Syllabus

Geog 1302: People and Places
Instructor: Ramin Zamanian
Fall 2015

Contact Information and Office Hours –

Instructor: Ramin Zamanian
Email: rzamani2@mail.wtamu.edu  *Note: This is a temporary email address. An email address with the instructor’s corrected name spelling will be announced soon.
Office: N/A
Office Phone: N/A
Office Hours: Email the instructor with all questions and concerns you may have.

Texts and Other Materials –

Required Texts:

Other Required Materials:
Students will need to have frequent access to the internet and word processing software, preferably Microsoft Word.
There may be additional (free) readings that the instructor will provide to students throughout the semester.

Course Description –

College-level geography courses are intended to help students understand why things are where they are on the surface of the earth. In other words, students will have the opportunity to better develop a spatial perspective in thinking about their surroundings.

This particular geography course provides a spatial perspective on certain aspects of cultures, such as cultural diversity around the world, geodemography, globalization, economic development, religion, language, and ethnicity. We will learn how these aspects of culture and human activity spread across the earth. We will also learn how they interact with each other and with the natural environment to create ever-changing cultural landscapes, within which everyone experiences life.

Course Philosophy: The following passage encapsulates the philosophical approach of this course:

“An education should develop in each individual the realization that his own country, region, and ethnic, religious or linguistic group is but one among many, each with differing characteristics, and that other countries, regions or social groups are not necessarily queer, or irrational, or inferior. It may be argued that one cannot see his own country and culture in perspective until he has studied other lands and peoples. Only then can one realize that his own civilization is but one of a family of civilizations with common elements yet distinctive characteristics, evolving through time from common antecedents with differentiation but much cultural borrowing; facing similar problems yet with particular combinations of attitudes, policies, technologies, climates, soils, minerals, and evolved economic systems.”

~ Chauncey Harris, University of Chicago
Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes –

The students in this course will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of key concepts and processes in human geography.
2. Identify how cultural practices shape the landscape.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of human/environment interactions.
4. Describe and explain the importance and impact of globalization.

Program Learning Outcomes –

Program outcomes related to this course:

With this geography course being in the History department, several of the following will not especially apply to this class. The first objective will be emphasized, though.

Your State Mandated Core Competencies for GEOG 1302:
1: Chronology and Context
   Analyze the connections between the past and present with the ability to locate both self and others in time and space by surveying the histories of various cultures in the modern and pre-modern worlds.
2: Writing and Citation
   Apply the fundamentals of historical writing and citation.
3: Critical Thinking
   Think critically about historical issues through analysis of primary and secondary texts, synthesis and analysis of arguments in multiple texts, and through developing their own arguments about historical texts.
4: Historiography
   Define historiography (history of history) and identify the different historiographical schools of thought as well as philosophical and ethical issues relating to the historical profession.
5: Research
   Conduct historical research using both primary and secondary sources by composing and presenting grammatically correct, well-argued research papers.

Course Requirements and Evaluation –

Explanation of Assignments and Requirements:

This class is to be lecture-based, with class participation expected as part of the total grade. There is no lab. The exams and assignments for the entire course will be worth 500 points total. There is no “redo” work available.

4 EXAMS, WITH THE LOWEST SCORE OF THE FIRST 3 EXAMS DROPPED: Worth 100 points each. Each exam will have 50-60 multiple-choice questions, and several true/false questions. The vast majority, but not all, of the exam questions come from the lecture slides and videos. Many of the lecture slides and other material will not come from the textbook.

For each exam, students will be given several terms to know which will not likely be covered in lectures. 3-5 exam questions will come from these.

Also, several questions will come from the lecture itself, not the text/pictures on the slides. Therefore, as with virtually all college courses, good note-taking skills during the lectures are crucial for success on the exams.

10 questions from each exam will come from map questions using placelists for students to know. This mapping part of the test will happen as long as the software allows for it (to be determined). An announcement about this will come within two weeks of the start of the semester.
Fourth (final) exam: Also worth 100 points, and not cumulative. It has the same format as the first 3 exams. This exam score will NOT be dropped at the end of the semester.

Exams are curved infrequently if at all. Do not expect any given exam to be curved.

RESEARCH PAPER/Writing Assignment: The paper is worth 100 points. A paper assignment will come separately from this syllabus during the first 2 weeks of the class. However, a few very important points about the paper need to be made here:

At the very least, papers will receive a score of zero if all or part of the writing from another author is copied into your paper, without acknowledging the source. More details about plagiarism will be explained at a later date.

Course papers will ONLY be accepted through the Blackboard software. This includes papers being turned in early. Late papers lose 20 points per day. The late penalty still applies even if the reason for the paper being late involves software or other computer problems.

Students sending papers via e-mail will be asked to submit the paper on Blackboard, and the late penalty will still be assessed if the paper is emailed late. Only papers submitted to Blackboard will be graded.

Online Participation: Worth 100 points total, this grade is divided into two parts: Individual participation (80 points) and overall class participation (20 points).

The 20 class participation points can only be fully earned if significantly more than just the same few people participate in the forum discussions throughout the semester, and if I see people voluntarily posting more than 1 good forum post per week, consistently, and responding to other people’s posts.

