

# World Regional Geography

## POLS: 104-003

Fall 2010

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 1:00 to 1:50 p.m.  
Maybank Hall, Room 307

Kevin Keenan

Office: 114 Wentworth, Room 105

Phone: (843) 953-5679

Email: KeenanK@cofc.edu

Office hours: M: 2:00 to 4:00 PM;

T: 3:00 to 5:00 PM & By appointment

### Course Description

This course surveys the areas of the earth where the great clusters of humankind have made homes and forged livelihoods. The course reviews the characteristics of these people and their places in significant detail. Geographic concepts and principles are used to study the physical, economic, social, and political conditions, problems, and prospects in the culturally diverse world. The spatial expression of culture, as well as specialized behavior patterns, adaptations and ways of life in distinct environments are analyzed. The interdependencies among regions, the reasons for their existence and their implications for economic development are reviewed. By studying human relations and human experience around the world, students will learn about space, place, scale, and context as key processes that define the discipline of geography.

### Objectives

Students successfully completing World Regional Geography will be able to *identify* and *describe* the world's major geographic realms and significant contemporary issues within these realms. Students will be able to *identify* and appropriately use key geographical concepts for analysis, explanation, and exploration of both foreign and familiar places. Students will be able to *explain* the economic interdependencies among realms and regions, as well as the cultural interconnections. Students will be able to *define* the major sub-disciplines within geography, and *give examples* of realms and regions of the world where associated sub-disciplinary perspectives and research have offered insight into the human condition and spatial patterns of phenomena that affect the social world. Finally, students will be able to *articulate* theoretical frameworks for critically analyzing at least one issue in each of the realms that we will study in this course.

## Course Philosophy

This course is designed to be an introduction to World Regional Geography and the discipline of geography. As an introductory, 1<sup>st</sup> year course, the basic educational goals of knowledge and comprehension of geographical ideas, information, and concepts must be achieved. Because this course is offered within a Political Science Department, we will pay particular attention to issues of power and politics as they shape and are shaped by environmental conditions. We will also discuss the way that societies and groups within societies organize space to achieve political objectives. To facilitate the achievement of these goals, learning, assessment, and instruction are delivered in five ways:

(1) **Student engagement with the course texts through reading.** Reading is fundamental to the learning process, and it is expected that the bulk of the student's learning will be achieved via his or her careful and independent reading. The class time will provide an opportunity to reinforce the concepts in the textbook and clarify points of confusion. ***You must read in this class in order to earn a high grade.***

(2) **Constant assessment**—both summative (graded) and formative (un-graded). Periodically over the course of the semester, I will issue writing assignments in class that I will use to assess whether or not you have mastered a key concept. These assignments will not be graded, but I will return them to you with feedback. I will calculate your formal grade by your performance on in-class discussion, quizzes, a take-home mid-term exam, a media journal project, and an in-class final exam. (Each of these assessments is described in detail below.)

(3) **Writing**—Writing is integral to this class, and it is fundamental to your academic and professional success. Research also shows that students remember more about a topic when they write about it, and that writing is a crucial tool in building critical thinking skills. Critical thinking refers to a person's ability to link together ideas in order to come up with a new and useful piece of knowledge. (The media journal project requires you to engage in this type of writing.)

(4) **Discussion**—Willingness to speak up with valuable contributions and organized thoughts is also fundamental to your academic and professional success. This class provides an opportunity for you to engage with your peers and communicate ideas, all the while practicing for life outside of college. ***You must speak up in this class in order to earn a high grade.***

(5) **Lecture**—Because this is an introductory survey course, there will be a varying lecture component to each class. In some classes, I will speak a lot, in others less. In every class, however, you will have an opportunity and an expectation to speak up. Again, you must do the readings in the class to participate effectively in class discussion. You must also take notes to do well on the take-home midterms and the final exam.

## Course Texts

There is one assigned textbook for this course; it is available for purchase at the campus bookstore and from the publisher's web site as an e-book at reduced cost. The main readings for the course will come from this book.

de Blij, H.J. and P.O. Muller. 2010. *Geography: Realms, Regions, and Concepts*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 14<sup>th</sup> edition.

The cost of a new print copy is \$148 at the campus book store, while the cost of a used copy is \$111.

The cost of an e-book, which is available at the publisher's web site, is \$85.50 and is available at: <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-EHEP000319.html> (Please note, if you purchase the e-book, you WILL NOT be able to return it.)

Critical analysis readings will be posted on WebCT or emailed to the class.

