

# **Geography 101: People and their Environments**

Mondays and Thursdays– 9:45 – 11:00

West Building – W415

Course/Section Number: 21470 – Section 01

Instructor: Ms. Ekaterina Bezborodko

Office Hours: By appointment

Instructor's Email: eb926@hunter.cuny.edu

## **Course Overview**

Geography is one of the most wide-ranging university disciplines, with its mission to explain the interactions of the human and natural worlds to produce our modern life, with its environmental and social complexity. This course is an introduction to both physical and human geography, with topics ranging from climate change and plate tectonics to globalization and political boundaries. It is an introduction to the major subfields of the discipline, major patterns of natural and human activity at the global level, and major theories and techniques for thinking spatially. A special emphasis is placed on the interrelatedness of these phenomena, with topics building upon each other throughout the course.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students should be able to

- Identify major forces of the physical world – atmospheric, biological, and geochemical processes and the resulting distribution of biomes, weather patterns, and landscapes.
- Identify major trends in human activities such as population dynamics, migration, cultural practices, economic activities, and impacts on the environment.
- Describe how these interact and impact each other to produce complex phenomena such as globalization and climate change.
- Read maps and related spatial graphics for basic information and to make inferences and connections.
- Consider and compare a variety of theoretical outlooks on major world problems such as environmental degradation, inequality, and political conflict.
- Understand the breadth of geography as an academic discipline with a variety of professional applications.

## **Materials**

### **Required texts:**

*The Thinking Person's Guide to Climate Change*. 2014 Robert Hanson. American Meteorological Society and The University of Chicago Press. You can buy this book directly from University of Chicago Press for \$30, or go to other booksellers' websites for cheaper used versions. Don't worry – we won't talk only about climate change in this class!

Goode's World Atlas, 23<sup>rd</sup> Edition. It is on sale for \$19.99 on the Rand McNally website (<https://store.randmcnally.com/goodes-world-atlas-23rd-edition-paperback.html>). If the price is too high when you go to buy it, you can find used copies online, and if you have to, you can purchase a used copy of the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition. Please note, Google Maps are not an adequate replacement for an actual atlas, especially for the physical geography component.

Other required readings will be posted on Blackboard. Expect to read 2-3 articles/book excerpts or 4-5 shorter news media articles each week. Readings need to be done by the time you come to class.

**Optional text:** Dahlman, Carl and William Renwick. *Introduction to Geography: People, Places & Environment*, 6/E. ISBN-13: 978-0321843333 ,ISBN-10: 0321843339 2014 Prentice Hall. The course will broadly follow the outline of this textbook, but all crucial information will be available in the required readings/materials. You are welcome to buy an inexpensive used copy or consult the book on reserves at the library as a study guide.

### **Requirements**

**Attendance, Reading, Self-guided Study** You are expected to read all materials and study all maps presented to you. Attendance is highly recommended and will be tracked with a sign-in sheet. Regular attendance will be rewarded when considering borderline final grades. I will not use office hours to re-explain lecture content to students who regularly miss lectures without documented reasons. College courses often require students to master a certain amount of content through self-directed study. That is, not every single concept will be addressed in lectures. I am available for questions.

### **Map Quizzes and Map Exercises**

There will be four map quizzes, each of which requires you to identify countries, cities, and major physical features on a continent. Each regular exam will include a separately-graded map quiz, and the final exam will include two of them. You can expect to spend about 5 minutes on each quiz.

The three map exercises are out-of-class assignments to be completed on Blackboard. The goal is to practice your map interpretation skills while analyzing major spatial patterns of phenomena covered by this course. All maps will be provided online.

### **Exams**

Three exams will be administered, including the final. These cannot be rescheduled except for documented emergencies. A large part of the exam will be short essay questions that you will receive ahead of time. You will need to think ahead about your answers, but you will not be able to bring any of your notes to the exam.

