

# Geography 101: People and their Environments

Tuesdays and Fridays– 11:10-12:25

In person in West Building – Room 415 (selected days)

Online through Zoom (selected days; permanent zoom room link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5285053327> Meeting ID: 528 505 3327)

Course/Section Number: 10581 – Section 02

Instructor: Ms. Ekaterina (Katya) Bezbordko

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, 1:00-1:30 pm in HN1032 (or convenient well-ventilated campus area of our choice); limited zoom appointments might be available outside these hours

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

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## Course Overview & Learning Outcomes, Texts

### 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, political boundaries, and world cultures. 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.
- Analyze course topics using geographic concepts such as scale and spatial process.
- Understand the breadth of geography as an academic discipline with a variety of professional applications.

### Required texts:

**Dahlman, C and W. Renwick (2014) *Introduction to Geography: People, Places, and Environment*. (6th ed) Pearson. ISBN: 9780321843333**

PLEASE GET THE SIXTH EDITION

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FOR MAP QUIZ STUDY: *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.

## Learning Activities and Grading

### Summary

<b><i>Learning Activity</i></b>	<b><i>% of Final Grade</i></b>
Homework Quizzes	10%
Discussion Group	25%
Map Exercises (3x8%)	24%
Map Quizzes (4x2%)	8%
Exam 1	10%
Exam 2	10%
Final Exam	12%
Survey/Intro	3%

### Detailed Descriptions

#### Homework Quizzes

*Purpose:*

- Check your understanding of assigned texts and pre-recorded lectures
- Demonstrate your independent learning efforts
- Identify terms and concepts to review in our flipped-classroom in-person sessions
- Ideally – improve your study skills and gain confidence with independent learning

*Description:*

- Covers specific assigned readings and pre-recorded lectures
- Mostly covers introductory terms and main ideas, with a few higher-order conceptual questions
- Up to 15 multiple-choice and/or short-answer questions

*How to do it:*

- Quizzes are located in Blackboard in the Course Topics folders.
- You will have one chance to submit a completed quiz.
  - There is no time limit.
  - You can log into your quiz multiple times before you submit your final answer (you do not have to complete it in one sitting)
  - When you submit your answers, you will see which *multiple-choice* questions you got wrong, but not what the correct answer is.

- Write your answers on paper as you go, in case of technical difficulties.

*Evaluation:*

- Your top eight scores of the semester will be counted for the final quiz grade.
- LATE HOMEWORK QUIZZES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR A GRADE (BUT YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO COMPLETE THEM FOR STUDY PURPOSES!)

## Discussion Group: Live Discussion and Written Questions

*Purpose:*

- Apply basic terms and concepts to a detailed example of each major course topic.
- Deeply examine an event or ongoing situation using geographic concepts such as scale, movement through space, and the creation of place.
- Practice effective discussion strategies.
- Ideally - enjoy interacting with your classmates!

*Description:*

- During class, you will discuss a journalistic or other non-textbook source provided for each course topic.
- A discussion prompt will be provided to you ahead of time.
- Your group will submit one written answer that summarizes your group's thoughts on the discussion prompt. This answer will be visible to other members of the class, and you are encouraged to read other groups' responses.

*How to do it:*

- You will be assigned to a semester-long discussion group of about 5 students.
- On your in-person day, you will sit with your group and have from 20-40 minutes to discuss the week's prompt.
  - Remember to write down your main ideas and interesting remarks.
  - Designate someone each week to submit the written summary to the discussion board.
  - I suggest your designated person write a first draft and let other members comment on it through email before posting it online.
- A separate discussion board will be set up for each course topic.
  - Find the link in each Course Topics folder on Blackboard.
- Create a discussion "thread" labeled with your day and group number and submit your answer by the due date.
- Each individual group member is encouraged to read other groups' answers and submit a comment; people who comment *regularly and thoughtfully* on others' responses can count on leniency when rounding up final grades (if you have an 78.5 but you're a great discussion participant, I'm likely to round it up to a B- for the final grade).
- You cannot erase or edit your answer once you submit it.
  - The reason for this is so we can see the original text to which someone has replied.