You are also required to have a weekly five day subscription to *The New York Times*. You must receive hard copies of the paper (more on this below). If you live on campus, your paper will be delivered via campus mail services. If you live off of campus, but outside of a home delivery zone, you must pick up your paper each day at the library. If you are in the home delivery zone, you can have the paper delivered to your residence. To sign up for delivery, visit [www.nytimes.com/student](http://www.nytimes.com/student). The cost of the subscription is \$2.50 per week, and you should immediately subscribe for 15 weeks for a total of \$37.50.

## Course Overview

**25 August:** Introduction

**27, 30 August; 1, 3 September:** Defining Geography

**\*\*\*3 September:** Take-home midterm question #1 will be issued via email. It must be returned by Saturday, 4 September by noon.

**6, 8, 10 September:** Defining Realms and Regions

**\*\*\*10 September:** Take-home midterm question #2 will be issued via email. It must be answered by Saturday, 11 September by noon.

**13, 15, 17 September:** Europe

**20, 22 September:** Russia

**\*\*\*24 September:** Take-home midterm question #3 will be issued via email. It must be answered by Saturday, 25 September by noon.

**27, 29 September; 1 October:** North America

**\*\*\*October 1:** Take-home midterm question #4 will be issued via email. It must be returned by Saturday, 2 October by noon.

**4, 6, 8 October:** Middle America

**\*\*\*6 October:** Media Journal #1 Thesis statement and Map to the paper due by noon on 6 October

**13, 15 October:** South America

**\*\*\*14 October:** Media Journal #1 is due by noon on 13 October.

**18, 20, 22 October:** Sub-Saharan Africa

**25, 27, 29 October:** North Africa & Southwest Asia

**\*\*\*29 October:** Take-home midterm question #5 (last question) will be issued via email. It must be returned by Saturday, 30 October by noon.

**1, 3, 5 November:** South Asia

**8, 10, 12 November:** East Asia

**15, 17, 19 November:** Southeast Asia

**22, 29 November:** Austral realm

**\*\*\*22 November:** Media Journal #2 Thesis statement and Map to the paper due by noon on 22 November.

**\*\*\*29 November:** Media Journal #2 is due by noon on 29 November.

**1, 3 December:** Pacific Realm

**6 December:** Review and Evaluations

**15 December:** Final exam

## Assignments & Evaluation

**Class participation** – The class participation grade will be determined by your attendance at each class, your engagement during the lectures, and your responses to questions and to other students' comments. Sleeping or putting your head down during the course will adversely affect the grade. Lateness—both at the beginning of the course and after the break—as well as early departures, will adversely affect the grade. Chatting online using your laptop, or text messaging during class will also negatively affect your grade. The participation grade will be determined primarily by your willingness to speak up and share thoughts, questions, and concerns during the course. I will also give you ample opportunities to boost your participation grade by presenting on relevant *New York Times* articles that you are reading for your media journals. Participation counts as **15% of your grade**. Please see Rubric #1 “Evaluating Student Participation,” which is posted on WebCT, for more detailed information regarding how I will evaluate your participation.

**Take-home Midterm Exam** – I will email to the class five essay questions on various dates during the first half of the fall semester. All dates are noted on the syllabus. You are required to answer each of these questions by noon on the following day. Responses should not exceed 2 pages per question and must be single-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font. The midterm exam will count towards **25% of your grade**. You will be evaluated on organization, grammar, spelling, and presentation in addition to correct content. You may use the textbook, but you are not permitted to discuss the content of your answers or to consult others on how to answer a question. Your midterm exam must be submitted to my email box KeenanK@cofc.edu as a Microsoft Word document by noon on the date specified. Email attachments arriving with an email time stamp of 12:01 a.m. or later will be considered late. Late exams will lose 6 points (out of 20) each 24 hour period that they are late.

NOTE: The take home midterm is due by noon on the date specified in my email box KeenanK@cofc.edu . It is YOUR responsibility to make sure this exam gets to me on time. (I will acknowledge receipt of all exams by return email.) The late policy will be strictly enforced.

