Instructor: Benjamin Christian  
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Email: bdchristian@alaska.edu  
Office Hours: MTWR, 4-5 pm (and by appointment)

Course Description: This course is an issues-oriented, interdisciplinary exploration of the world and the peoples, places, and events that shape it. The course introduces basic geographic concepts, tools, and methods, and explores the world’s most important regions, physical features, and places. We will analyze physical, cultural, historical, economic, and political processes and seek to understand how these elements combine and interact to influence local, regional, and global events. The goal is to recognize and understand how geographical factors shape the world we live in today.

Required Textbooks:
- Nijman, Jan, Peter O. Muller, and H.J. de Blij. The World Today: Concepts and Regions in Geography, 7th edition. (Loose-leaf or E-Book)  

Google Earth Pro: We will be using Google Earth Pro throughout the semester to explore and analyze places, regions, and other geospatial data. You will also perform graded exercises using Google Earth Pro. You should download Google Earth Pro (https://www.google.com/earth/desktop/) to the computer you use to complete your coursework as soon as possible and begin to familiarize yourself with its features and capabilities. Note that the new Google Earth Online (for Chrome) will not work for this course’s assignments.

Blackboard: All of the course documents, lecture materials, KML files, study guides, etc. will be posted to Blackboard. I will also send announcements via Blackboard. You may also be required to complete reading quizzes, homework assignments, and/or portions of your exams on Blackboard. Make sure you have a Blackboard account and access to this course’s page as soon as possible.

Course Objectives:
- To understand what the discipline of geography is and how we apply it to understand the world around us.
- To know and understand the location, characteristics, and relevance of the world’s most important places, physical features, and regions.
- To develop a basic understanding of the world’s natural and human systems.
- To understand how these processes and systems interact to form the underpinnings of current social, economic, and political trends throughout the world.
- To gain a basic proficiency with geographic tools such as maps and Google Earth.
- To become more inquisitive, intelligent, and responsible consumers of information concerning our world and the places, events, and phenomena that shape it.
Assignments and Grading: Your grade in this course will be based on participation in in-class activities, reading quizzes, homework exercises, and two exams.

Attendance and Participation: Students are required to attend lectures, carefully and critically read all textbook and supplementary reading assignments before class, and participate in class discussions and activities. Each class period will feature a combination of lecture and a variety of active learning activities and exercises. These are critical components of the learning experience, and your participation is required! Attendance and Participation is 20% of your final grade.

*How to Get your participation points*: 
- **Do the assigned readings and reading quizzes/responses prior to class:** In order to get the most out of each lecture, you must first have read and given some thought to that day’s assigned readings.
- **Show up to class:** Lectures build off of your readings, they do not simply reiterate them. Your exams will be partially based on material covered exclusively in lecture (i.e. not found in your book), so it is very important that you come to class. *After 3 unexcused absences, you will drop a full letter grade. If you have 5 unexcused absences before the withdrawal deadline, I will withdraw you from the course.*
- **Participate in activities/discussions:** In-class activities and discussions will be a critical part of each class period’s learning experience, and your active participation in those activities and discussions is required.
- **Don’t be disruptive, especially with electronic equipment:** Turn your devices off or put them somewhere you won’t be tempted by them unless the day’s activity calls for them or you have special permission. If you are caught messing around with your phones or other devices when not authorized to do so, you will lose your participation points for the day.

Pre-Class Reading Quizzes & Responses: You will answer a series of questions posted on Blackboard before each class period (with the exception of exam days). These quizzes consist of simple multiple choice questions and short answer/short essay questions. Reading quizzes are designed to encourage you to complete reading assignments, reinforce critical material, and prepare you for in-class activities and discussions. **Pre-class reading quizzes/responses are worth 10 points apiece (20% of your final grade).**

**Homework Exercises**: You will complete a homework assignment on Blackboard at the end of each week of instruction. Homework assignments will be a mixture of short essays, map interpretation exercises, and Google Earth exercises. **Each homework assignment is worth 40 points, or 20% of your final grade.**

**Exams**: There will be 2 non-comprehensive exams given throughout the semester. Exams will consist of a mixture of map/diagram labeling, multiple choice questions, and essays. Exams will be on material covered in the textbook, supplemental readings, and lectures. I will provide study guides in advance of the exams. If you plan on missing an exam, contact me as soon as possible. Make-up exams will only be given if you have a valid and verifiable excuse. **Exams are worth 200 points apiece (40% of your final grade).**
Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes &amp; Responses</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Exercises</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total: 1000 points**

**Grading Scale**

- A+ = 98% - 100%
- A  = 93% - 97%
- A- = 90% - 92%
- B+ = 88% - 89%
- B  = 83% - 87%
- B- = 80% - 82%
- C+ = 78% - 79%
- C  = 73% - 77%
- C- = 70% - 72%
- D+ = 68% - 69%
- D  = 63% - 67%
- D- = 60% - 62%
- F  = <60%

**Academic Misconduct Policy**

Copying, plagiarism, and/or other academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Students caught in any of these activities will be removed from the course, will receive an F, and will likely face additional punishment from the University, up to and including expulsion. The University’s policy on academic misconduct can be found in the UAF catalog under “Students’ Rights and Responsibilities” and at [www.uaf.edu/catalog/current/academics/regs3.html](http://www.uaf.edu/catalog/current/academics/regs3.html).

**Students with Disabilities**

The staff of Disability Services (474-5655) coordinates accommodations and services for UAF courses. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation and have not contacted them, please do so as soon as possible. Please also see me privately in regard to this course.

**A Note on Reading & Writing:** This is a college-level course with college-level expectations. You **MUST** be able to read and write at a college-level in order to succeed in this class. If you have any concerns about your ability to read and comprehend course materials or communicate effectively via the written word, you should strongly consider postponing your enrollment in this course and take one of UAF’s Developmental English courses instead. Please see me privately if you have any questions or concerns about this requirement.

**Getting Help:**

Geography is a challenging and complex subject. Unfortunately, it is also a subject that is rarely, if ever, taught in our secondary schools. My job is to help you understand the material, so don’t hesitate to seek additional assistance. Stop by during office hours, send me an email, or schedule a meeting; I will be pleased to help you any way I can (within reason, of course). Be aware, however, that you are ultimately responsible for completing your assignments on time and mastering the material.