- If you've made an error or want to revise your answer, just create a reply to your own posting.

*Evaluation:*

- Individuals are evaluated based on their regular participation in discussion groups (this requires attendance, or, when you're unable to make it, participation in comments and drafting of written responses).
- Groups are evaluated on the quality of their written submission, and individuals are credited with the group score as well.
- See rubric for guidelines to a good discussion answer.
- Pass+ (Rubric score 5) /Pass (Rubric score 4) /Fail (Rubric score 3 or below)
- Your top 8 group scores plus percentage attendance (out of 8 required discussions) will be used for your individual grade.

## Map Exercises

*Purpose:*

- Experience reading and interpreting a wide variety of maps illustrating course topics.
- Consider the purposes and limits of communicating with maps.
- Learn to avoid common mistakes of map reading.
- Ideally – have a great aesthetic experience and appreciate cartography as science *and art*.

*Description:*

- There are three map exercises during the semester.
- Each exercise has a set of 10-15 maps and up to 50 multiple-choice questions to go with each map set (*not* 50 questions for each map!).
- The map sets follow the sequence of course topics.
  - Some maps will also appear in lectures.
  - Others will be new to you – they either illustrate an important event/situation, or are made in particularly interesting or unusual ways, or just seem like fun maps to look at.

*How to do it:*

- Map exercise materials are located in the Map Exercises folder.
- Each map exercise includes a PDF of numbered map slides, a PDF of the questions, and a link with the exercise portal where you will again see the questions and enter your answers.
- Protect your work – write down your answers on a piece of paper as you go along.
- You will have two untimed tries to complete each map exercise.
  - After you submit each try, you will see which answers you got wrong but not what the correct answer is.
  - If you want to improve your score, submit a second try.

- If you encounter technical difficulties on the first try, just try again. I will give people a “third” try only in exceptional circumstances, so use your tries wisely.
- Plan for several work sessions – if you rush through it, you are not likely to do well.
  - One strategy is to divide the maps by course topic and complete the associated questions as we introduce the topics in class.

*Evaluation:*

- Your highest score for each map exercise will count as your final score.
- Each map exercise is worth 8% of the final grade.
- There are usually a couple of extra-credit questions identified for each map exercise.
- You will see the correct answers and associated commentary *after the due date* (not always *immediately* after the due date).

## Map Quiz

*Purpose*

- Learn the location of a variety of countries, cities, and physical features such as rivers and mountain ranges, with a focus on places mentioned in other class materials.
- Test your learning through four quizzes broken up by region.
- Ideally, gain confidence in your general knowledge of the world’s political & physical geography.

*Description*

- A comprehensive list of locations organized by continent and tested through four 20-item paper-based quizzes.

*How to do it*

- Find the list of locations and blank practice maps in the “Map Quiz” folder on Blackboard.
- Use a proper print or online atlas (*not* Google Maps!) to identify items on the list. Practice filling in the provided blank maps. Study tips are provided in the materials.
- Above all – don’t cram ☺ Start studying early!
- The quizzes will take place during designated in-person days. This means that sometimes one group will have more time to study for a quiz than another, but we will take turns being the “first” group to take a quiz.
  - You will have 15-20 minutes to complete the quiz.
  - You will get the exact copies of the practice maps for the region being tested that day and a list of 20 places to identify. This will be a subset of your practice list.
  - Label the blank map with the letters corresponding to the items on the list.

*Evaluation*

- For a score of 100%, you will need to receive a score of 15 out of 20.

## Exams

### *Purpose*

- Demonstrate your knowledge of basic factual and conceptual knowledge of course material.

