinct, intact and separate peoples, cultures, biophysical features and places. Importantly, culture *changes*; it is not static or timeless.



Geography is the study of connections between people and places. A ‘place’ is a point; it can be a city, your body, a neighborhood, a nation, a region and so each place is a node within a network. A place becomes a place because of its landscape, the confluence of cultures, [social institutions](#) and history, all of which have resulted from its relationship to the physical, social, economic, political and [cultural geographies](#) of other places near and far. Thinking geographically means understanding that place is a process. That is, all places are made by their connections or relationships to another place. For this reason, geography studies how places are shaped by the ‘flows’ of people, goods and ideas. In other words people move from rural areas to cities, settle and return to rural areas. ‘People’ is shorthand for what people do (practices), what hierarchies they are organized into, what identities they cultivate (American) or are assigned (gender). An idea like capitalism travels, has practical influence on people’s lives and landscapes and changes as it is implemented in different political and social contexts. ‘Goods’ is shorthand for environmental resources, opportunities, education, health care and so forth. Goods like Coca Cola are produced in one place using ingredients derived from another and sold somewhere else on the basis of taste, the power of the market and the imaginary of what it means to drink a Coke. All of these elements are part of the making of place. Fundamental to this course is the premise that people, goods and ideas flow unevenly and that this unevenness connects all of our lives. Some people’s lives are easier and others are harder *because of* historical and present day relationships that redistribute people, goods and ideas unequally and many would say unfairly. Realizing all of this means we have acquired a global understanding or [global sense of place](#)<sup>1</sup>.

In this course, we will seek to understand how individuals and societies are affected by local and global forces. Capitalism, for instance, is a local and global force. It operates around the world but it has different characteristics and effects depending on the place. Russia’s market economy is very different from Belgium’s. Climate change is a global and local force—the climate is a physical phenomenon operating in the world but the climate of the [Sahel](#) is different from that of New England and climate change will have a more profound impact on most people in the Sahel than it will have on most people in New England.

The course asks you to think critically as you learn about regions, which means understanding how relations of power work geographically in societies. All people and nations live in hierarchies of power. In other words, it is necessary to understand that dominant [norms](#) concerning class, [race](#), sexual, national and gender identities affect individuals and societies. For instance, nationalist sentiments can result in laws curtailing the rights of immigrants. Or, in most societies men continue to have more wealth than women, which means are less economically secure. There



<sup>1</sup> Massey, Doreen. 1994. *Space, place and gender*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

are also particular ideas that are dominant globally concerning progress, capitalism, economic globalization, poverty, the environment and human rights, among others. For instance, we take it for granted that capitalism is a good economic system. Often these dominant ideas make it difficult to critique the status quo and to discuss alternatives. Thinking critically requires challenging preconceived notions that may come from these dominant norms and ideas. It means seeking the most rigorous explanations and establishing views based in fact not opinion.

The emphasis in the lectures will be on geographical concepts. Your book will be a resource for factual aspects of each region. Lecture powerpoints are distinct from text powerpoints. A common mistake is to only write down what's on a slide rather than writing down my explanation for what's on the slide. This makes test questions on lecture concepts much more difficult. In the past, these students have done less well on these questions—so take good notes!

**Required Text: *Geography: Realms, Regions, and Concepts*, 14<sup>th</sup> edition, Harm J. de Blij and Peter Muller, John Wiley and Sons. Student companion site at:**

<http://bcs.wiley.com/he-bcs/Books?action=index&itemId=0470462426&bcsId=5287>

Please do the reading prior to the week for which it is assigned.

Week	Date	Reading	Quizzes and Assignments Blog posts
1	Jan. 24, 26	Introductory chapter and pdf Marston World Regions in Global Context (cite this in your paper)	
2	Jan. 31, Feb. 2	Europe, Chapter 1	Map quiz Jan. 31 Blog assignment 1: Currywurst due Feb. 2 Comments by Feb. 4
3	Feb. 7, 9	Russia, Chapter 2	
	<b>Feb. 10-13</b>		<b>Quiz 1 on weeks 1-3</b>
4	Feb. 14, 16	North America, Chapter 3	Blog assignment 2: Federal Stats on Racial Inequality Upload completed assignment to dropbox by 11:59 Feb. 13, print and bring to class. <b>Blog Due before class Feb. 14 we will discuss in class</b> Comments/additions by Feb. 18
5	Feb. 21, 23	Central America, Chapter 4	Map quiz Feb. 21 Blog assignment 3: Haiti What survives should be saved due Feb 23, Comments Feb. 25
	<b>Feb. 24-27</b>		<b>Quiz 2 on weeks 4-5</b>
6	Feb. 28, March 1	South America, Chapter 5	Map quiz Oct. 11
7	March 6, 8	Sub Saharan Africa, Chapter 6	Map quiz March 6 Blog assignment 4: TBA
	<b>Mar 9-12</b>		<b>Quiz 3 on weeks 6-7</b>