### **Anonymous Surveys**

There will be two anonymous surveys via Blackboard, one at the start and one at the end of the course. You will get a point for completing each one. I will be able to see whether you completed them or not, but I will not be able to trace your individual answers to your

name. The first survey will help me take into account your interests and academic preparation, while the second survey is your chance to evaluate course materials and tell me what you enjoyed most and least. This is separate from and in addition to Hunter's formal student evaluation process, which pertains to my conduct as instructor. The official Hunter evaluation is administered through a separate portal and does not affect your course grade at all.

### **Blackboard**

Our course page on Blackboard will be used to communicate important announcements such as schedule changes, and to administer surveys and map exercises. Please make sure you check the e-mail account that is linked to your Blackboard (usually your official college e-mail).

### **Classroom Etiquette**

Please arrive to class on time. Turn off all cell phones and similar devices. There should be no texting or browsing the internet during class. Please save side conversations for a later time, and raise your hand to talk. If your phone use or talking is audible, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

### **Emails and meeting requests**

You are very welcome to get in touch with any questions about the course, the field of geography, and any topics we study. You are also welcome to request an in-person meeting via e-mail. Please note that without prior arrangement, I'm not likely to be in the adjunct faculty office. Please include "GEOG 101" in the subject line, and sign with your full name. Emails without signatures or subject lines will not be answered. I will make all efforts to answer e-mails within two working days.

### **Grading**

**Map quizzes 12% (4 x 3% each)**

**Map exercises 21 % (3 x 7% each)**

**Exam 1 20%**

**Exam 2 20 %**

**Final Exam 25% (1/4 cumulative, 3/4 based on last third of course materials)**

**Anonymous Survey 2% (2 x 1%)**

- Exams and late map exercises can only be rescheduled based on documented or exceptional circumstances, such as illness, bereavement, or documented family emergency. Please contact me as soon as possible. If you will need to reschedule due to a religious observance or other pre-scheduled event, it is your responsibility to address this *before* the exam or due date.
- **An Incomplete (IN) grade** will not be given unless you have an exceptional and documented emergency. For an IN to be awarded you must contact me about making up any missed assignments and fill out the *Contract to Resolve an Incomplete Grade* form **within 72 hours** of the day/time of the final exam. The IN will become an FIN at the end of the following semester if you do not complete the work.

- **Credit/No Credit (CR/NCR)** forms will be accepted before the final exam - submit them *no later than 15 minutes before the final exam begins*. No forms will be accepted after the start of the final exam. To qualify for the CR/NCR option students must have completed all of the course work (exams, quizzes, exercises etc.). CR-NCR grades will be assigned based on the rules outlined on the CR/NCR form. If you think you'll need this option, *please* speak to your department advisors and also to me to make sure it is in your best interest.
- Please note, course withdrawals affect your financial aid! If you receive a W, WN, or WU, you may need to return part of your financial aid. If you simply cease to come to class and to turn in your work, you may end up with a WU as a final grade. . A **WU (Unofficial Withdrawal)** grade is assigned as follows:
  - 1) A student's enrollment has been verified by the course instructor, and
  - 2) The student has severed all ties with the course at any time before the final exam week and, consequently, has failed to complete enough course work -- as specified in the course syllabus -- to earn a letter grade (in our course, this means that you must complete a minimum of all three exams OR a minimum of the first two exams and all three map exercises), and
  - 3) The student has not officially withdrawn from the course by completing the process for a W grade, or made arrangements to receive an INC.

**An F grade is assigned if you did your work poorly – it is not a substitute for a WU. If you simply abandon the course, you will get a WU. A WU is like an F on an academic transcript, but a simple F does *not* require you to return your financial aid because a letter grade means you completed the course. So, it is in your interest to avoid WUs!**

See the Hunter Academic Calendar for guidance on deadlines to drop courses with refunds or to avoid withdrawal on your transcript:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/onestop/repository/files/registrar/Fall2018Calendar.pdf>

### **Hunter College Statement on Academic Integrity**

Hunter College 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 CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College.