For most weeks, new questions will be posted in the online forums for students to answer. Some will be discussion questions for anyone to answer, others will be questions from the textbook. For the textbook questions, please do the following:

1) Let the class know in the forum which question you will answer. Check to be sure no one else has taken that question.

2) If someone has already taken that question, you can either respond to it in a thoughtful, meaningful way (maybe add an idea or question a part of the person’s answer).

3) If no one has taken that question, answer the question within a few days at most, and for most questions, a sufficiently thorough answer length should be roughly 2-4 sentences. If you are writing a response that is much longer, please write a brief summary of your main point at the top of your response.

Each week, a satisfactory answer will earn a student 8 points. Students can receive a maximum of 16 points per week.

*Discussion posts should only be written AFTER reading through all the previous posts that are relevant, and any textbook or other readings specified. Also, posts that are not reasonably concise and to-the-point will not be graded. All graded posts must be written by the deadline I give (usually a week or two will be given), in order to earn points.*

Students are expected to give thoughtful answers to most of the questions posted online, and are encouraged to respectfully/professionally comment on other students’ statements and opinions (do you agree/disagree, and WHY?). I encourage you to verbally either support your fellow students’ arguments or disagree with them. Disagreements are not to be given or taken as a personal attack. Rather, they are to encourage consideration of a different viewpoint, as all of us are here to challenge our current knowledge about the world and expand our understanding of the world.
Course Grading Summary:

First 3 Exams = 200 pts total
(after lowest score dropped)
Final Exam: 100 pts
Research Paper: 100 pts
Online Participation: 100 pts
Total: 500 points

Grade Distribution *

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-90.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89.99-80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79.99-70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69.99-60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.99 and below</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Reminder:
Dropped at the end of the semester: Lowest of the first 3 exams.
NOT dropped at the end of the semester: Any other grade.

* Final Average Grade Curving Possibility:

If, and only if, certain conditions are met, I will curve final averages at the end of the semester as follows:
The limit for final average curving is 2 points below the next highest grade level. Therefore any final average of 87.99, 77.99, 67.99, or 57.99 will NOT be curved to the next highest grade level.

Conditions for Grade Curving:
- Final Average no more than 2 points below next highest grade level
- All exams must have a grade of at least 40%, even the dropped exam grade.
- Students earn at least 40 of the 80 individual participation points.
- Students, individually and as a class, adhere to the Class Etiquette and the Academic Integrity standards.
If I need to cancel the grade curving, a final average of 89.99, 79.99, 69.99, and 59.99 will mark the limits of an A, B, etc, and will NOT be curved to the next highest grade level.

Aside from the curve, final averages do not get raised under any circumstances, unless you show me a grading error, which I will gladly fix. It does not matter what grade you tell me you want/need in the course – your final average is solely based on the total points you earn. Having a scholarship or needing to get a scholarship in the future are not excuses for me to raise your grade. Earn that scholarship! Also, enthusiasm and good attendance alone, while appreciated, are not valid reasons for asking to raise a grade, especially the final average. Any personal troubles over the course of the semester that are not excused in an official written document do not qualify as a reason for raising a grade. Do not ask me to make special considerations for you, as I will simply refer you to this paragraph.
Policies and Responsibilities –

Discussing Grades: Grades can only be discussed between students and the professor over email.

Make-up Exams need to be taken no later than two weeks after the scheduled exam date, unless you have an acceptable written excuse. A score of ZERO will be given otherwise. Make-up exams are only for extended emergencies, when official written documentation can be provided to me at any time before taking the make-up exam. Written documentation excusing your absence is required (documents can be scanned/digitally photographed).

You will have one week to complete each test, so there are very few acceptable excuses for needing to do a make-up.

Make-up exams will NOT be given for personal, familial, fraternity/sorority or other social functions, routine dental/medical/legal appointments, vacation travel, being arrested and/or in jail, oversleeping (even if due to power outages or inconsiderate roommates – I recommend having two alarms, with at least one battery-operated). These are in no way valid excuses. Make-up exams will not be given until official written documentation is shown, and will never be given without an acceptable written excuse.

The four acceptable excuses for missing exam or paper due dates are:

1. University-sponsored activities: This usually relates to team sports, band members, cheerleaders, or class-related field trips and conferences. An official written document from the sponsoring group must be shown prior to taking the make-up exam.

2. Extended jury duty, court appearances, and military service: An official note from the court/judge/commanding officer must be shown.

3. Family emergency/death in the family: A letter from a parent or spouse confirming the emergency situation must be shown. The letter must indicate their willingness to be called over the phone by me, and must come with a phone number, as they will be contacted. The student will not be able to take the exam until a family member has been contacted and the situation confirmed. An obituary or funeral program is not sufficient unless you are specifically mentioned as a participant or surviving family member. This is the only case where a parent or spouse will not need to be contacted by me.

4. Severe personal illness or injury: If you are sick enough to miss an entire week, you are sick enough to seek medical attention. Thus official documentation from a doctor or hospital must be shown, indicating that the student was ill or injured for much of the exact week of the allowed exam days. Any claims of illness/injury without a doctor's excuse note are not acceptable for making up an exam.