8	March 9-19	Spring Break	
9	March 20, 22	North Africa and Southwest Asia, Chapter 7	Map quiz March 20 <b>Paper topic uploaded to dropbox by March 22</b>
10	March 27, 29	South Asia, Chapter 8	
	<b>March 30- April 2</b>		<b>Quiz 4 on weeks 9-10</b>
11	April 3, 5	East Asia, Chapter 9	Blog assignment 5: Return of Confucius <b>Blog before April 3—we will discuss in class.</b> Comments April 7
12	April 10, 12	South East Asia, Chapter 10 Library visit April 12	Map quiz April 12
	<b>April 13-16</b>		<b>Quiz 5 on weeks 11 and 12</b>
13	April 17, 19	South East Asia continued Australia/New Zealand, Chapter 11	
14	April 24, 26	Pacific and Poles Chapter 12	
15	May 1, 3	Conclusions	
			<b>Quiz 6 on week 13-15</b> <b>Papers uploaded to the dropbox by May 16</b>

### D2L

- Powerpoints from the lecture and powerpoints drawn from the text. Use the latter to review your knowledge of the chapters. Save pdfs of powerpoints first before you try to open them.
- Dropbox: for assignments always uploaded in .doc, .docx, .pages or .rtf
- Quizzes: all tests will be on d2l except map quizzes. Dates below reflect opening and closing dates. Closing time on the last day is at 11:59. Opening time is at 5 am.
- Discussion board for anonymous questions and comments on the class and assignments

Blog: <http://geo110uwl.blogspot.com/>

Assignments 1-5

### In this course you will be expected to do the following:

- Take comprehensive and organized notes of lectures, discussions and readings. Printing and studying off of the power points will not be enough to do well in this class. Good notes are those that use your own words and synthesize material. Lectures are not a review of the material in the text.
- Read all assigned texts prior to lecture. Class discussions may be based in part on the assigned chapter.

- Participate in discussions either online or in class. Your success in this course depends on your participation.
- Check your university email account **daily**.
- Attend regularly, however I do not take attendance and it is not necessary to inform me when you will be absent.
- Check the d2l course site daily.
- Contact me immediately if you need help. It's always best to make an appointment whether you're coming during office hours or some other time. We can meet virtually too if that is easier for you or I can phone you. Using email is a good way to get quick answers to your questions.
- Complete and submit all assignments to d2l by the assigned due dates. To be fair to other students, I cannot accept late work except in cases of documented medical emergencies. It is your responsibility to make note of the exam dates and to set alarms in your online calendar/phone designating opening and finishing times.
- Make constructive suggestions about the course either directly to me, anonymously on d2l or on course evaluations.
- Expect your ideas to be challenged; expect to feel uncomfortable with some of the topics discussed over the course of the semester.
- Engage with your fellow students and your professor in a respectful manner. Don't text or surf during class. Please do not talk to your neighbor during the lecture because it makes it hard for other students to concentrate. Such behavior will definitely reduce your grade.
- You should expect to spend about 6-10 hours/week outside of class on this course.
- Think about the issues critically. The first step is to pose a question and to keep asking questions. Observe. In observation, you remain open to hidden or unexpected explanations. Critical thinking identifies and scrutinizes assumptions and favorite explanations. It is fair minded and alert to bias recognizing that all knowledge is a human creation and thus has a subjective element but some knowledge is more objective than others. It seeks to understand others' perspectives and hones the skill of seeing from multiple perspectives. Analyze. Analysis breaks down material into parts and seeks to understand organizing principles and structure of a problem. Accept that 'the answer' may be ambiguous and complex, most issues are not black and white. Synthesize. See connections among things that might not appear related at first. Keep posing questions and synthesis becomes richer. This is a creative process. Critical thinking evaluates material, asking, are my conclusions based on sound knowledge creation?

Standard Grade Scale at UWL

A = 100-93%	AB = 92-88%	B = 87-83%	BC = 82-78%
C = 77-70%	D = 69-60%	F = 59% and below	

**Grade breakdown**

6 quizzes = 60%

6 Map quizzes = 5%

1 paper = 15%

Participation: 10%

Five short blog assignments associated with five regions: 10%

**1) Quizzes (60%):** The exams will consist of multiple choice, T/F and matching questions all of which will be taken on d2l. It is hard for students to remember to do these quizzes so set an alarm or find some means to remind yourself. Forgetting is not a legitimate excuse. Material for the exams will be taken from lectures, videos and the assigned readings. You may use your notes, the text and friends to take the test but be aware that you have a limited timeframe. Discussing the questions with friends who have not yet taken the test is cheating and will also render the scaling of grades impossible. Exams are designed to encourage you to develop good study habits and good note taking.

You must take the exams during the scheduled timeframe unless you have spoken to me two weeks in advance to arrange for a different time. Typically, if you ask for a separate time, it must be earlier than the class. In the case of an emergency or severe illness, it is your responsibility to request a different date for the test **before** the exam by email or phone message. I must approve your request for a schedule change and you must provide a doctor's note or other appropriate proof that you could not take the exam. No communication = no exam = F.