### *Description*

- Each third of the course will be tested with a *timed, open-book*, exam on Blackboard.
  - You will not have adequate time to look up each answer in your course materials; please do not rely on the open book format to avoid extensive studying.
  - You can also take this same exam in-person on paper (or online) if enough people want this option. You will be allowed to bring your textbook, notes, and computer with you. This will give you very direct access to me during exam time and fulfill the promise of making 50/50 in-person classes available. If fewer than 10 people are interested in this option, it might not be available.
- There will be approximately 30 questions in multiple choice, short answer, and True/False format. Each student will need to explain their answer for a random sub-set of multiple choice and True/False answers. Up to five additional extra-credit questions will be available. Do not explain your answer to extra-credit questions.
- A study guide will be provided ahead of time.

### *How to do it:*

- If you're doing it online (in person or at home): On the exam day, open the exam portal in the Exam Materials folder on Blackboard.
- If you're doing it in person, you will get a paper copy of the exam.
- You will have immediate email and telephone access to the instructor in case of technical difficulties during the entire exam period.
  - Write down your answers on paper as you go. In case of technical difficulties, you might need to start over, using only the remainder of the allotted time.
- Make-up exams are available *only* in cases of serious, documented emergencies. They will be completed in an entirely different format – essay questions that you will need to prepare to write during a timed exam scheduled at our mutual convenience.

*Evaluation* – total correct out of total score. I never grade on a curve, but I do make adjustments if it looks like a question is open to misinterpretation because it is not clear enough in retrospect.

## Surveys & Introduction

### *Purpose & Description*

- Check your understanding of the syllabus and course website, learn to use VoiceThread, introduce yourself to your instructor and classmates, and provide feedback to the instructor at the end of the semester.

- Two anonymous untimed surveys (multiple choice and open answer) on Blackboard and a VoiceThread recorded introduction.

*How to do it*

- Find these in the Surveys folder on Blackboard. The VoiceThread will have specific instructions for how to record a comment.
- You will have unlimited untimed tries to submit these items.
- The two surveys will be anonymous – I will see if you completed them but will not see your individual answers. The VoiceThread introduction will be visible to all of your classmates.
- You need to listen to the introductions of your discussion group members, but you are encouraged to listen to as many additional introductions as you can. Who knows, you might find new friends with similar academic and career interests!

*Evaluation*

- You will get one point on your final grade for each item completed. None of these will be graded. Yes, the percentage points in the course sum up to 102%, not 100%. It is part of the various built-in extra credit opportunities, as I do *not* make individual extra credit available.

## Schedules of Topics and Due Dates

### Topics – Mini Schedule

<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Subject</b>
		Aug. 27	<b>Introduction to Geography</b> Synchronous online
Aug 31	<b>Geographic Concepts</b> Synchronous online	Sept 3	NO CLASS
Sept 7	NO CLASS	Sept 10	<b>Weather &amp; Climate Basics</b> Synchronous online
Sept 14	<b>Weather, Climate, Climate Change</b> <i>Tuesday group in-person</i>	Sept 17	<b>Weather, Climate, Climate Change</b> <i>Friday group in-person</i>
Sept 21	<b>Geology &amp; Geohazards</b> <i>Tuesday group in-person</i>	Sept 24	<b>Geology &amp; Geohazards</b> <i>Friday group in-person</i>
Sept 28	<b>Biogeography</b> <i>Tuesday group in-person</i> MAP QUIZ ONE: AMERICAS	Oct 1	<b>Biogeography</b> <i>Friday group in-person</i> MAP QUIZ ONE: AMERICAS
Oct 5	<b>Energy: Landscape &amp; Resources</b> Synchronous online	Oct 8	<b>EXAM ONE</b> Student choice: -synchronous online <i>or</i> - in-person



