

Sam Houston State University – Fall Semester 2017

Geography 1321.02 – People, Place and Environment

MWF 11:00 – 11:50 am
Lee Drain Building #328

Instructor: Ava R. Fujimoto-Strait

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Office location: LDB #335

Office hours: MW 1:00-3:00; or by appointment

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce you to the scope and nature of Geography as a field of study and as a mode of scientific inquiry. We will investigate both the physical and human patterns and processes that affect the Earth, in addition, to understanding these systems from a spatial perspective. We will also be relating current political, social, economic and environmental issues and events to the geographical processes examined. Topics will include an introduction to the discipline of geography; cartographic principles; basic physical geography concepts (landforms; weather; climate; biogeography); human-environment interaction; population dynamics; cultural, social and economic geography; and urbanization.

Required Materials:

- 1) Bergman, E. F. and W. H. Renwick, 2008. *Introduction to Geography: People, Places and Environment*. 4th Edition. Prentice Hall (recommended but not required)
- 2) Additional readings will be distributed in class and/or placed on Blackboard throughout the semester.

Reading and study of the textbook is an important preparation for this course. It will help you to understand the material presented in class and gives you an opportunity to identify questions that you may have. The textbook may also be useful to you as a reference for key concepts and ideas. However, it is important to understand that *there is no substitute for attending class*. Due to the nature of the course, some of the material that will be discussed in class will NOT be found in the textbook. Class lectures are drawn from a variety of sources and goes beyond the information covered in the textbook.

Student Responsibilities and Grading Policies:

Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. Failure to do so may result in the lowering of your grade. Your semester grade will be determined according to your performance on three exams; a project (paper OR presentation); two written assignments; and a final exam.

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| Exams (each exam is worth 20%) | - | 40% |
| Project (a presentation OR a written paper) | - | 20% |
| Written Assignment (each worth 5%) | - | 10% |
| Final Exam | - | 30% |

Make-up exams are only given if there is a valid documented excuse. Please make sure to contact the instructor (by phone or email) if you will be missing class or need to make-up an exam.

Exams – The exam format will be a combination of subjective (multiple-choice, matching, true/false) and objective (short answer, essay) questions. Exam questions will be drawn from lecture, textbook readings, handouts distributed in class, visual presentations/projects, films, guest lectures, assignments, and class discussion. The lowest score from your first three exams will be dropped. The final exam is cumulative but the majority of the questions will cover material from the last quarter of the semester. The final exam cannot be an exam grade that is dropped.

Written Assignments – There will be two written assignments distributed during the semester. These assignments supplement concepts learned in class and may require field reconnaissance; calculations; participation in a field trip (during class time); etc. These assignments are designed to reinforce concepts learned in class, in addition, a “fun” geographic activity.

Project – Your project will consist of a class presentation OR a written paper. For this project, you will choose an area of interest (a country, geographic realm, city or region) and research an important issue for that area (e.g., Madagascar – focus on endangered species on the island; India – population problems there and what the government is trying to do about it). If you are doing a presentation, try to enhance your presentation by finding images of your geographic area (i.e., try doing a search on-line...www.google.com and click on images). Class presentations should be no longer than 10 minutes. Written papers of your area and topic should be no longer than 8 pages (typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, bibliography). Project ideas should be determined by Friday, September 1st. If you are presenting, your presentation date will be sometime during the semester. Written papers are due on the day of the final exam.

Class Participation/Attendance – Class discussion will be encouraged throughout the semester. On some days, following lecture, there will be discussion topics that we will explore. Attendance and class participation is important, especially in the final tabulation of “borderline” grades. If a student misses more than 25% of the course, the student will fail the course.

Important Dates:

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| September 1 st | Project Topic Due |
| September 13 th | Exam 1 |
| October 13 th | Exam 2 |
| November 8 th | Exam 3 |
| December 6 th (begins at 12 noon) | Final Exam and Papers Due |

*Please be sure to contact me with any questions, comments, and/or concerns.
Welcome to the course and I look forward to working with you!*