

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Fall 2015

Discipline: Geography

Course Title: World Geography

Lower Division

Faculty Name: John Boyer

Pre-requisites: none

COURSE DESCRIPTION

World Geography is a survey course designed to acquaint undergraduate students with a variety of geographic, historic, environmental, demographic, religious and economic characteristics of various areas of the world. The objectives of the course are to broaden and strengthen the individual's interest in the world at large and to consider how/where/why physical and cultural forces shape and define the earth we live on. The world is a big place, filled with trillions of facts and figures, billions of people, hundreds of thousands of places, and lifetimes of experience: we can only cover so much. Readings, lectures, slides, and films will be employed to promote interest and highlight geographic themes, but are not intended as exhaustive regional surveys.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the course is to broaden and strengthen the individual's interest in the world at large; to consider how/where/why physical and cultural forces shape and define the earth we live on. SAS World Geography is a world regional survey designed to acquaint undergraduate students with a variety of geographic, historic, environmental, demographic, religious and economic characteristics of various areas of the planet that we will be visiting. The world is a big place, filled with trillions of facts and figures, billions of people, hundreds of thousands of places, and lifetimes of experience: we can only cover so much. However, upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

Skill or ability

- To evaluate the causes of major historical events and their impact on the contemporary world.
- To critically analyze the media coverage of a foreign country or event from a variety of different news sources and ideological perspectives.
- To understand and interpret global current events and international issues from an interdisciplinary perspective.
- To describe current major regional/global issues and make predictions of how these issues will impact the future.

Knowledge

- To describe the historical, economic, cultural, social and physical characteristics of the major world regions the various state that comprise these regions; both in terms of their uniqueness and their similarities, as well as how they interact with each other in the modern world.
- To understand fundamental issues in international relations including world interdependence and of the global nature of contemporary issues.
- To comprehend and analyze relations between nations, international government and non-governmental organizations, and major global actors in historic and contemporary debate.

Beliefs and attitudes

- To possess a broad individual interest in the world at large.
- To maintain a sense of on-going engagement toward current national and international affairs.
- To empathize with diverse perspectives on global issues and events; that is, to be able and willing to see things from a different perspective while maintaining one's own.
- To develop an appreciation for the great variety of cultural forms and ways of thinking throughout the world, and to formulate a world view that uses this appreciation to become responsible global citizens.
- To possess confidence to converse with others on global topics and pressing issues of our day.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Plaid Avenger's World 8th edition

AUTHOR: John Boyer

TITLE: Plaid Avenger's World

PUBLISHER: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company

ISBN #: Not sure the book will come out next summer

DATE/EDITION: 8th edition

[There will be a digital version of this text available for the SAS students for Fall 2015]

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Must watch at least 3 films out of the 10 I show during different days at sea. Either that or you can borrow the films and write a paper. Some films will be shown in the common area as a group, as room availability permits.

A1- September 15:

Lecture: Introduction to the course. What is World Regions? What do they need to do to earn their grade? Introduction to the Atlantic World. What is globalization? What is the Atlantic World and why is it important?

Reading: Syllabus

A2-September 17:

Lecture: World of States. What defines a state? What is sovereignty? What is a nation or a nation-state? Who controls the state?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 1&2 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

A3- September 19:

Lecture: Europe. Who is in the region and why? What is the EU, and what does it do today?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 3 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

Assignment: Quiz #1

September 21-26: Italy

A4- September 27:

Lecture: Europe: North vs. South, East vs West; The Mediterranean Realm

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 4 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

Assignment: Quiz #2

A5- September 29:

Lecture: Turkey

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 5 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

Assignment: Quiz #3

September 30-October 05: Istanbul

A6- October 07:

Lecture: The Mediterranean Realm Continued: Southern Europe and North African connections

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 6 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

Assignment: Quiz #4

October 08-13: Piraeus

A7- October 15:

Lecture: Developed or Developing. What is the periphery? What are the differing degrees of development?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 7 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

Assignment: Quiz #5

A8- October 17:

Lecture: North Africa and The Middle East

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 8&9 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

October 18-23: Barcelona

A9- October 25:

Lecture: North Africa and The Middle East Continued

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 10 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

Assignment: Quiz #6

October 26-31: Casablanca, Morocco

A10- November 02:

Lecture: Sub-Saharan Africa. Why is this region the most challenged? What are the physical features of Africa? **Reading:** Plaid Avenger's World ch. 11&12 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

Assignment: Quiz #7

A11- November 04:

Lecture: Midterm

A12- November 07:

Lecture: Sub-Saharan Africa: Why is this region lagging behind? What does the future hold for Sub-Saharan Africa? The African/Atlantic Realm

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 13 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

A13- November 09:

Lecture: Latin America. How did the term "Latin America" come about? What is the common culture?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 14 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

Assignment: Quiz #8

A14- November 11:

Lecture: South America Intro: Powerhouse Brazil

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 15&16 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

November 12-17: Salvador, Brazil

A15- November 19:

Lecture: Latin America continued. Why is there a wealth disparity and how does it affect the region? What is the history of US involvement in Latin America?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 17 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

Assignment: Quiz #9

A16- November 21:

Lecture: South America. How do the physical factors affect the region? What are the social factors affecting the region?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 18&18A and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

A17- November 24:

Lecture: South America continued. Who is the superpower country of South America? How do trade blocks affect the region?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 19 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

A18- November 26:

Lecture: Caribbean. What makes the Caribbean distinct from other Latin America regions?