**2) Map quizzes (5%):** You will be quizzed on the countries in the following chapters: 1 Europe, 3 Middle America, 5 South America, 6 Sub Saharan Africa, 7 North Africa, SW Asia, 10 SE Asia. Most quizzes will be held on Tuesday as we begin each region.

**3) Participation in class (10%):** You are expected to contribute to group work and to answer questions in class. Sometimes you will turn in assignments done in class as part of this grade. The participation grade is also a reflection of your attitude in class (see above discussion of appropriate class behavior). Showing up for class alone will not guarantee you a good participation grade. For those who prefer NOT to speak in class, please blog with my 110 online class. For full credit do these each week. Points will be allocated in the same manner as under 4) required blog discussions. Those of you willing to speak up in class often DO NOT need to engage in blog discussions apart from the five required.

**4) Required blog discussions (10%):**

[geo110uwl.blogspot.com](http://geo110uwl.blogspot.com)

See syllabus for due dates

Europe: January 29-Feb. 4

North America: Feb. 12 - Feb. 18

Central America: Feb. 19 - Feb. 25

Sub Saharan Africa: March 4 - March 10

East Asia: April 1 - April 7

Discussions on <http://geo110uwl.blogspot.com/> will make use of lecture material, podcasts, video clips and/or additional short readings. NOTE: THIS IS NOT ON D2L. Your grade will depend on the sincerity, clarity, effort and capability reflected in your response. As always, please respect others' views. Disagree courteously and support your argument with facts and educated opinions. This is a public blog so anyone in the world can see what you write.

First, become a member of the blog and fill in your user profile.

You will be blogging alongside members of my online 110. Only take part in the required blogs.

**You must do the assignment and post before Tuesday’s class**

Blog posts will be graded using 0-3 points per post. Blog assignments receiving a 0 are those that are not written within the allotted time frame. 1 to 1.9 is for a partial post—you may not have dealt with all the questions or your post is very short or superficial. 2-2.7 is for a full post that is a well-written discussion of the question posed. A 3 is for a well thought out post plus a thoughtful response to your classmates. “I agree...” is not a thoughtful response. This is the place to display your knowledge of the material, inquisitiveness, critical thinking and ability to link the reading material or podcast to the lecture. You don’t have to write long entries, but these posts are an opportunity for you to make connections, bring up ideas that come up for you during the readings, and begin to articulate your thoughts. I suggest that you compose all written posts first in Word and paste it into the blog. This will prevent you from losing your work should your server time out while completing an assignment.

**5) Paper (15%):** 1 paper designed to improve your critical thinking, writing, research and analytic skills. 4-5 single spaced pages of research and analysis on assigned question. Separate page for cited work (peer reviewed and additional sources). In-text citations are required (Author’s last name, year, page number). All papers must be single-spaced. Two readings will help you with the paper assignment. One is on D2l under the name of Massey associated with the introductory lecture. The other is a pdf of the introductory chapter of another textbook (World Regions in Global Context by Marston et al). You must incorporate this latter text into your paper. Please save your paper as .doc, .docx, .pages or .rtf. **NO .wps format** please. Papers must be uploaded to the d2l dropbox. The d2l program notifies you if you have successfully uploaded your paper. If you don’t get this notification, try again. I will read your last upload and disregard early ones should you want to make changes prior to the due date. Please do not email papers to me.

**Academic Misconduct:** Representing others’ ideas and knowledge as your own is plagiarism. Plagiarism or cheating in any form will result in an F for the course, and may include harsher sanctions. Please read the code available on the university web site and be sure to understand it. Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

- (a) Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- (b) Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- (c) Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- (d) Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- (e) Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- (f) Submits the same paper to satisfy course requirements for two courses
- (g) Purchases a paper to satisfy course requirements
- (h) Assists other students in any of these acts.

[http://www.uwlax.edu/studentlife/academic\\_misconduct.htm](http://www.uwlax.edu/studentlife/academic_misconduct.htm) - 14.03

For helpful information on how to avoid plagiarism go to

<http://www.uwlax.edu/murphylibrary/research/plagiarism.html>

<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Critical and Creative Thinking Skills: Detect patterns underlying phenomena and draw reasonable inferences from information	Map quizzes, quiz questions on text and lecture
Individual, Social and Environmental Responsibility: Explain how knowledge from various disciplines is essential to individual or societal health and well-being.	Paper, discussion assignments

Intercultural Knowledge and Competence: Explain how values and ideas of cultures have evolved or how patterns of globalization have shaped the modern world	Discussion assignments, quiz questions
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**Disability Accommodations:** Any student with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, or hearing) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the instructor and the Disability Resource Services Office (165 Murphy Library) at the beginning of the semester. Students who are currently using the Disability Resource Services office will have a copy of a contract on file in the Disability Resource Services office that verifies that they are qualified students with disabilities.



If you're interested in environmental issues, like the consequences of a fossil fuel economy, I also teach **Geo 200, Conservation of Global Environments**, which fulfills a Gen Ed requirement.