



# World Regional Geography

Winter 2019

Online

[Canvas.uoregon.edu](https://Canvas.uoregon.edu)

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## Introduction

Why are population growth rates declining in Japan even as they remain high in Afghanistan? What are responses by Kenyans to the environmental challenges they face? How have post-colonial states in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America adapted to neocolonial political and economic systems? How has increased consumption of disposable goods in the United States influenced resource extraction and waste disposal in West Africa and East Asia?

### **How can knowing these things make you a more informed, engaged, and responsible citizen?**

This course is designed to give you tools that will help you address questions like these. This class is not simply facts about places, but instead asks questions that compel us to look at the political, economic, social and environmental processes shaping places in different regional contexts. Throughout this course, you will develop tools that will help you continue learning about the world far past the final exam. Our geographic approach to places will provide you with a deeper context for comprehending the processes through which places are shaped and importantly, develop an understanding of current events playing out in our world right now.

You will not be required to memorize trivial facts in this class. Instead, I expect you to engage with a geographical approach to understanding and explaining how spatial phenomena (i.e. economic, political, social or environmental processes) shape places in different human and physical geographic contexts. Geographers examine how and why people interact with and transform the areas in which they are situated to create specific places (cities, states, parks, etc.). It delves into how power dynamics, histories, globalization, identity and more are

mobilized and situated in places to explain the disparities and patterns that constitute the world in today's headlines.

This class is completely online. You will be required to read assigned pages in the textbook and review content slides that provide more depth on specific subjects. This course, by its very nature, is a whirlwind tour of the world. Rather than try to learn everything about each region, we will use themes, such as impacts of climate change, deforestation, fertility rates, economic development, and more. While we will not look at all themes in all regions, we will compare each of them between two or three different regions to see how processes intersect with places in different ways.

### Skills you will develop in this course

You will develop many life and job-ready skills in this course. As you complete the various tasks throughout the term, think about how each one is contributing to your own personal development, beyond just learning content. Research shows that employers want the transferable skills of effective communication, problem-solving, leadership, critical thinking, asking and answering questions, and more, far more than they want someone who knows specific or can push certain buttons. You can be taught those things.

As you go through the course and develop your projects and assignments, make them interesting so that one day, they will make a good story in an interview. Each assignment will clearly delineate life and job-ready skills that you will develop through that process.

### Course learning outcomes

- Identify the political, economic, etc. influences on different places and understand how these forces create differences and similarities across space.
- Integrate the concepts we examine in the course to understand how various processes work together (etc: globalization, political geography)
- Applying concepts learned through other places to students own lives (nationalism, borders, economic activities, etc)
- Identify ways our mental maps of places are influenced by media, etc., and learning how to utilize concepts in this course to move beyond stereotypical images of places
- Reflect on the ways places are portrayed that reduces their experiences to stereotypes. Gain more awareness for why places (and the people within them) experience what and how they do.
- Question the biases inherent in news, media, reports, etc., that frame different places (and people) unfairly (whether 'positive' or 'negative')

### Required Text

Caitlin Finlayson, 2016. *World Regional Geography*. [The book is free and can be accessed here.](#)

## Logistics of an online course

An online course requires more self-motivation on behalf of the instructors and the students. You are responsible for completing assignments on time. I am responsible for posting material and responding to you in a timely manner. It can be difficult to stay engaged in a course without face-to-face contact. In order to make up for that, this course will require small group discussions to facilitate interactions and inspiration and interest in the course material and the world around us.

If you have trouble with deadlines, take 10 minutes at the start of the course to make a calendar that you won't lose. Make it a point in your discussion group to remind each other of deadlines, check on progress, etc.

## Requirements

Note that all times are in Pacific Standard Time. If students are in another time zone it is their responsibility to post by the times notes here.

- Read the assigned pages in the textbook and complete the reading quiz on canvas. Due weekly on Wednesday at 11:59pm.
- Review the weekly content slides, which focus on the major themes for the region(s) covered in that module. There will be links to videos and articles embedded in the slides. Read them.
- Participate in weekly discussions about current events in your discussion group. Each week you will be assigned a prompt to focus on, but if your group goes in a different direction, that is encouraged, as long as the conversation stays relevant.
- Complete all assignments. There will be no exams in this class, but you will be required to complete several assignments to continually assess your comprehension of the material

## Etiquette

This course requires a significant amount of participation, discussion and reflection. All students are expected to be engaged and share experiences. Please address each other respectfully.

- Free speech and academic freedom is a cornerstone of the academic environment. You are not graded on your level of agreement, but your understanding of concepts and ability to apply critical thinking skills to issues around the world.
- That being said, *all discussion must adhere to basic decency*. This is difficult to quantify, but disrespectful, abusive, or hateful talk will be addressed. If the situation is not resolved, the student will be asked to leave the discussion group and the class.
- When emailing your colleagues, the GE, or the instructor, please use proper names, grammar and salutations. In addition, put the course name in the subject of the email. It's also helpful to say what class you are in and your own name.

For example:

Subject: GEOG 201- I enjoyed the class!

Hi Dr. McLees,

I just wanted you to know that I really enjoyed today's world regional geography class. I can't wait for the next one to begin!

Thanks,

Leslie

## Academic Integrity Code

All students are expected to complete assignments in a manner consistent with academic integrity. Students must produce their own work and properly acknowledge and document all sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases). Students can find more complete information about the University of Oregon's Policy on Academic Dishonesty in the University of Oregon Student Handbook. Find links on the Canvas to clarify what is meant by plagiarism and to find proper ways of using sources.

If you are found to have plagiarized (copied) off a classmate or from other materials (including the Internet... yes, we can find out) for a test or an assignment of any sort, your first warning will be a zero on the assignment. Your second incident will result in an F in the course.

## Disability Statement

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me at the beginning of the term if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).

## Statement on Privacy

We are utilizing Canvas and ArcGIS online for this course, and you are encouraged to bring other materials and applications to the course to complete assignments. Know that neither Canvas or ArcGIS online can be accessed by the public, and access is limited to the instructor, GEs, and other students. If you have any issues regarding privacy, please bring them up with the instructor as soon as possible and we can make accommodations.

## Attendance Policy

Class attendance is an important part of a student's educational experience. Students are expected to attend every meeting of their classes and are responsible for class attendance. Regardless of what reasons there may be for absence, students are accountable for all academic activities, and I reserve the right to require special work or tests to make up for the missed class or classes.

Grading

Weekly quiz questions	15 points
Canvas discussions	15 points
Assignments (5 @ 10 points each)	50 points
Final project	20 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 Points</b>

*\*\* note that any assignment or exam submitted late will receive a 10% total deduction on the grade for each day it is late, including weekends \*\**