Academic Integrity –

All work must be completed individually unless otherwise stated. Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute scholastic dishonesty: acquiring or providing information for any assigned work or examination from any unauthorized source; informing any person or persons of the contents of any examination prior to the time the exam is given in any subsequent sections of the course or as a makeup; plagiarism; submission of a paper or project that is substantially the same for two courses unless expressly authorized by the instructor to do so. For more information, see the Code of Student Life.

The first offense for cheating or plagiarism is a zero on the assignment, and the second offense is removal from the class with an F plus additional disciplinary action by the university administration.

Note: The instructor will not drop a student from a class unless there is a behavioral problem. However, if a student drops to avoid an F from cheating, the instructor will change the grade from a W to an F with the administration's support. The instructor can also request college administration to remove a student from a class.
Acceptable Student Behavior -

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (Code of Student Life). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated (such as inappropriate remarks or links to inappropriate content in the forums). Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the online classroom. Inappropriate behavior may result in disciplinary action or referral to the University’s Behavioral Intervention Team. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

ADA Statement –

West Texas A&M University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student’s responsibility to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) and to contact faculty members in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations. Contact Information: Student Success Center, CC 106; phone (806) 651-2335.

Title IX Statement-

West Texas A&M University is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of sexual misconduct and discrimination. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. Harassment is not acceptable. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

- WTAMU Title IX Coordinator Becky Lopez – Kilgore Research Center 147, or call 806.651.3199
- WTAMU Counseling Services – Classroom Center 116, or call 806.651.2340
- WTAMU Police Department – 806.651.2300, or dial 911
- 24-hour Crisis Hotline – 800.273.8255, or 806.359.6699, or 800.692.4039
  https://www.notalone.gov/

For more information, see the Code of Student Life.

This Class is a Buff Allies Safe Zone Class (a Discrimination Free Zone): All students will be treated with respect both in and out of this class. Discrimination against any student based on race, color, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, or veteran status is not tolerated.

Buff Allies is a group of staff, faculty, and students who are committed to creating a safe campus for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) members of the WTAMU community.
Evacuation Statement –

If you are on the WT campus: If you receive notice to evacuate the building, please evacuate promptly but in an orderly manner. Evacuation routes are posted in various locations indicating all exits, outside assemble area, location of fire extinguishers, fire alarm pull stations and emergency telephone numbers (651-5000 or 911). In the event an evacuation is necessary: evacuate immediately do not use elevators; take all personal belongings with you; report to outside assembly area and wait for further information; students needing assistance in the evacuation process should bring this to the attention of the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

WT Attendance Policy for Core Curriculum Classes –

When on campus (not applicable to this class): For the purposes of learning assessment and strategic planning, all students enrolled in Core Curriculum or developmental courses at West Texas A&M University must swipe their Buff Gold cards through the card reader installed in the classroom/lab for each class/lab meeting.

Tips for Success -

- Be sure to read the “Getting Started” information posted on Blackboard.
- Check your email and Blackboard at least once every 2-3 days.
- Try to take the exams during the first part of the week that they are available to take.
- Do not start working on your research paper or start studying for tests the day before. Start reviewing even 5-7 days in advance for tests.

Copyright Statement –

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Links from various syllabus topics:
1 http://www.wtamu.edu/student-support/disability-services.aspx


*Tentative Calendar of Readings, Topics and Due Dates*

Please note that the content for specific dates given are “best estimates” - they may be adjusted from time to time, although the exam dates will most likely remain as is or very similar to what is listed.

Please print out this schedule and have it somewhere easily accessible.

Lectures for each week will be posted on the Tuesday of each week. Occasionally, I may need to post lectures a day or two after Tuesday, but you will be notified if that happens.

The exam dates on the schedule indicate the first day the exam can be taken...You will have a week to take each exam (with the final exam an exception), but the due date for the paper is the absolute deadline.

Tentative Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK START</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LECTURE TOPIC</th>
<th>CHAP.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 8/24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction: This is Geography</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 8/31</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction: This is Geography</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 9/7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Population and Health</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 9/14</td>
<td>EXAM 1 AVAILABLE: TUESDAY (all exams available for 7 full days) Chapters 1, 2</td>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 9/21</td>
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<td>Folk and Popular Culture</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6 9/28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 10/5</td>
<td>EXAM 2 AVAILABLE: TUESDAY Chapters 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>Religions</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 10/12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Religions</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 10/19</td>
<td>PAPER DUE: THURS 11:30PM</td>
<td>Ethnicities</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 10/26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 11/2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 11/9</td>
<td>EXAM 3 AVAILABLE: TUESDAY Chapters 6, 7, 9</td>
<td>Food &amp; Agriculture</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 11/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Urban Patterns</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 11/23</td>
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<td>Resource Issues</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 11/30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Political Geography</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 12/6</td>
<td>FINALS WEEK</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM: Available Sunday 12/6. Last Day to Take Exam: Thursday 12/10, Exam must be complete by 9:00PM.</td>
<td>Chapters 10, 13, 14, 8 (in that order)</td>
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