Oct 12	<b>Economic Geography</b> <i>Tuesday group in-person</i>	Oct 15	<b>Economic Geography</b> <i>Friday group in-person</i>
Oct 19	<b>Population &amp; Migration</b> <i>Tuesday group in-person</i>	Oct 22	<b>Population &amp; Migration</b> <i>Friday group in-person</i>
Oct 26	<b>Food and Agriculture</b> <i>Tuesday group in-person</i>	Oct 29	<b>Food and Agriculture</b> <i>Friday group in-person</i> <i>MAP QUIZ TWO: EUROPE AND FORMER USSR</i>
Nov 2	<b>Urban Geography</b> <i>Tuesday group in-person</i> <i>MAP QUIZ TWO: EUROPE AND FORMER USSR</i>	Nov 5	<b>Urban Geography</b> <i>Friday group in-person</i>
Nov 9	<b>Intro to Political Geography</b> Synchronous Online	Nov 12	<b>EXAM TWO</b> Student choice: -synchronous online <i>or</i> - in-person
Nov 16	<b>Political Geography</b> <i>Tuesday group in-person</i>	Nov 19	<b>Political Geography</b> <i>Friday group in-person</i> <i>MAP QUIZ THREE: ASIA</i>
Nov 23	<b>Intro to Cultural Geography</b> Synchronous online <i>MAP QUIZ THREE: ASIA</i>	Nov 26	<b>NO CLASS</b>
Nov 30	<b>Language &amp; Religion</b> <i>Tuesday group in-person</i>	Dec 3	<b>Language &amp; Religion</b> <i>Friday group in-person</i>
Dec 7	<b>Student Choice</b> <i>- continue Language &amp; Religion <u>or</u> choose other topic</i> <i>Tuesday group in-person</i> <i>MAP QUIZ FOUR: AFRICA</i>	Dec 10	<b>Student Choice</b> <i>- continue Language &amp; Religion <u>or</u> choose other topic</i> <i>Friday group in-person</i> <i>MAP QUIZ FOUR: AFRICA</i>
<b><u>Dec 21, 9:00 – 11:00 Final Exam</u></b> <b><u>NOTE DIFFERENT TIMING!!</u></b> <b>Date is subject to change as per the registrar; pay attention to Blackboard announcements.</b>			

### Assignment Due Dates

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES ARE THE **SAME FOR EVERYONE** NO MATTER WHAT YOUR GROUP DAY IS

<b>Monday, 11 pm</b>	<b>Items</b>
Aug 30	Syllabus Quiz
Sept 6	Introduction (concepts and mapping) Quiz Record VoiceThread Introduction

Sept 13	Weather & Climate Quiz
Sept 20	Geology & Geohazards Quiz Weather & Climate Discussion Post
Sept 27	Biogeography Quiz Geology & Geohazards Discussion Post
Oct 4	Biogeography Discussion Post
Oct 11	Economic Geography Quiz MAP EXERCISE ONE Deadline to respond to other groups' first three discussion posts for extra credit (you don't have to respond to each post for each question; read what interests you!)
Oct 18	Population and Migration Quiz Economic Geography Discussion Post
Oct 25	Food and Agriculture Quiz Population and Migration Discussion Post
Nov 1	Urban Geography Quiz Food and Agriculture Discussion Post
Nov 8	Urban Geography Discussion Post MAP EXERCISE TWO
Nov 15	Political Geography Quiz Deadline to respond to other groups' next four discussion posts (economic – urban geography) for extra credit (you don't have to respond to each post for each question; read what interests you!)
Nov 22	Political Geography Discussion Post
Nov 29	Language and Religion Quiz
Dec 6	Language and Religion Discussion Post MAP EXERCISE THREE
Dec 13	Final Discussion Question (depends on student topic chosen; might be waived) End-of-course survey

## Course Rules and Procedures

### The Flipped Classroom and Study Time

In a “flipped classroom” course, students are responsible for studying introductory material ahead of time. The instructor does not review all basic concepts unless students request them specifically, or quiz responses show general difficulties. This saves precious class time for more complex topics and for in-depth discussion. It develops independent study skills that are crucial to college success. Most importantly – it allows for a more interactive, engaging, and interesting course. This is why quizzes are due *before* we meet for class and why lectures are usually pre-recorded.

Expect to spend 6-9 hours a week on independent study. Budget some time each week for reading and listening to recorded lectures, writing up discussion questions, map exercises, completing quizzes, reviewing map lists, exam study etc. This is a standard requirement for college courses. Some students might require more or less and some weeks might be more or less heavy. This is just an estimate to help you plan your schedule.