Reading:

Assignment: Quiz #10

November 27-28: Port of Spain

A19- November 30:

Lecture: Caribbean Continued. How did the Caribbean become the melting pot it is today? What is the Caribbean known for in today's world?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 20 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

A20- December 03

Lecture: World Economy. What are the different types of economies on the scale of left vs. the right? Why are there so many economic systems? What are the different types of economic activities? What is GDP and what is not included in it?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 21&22 and daily news story posted in my electronic course folder

Assignment: Quiz #11

A21- December 05:

Lecture: Central America

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World ch. 23 and daily news story posted in my electronic course

December 06-11: Puntarenas, Costa Rica

A22- December 13:

Lecture: International Organizations: Who are the major global players? What are supranationalist organizations? What are the different types of international organizations?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World Ch 24 and daily news story posted in my electronic course

A23- December 15:

Lecture: Future of the Atlantic World: What is the future of the Trans-Atlantic economy? What is the future of Trans-Atlantic partnerships? The future of regional interactions in the Mediterranean/Atlantic/Caribbean Realm?

Reading: Plaid Avenger's World Ch 25&26 and daily news story posted in my electronic course

Assignment: Quiz #12

A24- December 18: Final Exam

Final Exam

FIELD WORK

Other than the mandatory **FIELD LAB** for our class, students are encouraged to go on other faculty-led trips in order to learn more and build a more solid foundation for the **FIELD ASSIGNMENT** listed below.

FIELD LAB (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.) **Attendance and participation in the Field Lab is MANDATORY.** Outline and requirements for the paper/blog entry for these field labs will be discussed in class. There are 2 field lab opportunities:

Supranationalism vs Devolution in Europe: Focus on Spain. 18 October 2015

For centuries, Europe was a scene of competing nation-states vying for economic and military dominance; a situation which culminated in the fragmentation and destruction of world wars. But since World War 2, Europe is now identified as the region most successful at international cooperation, not competition...specifically with the creation of the European Union, the foundation stone that most defines European unity in the the 21st century.

However, given the current financial crisis in European economies, combined with an existential cultural crises that increasingly trouble EU-sceptics, the grand European Union experiment has been challenged as of late. There has not only been a rise in political power of anti-EU parties in virtually every European country, but there has also been a rise in challenging the concept of the nation-state itself. These devolutionary forces are evidenced by the recent referendum on Scottish independence from the UK, and the very current and on-going independence movement in Catalonia to tear itself away from Spain, which will be the focus of our field lab.

In the first half of the day, we'll visit with some Spanish officials in Barcelona to learn about Spain's history of European Union engagement, as well as the official position and attitude about the Catalanian independence movement, followed by a Q+A session concerning the future of Spain itself and its role within the EU. Followed by a brief lunch in the historic downtown district.

Afternoon activities start with a visit to the The Palau de la Generalitat de Catalunya, a historic palace in Barcelona that houses the offices of the President of the Generalitat de Catalunya. The Generalitat de Catalunya is the institution under which the autonomous community of Catalonia in Spain is politically organized. It consists of the Parliament of Catalonia, the President of the Generalitat of Catalonia and the Government of Catalonia. We will receive a talk from the highest-ranking member of the movement that we can secure, and have a Q+A focused on Catalonia's autonomous community status and degree of true autonomy, the history of Catalonia, goals of their proposed statehood, and the catalyst that have promoted the independence movement itself.

(Depending on the advice from Catalanian contacts, we may shift the afternoon activities to take place in Catalonia itself. That would entail more Catalanian historical perspective from important sites, as we learn more about the current independence movement.)

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

- Each student will be required to write 3 field journal entries, from 3 different regions we will visit this semester (Western Europe, Turkey, North Africa, South America, the Caribbean, or Central America) on the “places” and “regions” they experienced during their voyage.

One of the objectives of this course is to understand the concept of “place” and also of “region.” For all of your excursions, trips, and field labs for all of your courses and adventures, I want you to view and analyze the unique aspects (physical, economic, historic, cultural, political) that define that particular place...but also be thinking about how your experiences in these places are defining the broader region as a whole. In other words, everywhere you go, for any reason academic or non-academic, pay attention to the geography of that place and how helps (or does not help) reinforce the regional construct from our class readings/lectures/discussions. Then you are going to produce 3 photo-documented blogs/papers about these themes from 3 different regions.