### **ADA Policy (from Office of AccessABILITY)**

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E 1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772- 4857 or (212) 650-3230.

## **Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct**

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

- a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).
- b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link:

<http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf>

## **Schedule**

### **M, August 27 and Th, August 30: Introduction to Geography**

What is geography? Geographical concepts. Mapping the world.  
PLEASE TAKE FIRST SURVEY BY AUGUST 31

**NO CLASS MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 – LABOR DAY**

### **September: W, Sept 5 and Th, Sept 6 (Wednesday follows a Monday Schedule): Weather, Climate, and Climate Change**

Basics physics of the atmosphere, distribution of climate regions, monsoon and ENSO phenomena, defining modern climate change

**NO CLASS MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10**

### **Th, Sept 13: Weather, Climate, and Climate Change Dynamics (continued)**

Climate change dynamics: causes and impacts

**M, Sept 17 and Th, Sept 20: Landforms, geological processes, and geological hazards.**

Plate tectonics, landscape formation by water and wind, and geological hazards (volcanoes, earthquakes, landslides, etc.)

**M, Sept 24 and Th Sept 27: Biological processes, ecology, and biomes.**

Circulation of energy through the biomes, climate change and invasive species.

**M, Oct 1: Population Dynamics**

Distribution and prediction of population, demographic transitions around the world, gender and age ratios.

**Th, Oct 4: Introduction to Economic Geography**

Economic systems, comparing economies around the world, measuring poverty

**Map Exercise 1 Due (by start of class)**

**NO CLASS MONDAY, OCTOBER 8**

**Th. Oct 11 Exam 1 and Map Quiz 1: The Americas**

**Exam will cover everything up to, but not including, population dynamics.**

**M, Oct 15 and Th, Oct 18: Agriculture**

Agricultural systems and their distribution, agriculture and climate change, urban agriculture

**M, Oct 22 and Th, Oct 25: Cities and urbanization**

Urban forms around the world, slums/informal settlements, urbanization and development, global gentrification, cities and climate change

**M, Oct 29: Energy Resources**

Fossil fuel, traditional and alternative energy sources: their distribution and use across agricultural and urban landscapes, and impacts of energy choices on climate change scenarios

**Th, Nov 1: Introduction to Political Geography**

State forms, government types, and

**Map Exercise 2 Due (by start of class)**

**M, Nov 5: Exam 2 and Map Quiz 2: Europe and Central Asia**

Exam will cover everything from Population Dynamics to Energy Resources, and will *not* cover Introduction to Political Geography

**Th, Nov 8: Political Geography, continued**

The dilemmas of nation states, borders, and refugees

**M, Nov 12 and Th, Nov 15: Governing the Global Economy**

Migration of Capital and Labor – why are people and economic activities on the move, and where are they going? What political forces and political actors shape these movements?

**M, Nov 19: Introduction to Cultural Geography**

What is culture? What is geographical about it?

**NO CLASS THURSDAY, NOV 22 – THANKSGIVING**

**M, Nov 26, Th, Nov 29, M Dec 3: Cultural Geography: Language and Religion**

Major language families and world religion, their origins and distribution, current trends in movement of languages and religions.

**Th, Dec 6: Cultural Geography of the Future: Movement of Ideas**

How do social movements regarding culture, politics, or economic justice become globalized? What are some major social movements and how are they distributed?

**M, Dec 10 (last day of class)**

**Map Exercise 3 Due (by start of class)**

If time allows, we will reserve the last lecture for a topic of interest chosen by students. Otherwise, we will summarize main points of the course and review for the final exam

**DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED: FINAL EXAM AND MAP QUIZES 3 (ASIA) AND 4 (AFRICA)**

**Exit Survey Due (by start of final exam)**

**75% of the exam will cover Political Geography – Cultural Geography**

**25% of the exam will cover topics from prior two exams – make sure to review past exam questions!**