

STATE FAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SYLLABUS

FALL 2015

COURSE	World Geography	INSTRUCTOR	Zach Rubin
COURSE NO.	Geography 101		
DEPARTMENT	Humanities and Social Sciences	EMAIL	zrubin@sfccmo.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

World Geography is a survey of the major topical elements of geography with additional emphasis on environmental awareness, regional development and place-name geography. This fast paced and fun course will strengthen your knowledge of your world. It is an excellent elective liberal arts course. Those of you going into elementary classrooms may also learn much about how to teach the subject matter to these students. This course functions as an introduction to the processes, peoples and geographic systems of the earth.

We are no longer in the situation where we can remain locked in the Western Hemisphere interacting only with our nearest neighbors. A variety of events affect us every day. Individuals making decisions based on their values and cultures affect our decisions, and vice versa. In order for us to participate in a global culture, we must educate ourselves about our world, and study how we came to be as we are. Our experiences and our understanding of the values and lifestyles of those who share residence on earth help determine our current relationships. I hope that this course can be one of many that results in a student's ability to:

- Describe how our world works, and construct a model, orally or in writing, of the interconnection of the systems of the human and physical environment,
- Analyze how cultures interact with each other and the resulting impact on the environment,
- Explain how cultural decisions impact the lives of our global neighbors,
- Differentiate among the regions of the world, and their physical and human characteristics, and
- Ascertain the multidimensional role of a member of the global village.

In addition to specific course learning objectives, this course attempts to incorporate the Institutional Learning Outcomes of SFCC. Especially, students will be encouraged to: 1. form and express ideas orally and in writing; 2. address issues of cultural and intellectual diversity; 3. increase an understanding and appreciation

of that diversity, and 4. use critical thinking and decision making to contribute to solving group problems. These ILOs will be assessed in the course assignments.

Purpose of this Course:

Geography is the study of people and places on earth. In this course we will examine the basic concepts that make up the discipline from both the human and physical aspects. It is a wide-ranging overview meant as an introduction to the world as it is today, with a focus on current issues.

Textbook:

Introduction to Geography (Sixth Edition) by Dahlman and Renwick. Copyright Pearson Education, 2013.

Note: I don't make use of the study guide nor the atlas the bookstore wants you to buy. Get them if you want, but you will not need them for the class.

Office Hours:

Since this is an online class I don't have a real office to come to. I do, however, check my email frequently and that is the best way to reach me.

Distribution of Points:

Category	Points
Attendance	150
Lesson Quizzes	150
Map Quizzes	70
Midterm Assignment	100
Final Assignment	100
Total	580

Grading Scheme:

Grade	Min. %	Min Points
A	90	522
B	80	464
C	70	406
D	60	348
F	0	0

Methods of Evaluation

Attendance:

Every week you will be required to post in 1 or 2 forums on topics relating to that week's material. The requirements will be noted in that week's objectives. Not posting

is considered an absence from class, even if you are completing other assignments. *Any student not posting for 2 more consecutive weeks may be dropped for non-attendance.*

Lesson Quizzes:

Each week there will be a summary quiz, and some weeks have an additional quiz on related material. The quizzes will cover material from the textbook, lessons I post to Blackboard, and major themes present in the discussion forums. Therefore, the only way to do well on them is to do the readings and keep up with what everyone posts in the discussion forums. You have unlimited time, up until 11:59 PM of the due date, to finish and submit each quiz.

Your assessments will not be comprehensive in the sense that the material I will draw from will come from progressing chapters of the book, but will be comprehensive in the sense that certain concepts and terms will be carried forward throughout the course. For the big writing assignments I will expect you to use examples from the chapters you have read in the book.

Map Quizzes

A major aspect of Geography is knowing where important landmarks are and why they are important. As such, you will have map quizzes covering the world broken down in to seven regions. These are highly interactive and completely self-contained units, where the information you need is presented to you and then you take a quiz on it. I don't expect that you will be an expert on important places by the end of the class, but these quizzes are designed to help you start applying concepts from the book and provide a base of knowledge about other places wherein you can use those concepts. You have unlimited time, up until 11:59 PM of the due date, to finish and submit each quiz.

Essays:

There will be a writing assignment that goes with each half of the course. These are worth 100 points each, and are in essay format. Each requires writing to be typed in 12 point, easily readable font with standard margins. Instructions will be given at the time it is assigned. I use Blackboard's SafeAssign feature for these, which cross-checks your submission against submissions from previous students and internet sources for possible plagiarism.

Any assignment with a written portion (i.e. the forums and the major assignments) will have a rubric for you to reference at the bottom of the assignment page. Review it carefully so you know what my expectations are and there are no surprises.

Withdrawals

You should talk with your instructor before withdrawing from any course. Perhaps there is a problem that can be solved with their assistance or through mediation. While an instructor may administratively drop you for non-attendance, it is ultimately your responsibility and in your best interest to withdraw from a course yourself. Refer to the current semester class schedule or Student Bulletin for the last date to withdraw. After that date you cannot withdraw and must remain in the class until the end of the semester.

