

GEOGRAPHY 2750

SPRING SEMESTER 2015

WORLD REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY

INSTRUCTOR

Kevin R. Cox

1106 Derby Hall

Cox.13@osu.edu

Office hours: 10:00 – 12:00 Fridays or by appointment.

TIME AND PLACE

Tuesdays, Thursdays 2:20 – 3:40, Cunz Hall 180.

OVERVIEW

The title of this course is world regional geography. The usual approach in courses of this nature is to go from one ‘world region’ to another describing how the regions differ from one another. The ultimate aim is to provide the student with a way of pigeonholing events and information so as to shed some weakly interpretive light on them: events like what is currently going on in the Ukraine; and ‘weakly’ because if your approach is largely descriptive then that imposes serious explanatory limits.

Emphatically, this is not the approach in this course. First of all I want to question what it means to talk about world regions and to adopt a more flexible approach to their definition; one that emphasizes geographic differentiation at a variety of scales and understood in a variety of ways. Second, we want to underline the politics of regions: how regional designations always work for some and not for others. Is (e.g.) Turkey in Europe or Asia? This is a hot political potato. Third, we want to shed explanatory light on geographic differentiation in the world. We talk about globalization. So how does globalization help us understand the differences between, say, Africa and East Asia or between Argentina and France? How can we come to terms with the differences

between, say, Africa-south-of-the-Sahara and Latin America? And fourth, what sorts of geographical difference are we most interested in in this course? My guiding criterion here is to try to convey what it is like *to live* in particular world regions. What are the existential dilemmas that Europeans face? What sorts of mental maps do they have of Europe? What sorts of conflicts and tensions make up the daily stuff of life there? In sub-Saharan Africa a crucial horizon of daily life is migratory labor. We need to know what that entails and why it exists on such a scale there. In Latin America, and in contrast, land rights are a preoccupation for millions. So why is that, and what difference does it make to daily life?

COURSE ORGANIZATION

The course is divided into Modules:

- a) A first brief Module addresses the question of how and why we should divide up the world into regions and what form they could / should take.
- b) A second one looks at the processes that make regions different one from another: for example processes of globalization and colonialism and how they have combined with conditions that predated them like the diversity of religions and languages.
- c) The remainder of the course is then divided into an examination of seven different case studies:
 - Africa South-of-the-Sahara
 - Europe in Question
 - Latin America
 - Tropical Worlds
 - From the Far East to East Asia to the Pacific Rim
 - The Neo-Europes

READING

There is no text book for this course. Every Module will have a lengthy narrative to be placed on Carmen. You will also be able to find supplementary readings there. Extensive use will be made of Power Points in class and these will also be available on Carmen.

A final point: The narratives that I have put together to accompany each Module are quite dense. One reading will *not* suffice. Be prepared to undertake multiple readings. You will discover new things and you will find yourself asking new questions, on each reading. Each narrative can be broken down in two different ways: there are the fundamental themes, logics or arguments that I am trying to convey. And there are the concrete cases through which I try to illustrate them. The first should be your initial priority. And then, as you work through the examples, think of your own and how they might have been included as well.

AN ATLAS

This course is about geography. Lots of different places and countries will be mentioned in this course and it helps to know where they are with respect to each other. Don't underestimate the importance of this. You can acquire a decent used atlas through Amazon for very little money: for \$3.00 or less plus shipping. I recommend either the Perthes World Atlas or the Rand McNally World Atlas, with some mild preference for the former, and the most recent the edition the better (the world changes!). This will be a purchase that will serve you well throughout your university career and beyond. Everybody should have a world atlas to hand, student or not.

BE CRITICAL!

As you read about the world, as you experience it in your everyday lives, be critical! It is only by looking for missing links, changing the angle of vision with respect to a problem, discovering new connections that have been omitted in past thinking that our understanding of the world and our ability to change it can improve. Think about what it means to be critical. It is not just a matter of opposing what someone is saying, obviously. Contrarianism has to have some basis in rational, coherent thought. As you read be ready to insert qualifications in the margin or questions that need to be asked and which the author failed to ask.

STUDY STRATEGIES

Studying always involves critique. To learn more about study strategies read what I have placed on Carmen on that topic.

ASSESSMENT

1. There will be two quizzes, each worth 16% of the final grade; a midterm and a final will each contribute 32% to the final grade. Quizzes will last 35 minutes. Midterm and Final exams will each last 1 hour and fifteen minutes. Quiz and exam questions will be of two distinct sorts:

- ‘Objective’ questions: True-False; select the correct alternative or alternatives
- Short answer questions

NOTE: I will circulate a study guide prior to each quiz and each exam.

2. The final 4% of your grade derives from your class attendance. Roll *will* be taken though not every day. Failure to appear in class before 15 minutes into class time counts as an absence. You are allowed three absences. Beyond that you forfeit 4 percentage points.

With respect to exams, please note that in the interests of preserving anonymity you should use your 7-9 digit identification number and *not* your name!!

Finally note the date for your final exam: Monday, April 29: 2:00 – 3:45.

GENERAL EDUCATION (GE) STATUS:

This course is a GE course in Diversity: Global Studies and in Social Science: Human, Natural and Economic Resources. In Diversity courses students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens. In the Global Studies subsection students understand: a) some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world’s nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.; and b) they recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

In Social Science courses students understand the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources. As a result of this particular course you are expected to: i) understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of organizations and politics; ii) understand the formation and durability of political, economic, and social organizing principles and their differences and similarities across contexts; iii) comprehend and assess the nature and values of organizations and politics and their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Take this very, very seriously: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

DISABILITY SERVICES

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/> .

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
BEGINNING		
1/13	Introduction / Module 1: Regions in Question	(concluded)
1/20	Module 2: Making Regions	(continued)
1/27	(continued)	Module 3: Africa South of the Sahara
2/2	(continued)	(concluded)
2/9	QUIZ 1	Module 4: Europe in Question
2/16	(continued)	(continued)
2/23	(concluded)	Module 5: Latin America
3/2	(continued)	(concluded)
3/9	MIDTERM	Module 6: Tropical Worlds
3/16	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
3/23	(continued)	(concluded)
3/30	Module 7: From the Far East to East Asia ...	QUIZ 2
4/6	(continued)	(concluded)
4/13	Module 8: The Neo-Europes	(continued)
4/20	(continued)	(concluded)
4/27		FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY APRIL 29 2:00 – 3:45