Using a combination of your field notes, class notes, maps, and photographs, prepare and submit 3 field journal entries, 1 each from Western Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South America. (Due dates to be determined in class.) These each need to be at least 3 pages double spaced BEFORE any of the photos and maps are added. Please also add captions to each of the photos. These entries will encapsulate any/all experiences you had from any/all the places you visited while in the region. You need to include 4-6 different “places.” in each entry. To reiterate: emphasis is on expressing and describing your experiences geographically, via “place” and “region.”

Now this may seem overwhelming at first, but let's add some structure to help you out. You'll soon see that it is not difficult at all to think geographically while exploring the world...heck, thinking geographically is actually part of the process itself by default! You are always thinking about space and place as you navigate around your local environment, and experiencing new things and having adventures and describing new places is why the field of geography was created to begin with! You just have to hone your senses a bit when it comes to thinking deeper about the world around you,

as you are in it. Here's how:

1. Physical Features

It is vital to take note of and describe physical features around you. This is pretty straightforward when it comes to assessing your surroundings: if you took away all the humans and everything they had created or modified, it is all the stuff that is left. This should include terrain, climate, vegetation, bodies of water, animal life, and natural resources that you spot throughout your travels. Take pics and find out names of stuff.

2. Cultural Features

Cultural characteristics of a place pretty much include everything that is human created or modified. If it is not naturally occurring, than a human must have had something to do with it. A road, a building, a religious practice, or a planted row of corn are all modifications of the environment by humans. For this section, think of cultural aspects more in the sense of things which give character to the place or region--just as a person has personality traits. So pay attention to what cultural attributes the place has, including but not limited to, language, religion, architecture, economic activities, rural/urban, transportation, important structures, levels of development, human activity and street life.

3. Physical/Cultural Interaction

Now that you notices some of the physical traits and some of the cultural traits of the place you are at, can you name some specific ways in which the physical and cultural features interact to create distinct landscapes, distinct features of the place, or distinct patterns or life? Example: the climate of a place has a huge influence on how people dress. And local climate and vegetation affect local cuisine. And local economic activity may modify the landscape if it is a mining economy. In a rural, predominantly agriculture based society; how would you define the level of development? Starting to get the picture? Then take a picture of it and explain it to me!

4. US/Western Influences

Even though you will be traveling around the planet almost anywhere you know go in this globalized world, you can often you can spot manifestations or representations of US/Western culture. By all means, I highly recommend you staying as far away from them as possible and experiencing local culture to the maximum...but, it is almost unavoidable in today's world, so investigate them geographically when you happen upon them. And then document/discuss any prominent symbols of Western Culture you notice. E.g. A Pizza Hut in Morocco; how does the menu differ there? Hear American pop songs playing in the streets of Rio; in what context? Saw a European multinational company running a mine in South Africa; what was local attitude towards them?

5. Current Events

There are mad bonus points for relating your real life experiences to major current events discussed in the text and in class. Did you see a public protest in Portugal about austerity measures...what

was that all about? Did you see election posters and chat with someone on the streets of Berlin about their upcoming elections? Did you notice active slum-clearing and construction in Rio to prepare for the 2014 World Cup? Elaborate! Now you are thinking geographically, globally, and up-to-the-minute!

Don't feel as if you have to do ALL of these things for every place you visit, but you should at least identify some physical and cultural features of the places you visit, and then think a bit deeper to pull out other factors as they present themselves to your inquiring eye. When compiling each of these 3 FIELD JOURNAL entries, pull from the now vast source of your knowledge and pictures that you collected along the way and present as much of it as you would like.

But here is the real deal: what you are really trying to do for this report is build a regional construct by using your descriptions of all the places you went. Europe is a highly urbanized, wealthy, high standards of living region: that should be easy to support with all your experiences in European cities. Sub-Saharan Africa is a much different region, physically, culturally, socially, and developmentally: I bet your descriptions of places you visit there will paint a very different picture of that region compared to Western Europe. South America, Russia, Middle East...all quite distinct and different from each other at a regional scale, but you can support those distinctions with your real world experiences in each individual place you visit. Make sense?

To make your job easier, don't just stumble into a new port and head to the first bar you see, as that would be a classic waste of your own time and resources. Before arriving in a port that particularly interests you, investigate it through guide books, the web, and Google Earth; note what you want to explore; once in the city/town, consider the organized SAS tours, visit areas of interest, jot field notes in a journal, diagram and photograph interesting spaces, discuss with others to test interpretations; once back on ship, coherently summarize your impressions and incorporate photos and maps; submit work in a presentable manner in either a .pdf format, or better yet straight to a blog for the world to see. These 3 photo-documented field reports will constitute 15% of your final grade, will reflect upon ideas in class, and will help you describe your port visits in greater intelligent detail...and trust me, you will look wicked smart for having materials like this to share with your family and friends back home, and for the rest of your life.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

12 quizzes – 20%

midterm – 15%

final – 15%

films – 15%

field lab paper – 10%

field journal - 25%

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

N/A

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

N/A

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I'll be bringing DVDs of international films I want the students to watch for the course. Also I might possibly bring personally recorded podcasts for the students to watch.

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."