How to Succeed in This Class:

If you look carefully, week-to-week this class is very formulaic. Take the time to follow the simple steps outlined in the lesson plan each week and your chances of success go way up for the class. They are:

1. Go over the reading schedule and objectives under “getting started” in Blackboard so you know when things are due
2. Go over the objectives so you know what the main themes are for the lesson, it will help you know what to look out for while reading.
3. Read the assigned portion of the text for the week.
4. There will usually be a supplemental reading in the course materials for that week. It is a good idea to read this after the textbook to get the information twice. *Note: there will be important things from the textbook not covered in the summary. You can't assume the summary will have everything you need to know.*
5. Follow the instructions and complete the forum, lesson quiz, and any additional assignments there are for the week.
6. Double-check your work. Make sure your comments and submissions were uploaded properly so there isn't any question later that you did them on time. *It is ultimately the student's responsibility to make sure assignments were uploaded or submitted properly. Any work submitted after the deadline, intentional or not, is late.*

Everybody learns differently, so take everything after the first point as a suggested order of operations. Everything on the list needs to be completed, but the order in which you do it is subjective (and you can hardly double-check your work too often!). I can't prescribe a specific path to success; just give you as many tools as I know how.

Learning in an Online Environment:

Taking Online Classes:

For some, this will be the first online class in a series of many. For others, it is part of a degree obtained entirely online or in tandem with on-ground classes. Remember to be respectful of others in your dialogue as there is a wide variation of technical skill in navigating online courses. We are all in this course to learn, so do your best to be part of a supportive learning environment for everyone involved.

Methods of Instruction:

Instruction in the class will involve readings from the textbook, supplemental readings and activities in that week's course materials and forum discussions each week relating to the topic covered. Forum participation is the equivalent of being present in an on-ground class. Therefore, the only way to do well in this class is to do the readings assigned and "show-up" by being an active reader and participant in the forum.

Severe Weather:

This class does not "close" when any of the on-ground campuses are closed, so you should look for emails from me instead of the school for how weather will impact the class. Also, everyone in the class is spread over much of the state (and often I get people in other states) where power outages or other hazards can happen without my knowledge. If you lose access to the course due to a severe weather hazard, let me know and we'll work out a way for you to make up any work you might have missed.

State Fair's Online Attendance Policy

Class attendance is essential for student success and students are expected to attend online courses. Any student who misses two (2) consecutive weeks of class during a regular 16-week semester or the equivalent proportion of class time during a shorter session, and those absences do not meet the excused absence criteria, will be dropped from the class by the instructor.

When work is not submitted each week, it will not only be interpreted as non-participation, but also **non-attendance**. Each instance of not submitting an assignment by its due date will count as an absence. Upon the 7th absence in a 16 week class, the 5th in a 12 week class, and the 4th in an 8 week format a student may be dropped from the course. **To simplify, not submitting required assignments may result in an administrative drop from the course** if, in the opinion of the instructor, the student does not have reasonable opportunity to succeed in the class.

Assignments are defined as Discussion Boards, Drop Box Submissions, Quizzes, Study Guides, CompWorks, Essays, and Tests. The instructor will not be held accountable if the last date of withdrawal passes and the student has a transcript grade of an F rather than W. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the withdrawal process by obtaining the appropriate form from the Student Services office and following up to ensure it has been completed.

Late Policy

Project planning, time management, and contingency planning are essential to success in this and all college courses. Thus, it is expected that assignments will be submitted by their respective due date.

To encourage personal commitment to learning and to maintain focus on the achievement of the student learning outcomes, late work is accepted with consequences.

The following will be in effect for assignments submitted late:

- One day late results in 20% off the points earned.
- Two days late results in 40% off the points earned.
- Three days late results in 60% off the points earned.
- Four days late results in 80% off the points earned.
- Five or more days late results in zero points earned.
- Assignments are not accepted after the last day of the course.

There is no make up work or extra credit in my course.

*That being said, stuff happens. If there are one or more personal emergencies that happen you find yourself in a crunch, email me **before** something is due and we might be able to work out a plan, depending on the circumstances.*

Other Notes:

- I reserve the right to change or update this syllabus as I see fit, with forewarning to you all.
- Let me know if you will be unable to turn in an assignment on time due to technical difficulties or illness and we will arrange a way to make up for content and points. I will be far less indulgent about this if you email me the night something is due than if you email me several days before, so get started on projects in advance and avoid the last-minute freak-out.
- Likewise, if I have to be absent from the my email or the course for more than 48 hours I will let you all know as far in advance as possible.
- There will be no extra credit in this course.

- Be *connected*. To some, the idea of being tied to a computer is a terrible fate, but the only way to ensure you succeed in this and other online classes is to make sure you frequently check your email and the forum posts. I try to find a balance, too, by taking a walk in the woods, but the nature of online classes requires you to vigilantly sit in front of a screen sometimes.