## Hybrid Schedule

This course is synchronous, so unless noted otherwise, you need to be available at assigned times even if you are not attending an in-person class that day, in case there is an online lecture or exam.

- Some days are marked as “in-person” for groups associated with either a Tuesday or Friday meeting schedule. Come to W415 and sit down in your group area. Come with questions about any materials for that week that you do not understand well. Be prepared to discuss the non-textbook readings with your group members using the provided prompt. Map quizzes will also be given during in-person days.
- On in-person days that are *not* associated with your day of the week, you are encouraged to use that time to listen to pre-recorded lectures and read your textbook.
- Please attend synchronous online lectures on zoom. I will not record these.
- RSVP a week before the exam day if you would like to take the exam on paper and in person during class time. If you prefer the online format, you still need to take the exam during regular class times. You could also bring your computer and take the exam online but in person (*if* you are sure your computer gets good internet reception in W415).

## Grading Policies

- There are no curves and no individualized extra credit assignments in this course.
  - I do adjust grades if I see that something was unclear on my end or for other such reasons, but *not* based *only* on the fact that many people got a question wrong.
- In the fall of 2021, Hunter has returned to the pre-pandemic grading rules with respect to INC and CR/NCR
  - An INC will be given only under exceptional circumstances.
  - A CR/NCR needs to be requested *prior* to the final exam.
  - Please talk to your advisors or with advisors in Student Services to see if this is the best option for you. Some professional programs and majors have their own rules about CR/NCR.
  - CR/NCR grades are available *only for those who have completed all assignments*, or at least 60% of the course content (which includes at least some quizzes!). You cannot skip map exercises, exams, or lots of quizzes and then ask for CR/NCR to make up for that.
- A WU will be given to students who unofficially drop the class – that is, students who simply “disappear” from class, stop completing assignments, and do not get in touch with me before the end of the course. This can have serious consequences for financial aid. Please get in touch if you run into difficulties or withdraw officially rather than abandon the course.

## Attendance and Assistance

Attendance is highly encouraged but will be taken for record-keeping purposes only. However, it is basically impossible to get full credit for discussion group questions if you have consistently bad attendance. If you have to miss your in-person day, get in touch with your group members and see how you can help with the discussion post. If you run into attendance problems, please get in touch with me immediately – I do not want anyone to end up with a WU or to fall seriously behind.

I will not review large quantities of material with students who do not have documented reasons but fail to attend classes, do not complete quizzes, and show no evidence of listening to pre-recorded lectures (evidence includes leaving comments or questions right in the lecture by using voicethread comments). I am happy to answer all of your questions, but I cannot conduct the equivalent of multiple classes. In a “flipped” classroom, your regular attendance is the best way to assure your success.

A special note to the many freshmen in this class: I treat you as adults because you *are* adults rather than high school students. Please make wise use of this freedom and flexibility. The fact that attendance is not strictly mandatory might give you a false sense of security. I advise you to follow the schedule closely and to meet your discussion group obligations.

## Communications

You are highly encouraged to get in touch with the instructor the moment you experience any difficulties in your course work. You are also very welcome to ask questions about the course content, geography, graduate school, and anything else I can help you with.

- Please use your Hunter email address, or at least a CUNY one, to communicate with me.
- Include “Geography 101” in your subject line.
- Sign with your first and last name.
- Emails without a subject line and your name might not be answered. Instructors sometimes receive suspicious phishing, malware, and other harmful emails. We must be careful about the emails we open, so please do sign properly.
- I will make all efforts to answer emails within two business days. If you do not hear from me after three business days, please write again.

## Hunter Policies

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act of 1990:

All students with disabilities and medical conditions are encouraged to register with the Office of AccessABILITY for assistance and accommodation.

For information and an appointment contact the Office located in Room E1214B, or call 212-772-4857 /or VP 646-755- 3129 or contact [accessability@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:accessability@hunter.cuny.edu)

Policy on sexual harassment/misconduct: <http://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-procedures/Sexual-Misconduct.pdf>

Policy on academic integrity: <https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-procedures/academic-integrity-policy/>