**Media Journal** – You are required to subscribe to *The New York Times* using the web address nytimes.com/student, to sign up to follow the news on a specific realm, and to keep an electronic journal in which you analyze the articles you are reading and connect them to course material. The media journal will count towards **20% of your grade**. The purpose of this assignment is for you to apply course concepts and facts to the interpretation of real world, contemporary issues occurring in the places you are reading about. You must title each journal entry, and articulate a common theme that runs through all of the articles. Each journal entry (there are two) should not be longer than 2.5 pages. You must keep a “clippings envelope” in which you cut out each article you discuss in your journal; I will periodically ask to see your envelope. Please note also that you are required to submit your thesis and map to the journal prior to the submission of your actual journal. The purpose of this process is to give you feedback on your thesis and map to the paper before you actually write them. For Media Journal #1, the thesis and map to the paper are due on 6 October, while the entire journal is due one week later, on 13 October. For Media Journal #2, the thesis and map to the paper are due on 22 November, while the entire journal is due one week later on 29 November. All media journal material must be submitted by noon on the day specified to my email box KeenanK@cofc.edu . Email attachments arriving with an email time stamp of 12:01 a.m. or later on the date specified will be considered late. Late material will lose 6 points each day that it is late. Please see Rubric #2 “Evaluating Student Media Journals,” which is posted on WebCT, for more specific information on how I will evaluate your media journal entries.

NOTE: The media journals are due by noon on the date specified in my email box KeenanK@cofc.edu . It is YOUR responsibility to make sure this journal gets to me on

time. (I will acknowledge receipt of all exams by return email.) The late policy will be strictly enforced.

**Quizzes** – Unannounced quizzes will be given throughout the semester. The quizzes will be quite simple, and will be designed primarily to see how the reading is going in the class. At least one quiz will be given each week, sometimes more. Some quizzes will count as extra credit towards your participation grade. The quizzes that are not counted as extra credit points will count towards **10% of your final grade**.

**Final exam** – A final exam will be given in this class. The final examination will be a mixture of multiple choice, map identifications, short answer and essay questions. It will be given on Wednesday, 15 December from noon until 3:00 p.m. in Maybank 307 ***You are permitted to bring to the exam and to use one 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper with any notes you wish written on the front and back.*** The final exam will count towards **30% of your grade**.

NOTE: There will be no make-up final exams, nor will any incompletes be issued for this course. If you miss the final exam, you must provide a documented reason for your absence within 2 business days of the exam date. With a sufficient, documented reason for absence, you will be excused from the final exam. **Absence memos are insufficient justification for missing the final exam. You must provide, directly to me, a verifiable doctor's note that explains your illness and why it prevented you from taking the final exam. The only other exception that will be acceptable for missing the final examination is the documented death of a family member or friend. Documentation must be provided within two business days of the exam.** Further, the final exam will begin precisely at noon; students arriving late to the exam will not receive extra time.

**Your final grade for the course will be calculated using the following grade distribution (percentage of total score of all assignments).**

A = 93 – 100  
A- = 90 – 92.9  
B+ = 87.5 – 89.9

B = 82.5 – 87.4  
B- = 80 – 82.4  
C+ = 77.5 – 79.9

C = 72.5 – 77.4  
C- = 70 – 72.4  
D+ = 67.5 – 69.9

D = 62.5 – 67.4  
D- = 60 – 62.4  
F = 0.0 – 59.9

## General Policies and Procedures

- **Statement on Academic Integrity:** The College of Charleston regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the Student Honor Code and the Code of Conduct. The College will pursue cases of academic dishonesty.

Complete information about the College of Charleston's academic integrity policies is available through the Office of Student Services. Please see the following document, available online:

[http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/general\\_info/honor\\_system/index.html](http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/general_info/honor_system/index.html) .

- **Student Email:** Students are required to have a College of Charleston email account and to check it at least once per day. All notices regarding the course will be sent to the College of Charleston account.
- **Faculty Email:** The professor uses KeenanK@cofc.edu and will check it at least once per day during the week. Immediate responses via email should not be expected, but can generally be expected within a 24-hour period.
- **Cell phones and pagers** may be left on, but they must be turned to silent mode.
- **Texting in class** while lecture is in progress or while people are participating is rude. It also hinders your learning. Please do not do it.
- **Chatting online, or checking facebook** while lecture is in progress or while people are participating is rude. It also hinders your learning. Please do not do it.
- **Special needs or concerns:** Any students who have special learning needs or concerns are urged to speak with me during the first week of the semester if accommodations are needed. The Center for Disability Services provides a comprehensive list of accessibility resources available at the College on the following website: <http://spinner.cofc.edu/~cds> .
- **Mutual respect for differing questions and ideas:** The College is a place for open inquiry and exchange of ideas. All members of the College should treat all other members of the College and members of society with mutual respect and appreciation.