

Sam Houston State University
Geography 1321 – People, Place and Environment
INTERNET CLASS SPRING 2017 (CRN = 20255)

"As a young man, my fondest dream was to become a geographer. However, ... I thought deeply about the matter and concluded it was too difficult a subject."
- Albert Einstein

***"Everything has to do with geography."* - Judy Martz**

Instructor: Dr. John B. Strait
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Office: 332-F Lee Drain Building (LDB)
Office Hours: Tuesday; 2 - 3:30 pm,
Wednesday; 10 – 12 Noon,
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) Getis, Arthur, Mark Bjelland, and Victoria Getis. 2014. Introduction to Geography. 14th edition. McGraw-Hill: New York. ***NOTE YOU WILL NEED THE TEXTBOOK FOR THIS COURSE, AND IT WILL BE IMPORTANT THAT YOU HAVE THIS EDITION.***
- 2) Access to a computer with STABLE Internet connection. In addition, an SHSUonline account with Sam Houston State University and an email address.

Course Organization and Grading Policies:

This course will consist of 8 units. Each unit has required textbook readings, supplementary website readings, powerpoint slideshows, discussion questions, and a written assignment. Units are all posted to allow for you to work through this course at your own pace, however, there are due dates to ensure that the course is completed by the end of the semester.

Students are expected to log onto Blackboard and check your SHSU email on a regular basis (at the very minimum, three times a week). The course grade will be determined according to the student's performance on the eight lesson assignments (lesson assignment AND discussion board responses), a research paper, an introduction exercise, and a research prospectus.

Unit Lesson Assignments (each worth 10%; due dates below)-	80%
Research Paper (due by Thursday, May 10)	- 18%
Introduction Assignment (due Wednesday, Jan. 24)	- 1%
Research Prospectus (due by Friday, March 2)	- 1%

Lesson Assignments: After reading the textbook chapter, supplementary website material, and viewing the PowerPoint slideshows, each student should respond to the discussion board questions AND complete the lesson assignment for each Unit. Note that an on-line discussion does not simply entail each student responding to the topic, rather it should involve a real give-and-take, back-and-forth communication among the class as a whole! Discussion board responses (posted in Blackboard by each student) and lesson assignments should be “turned-in” by the date specified below (*see Important Dates*). Under each unit, the last tab is the computer graded “lesson assignment”. The computer grades the multiple choice questions and I will grade the short answer questions a few days after each due date. You may work ahead, but the lesson grading will not be completed the due date for that particular lessons has passed. ***No late assignments will be accepted unless you have contacted the instructor (by phone or email) AND have a verified documented excuse.*** Each unit lesson assignment is worth 10% of your grade. The grades for the discussion assignment is calculated into the grade for the lessons. In other words, the grade for each lesson includes the lesson itself (on-line exam that you submit electronically) plus the discussion assignment. Grades for the discussion board and short answer questions on the lesson’s assignment are based on content as well as quality of writing (free of spelling, grammar and syntax error).

Structure of Units and Procedure for submitting Unit Lessons:

All unit materials are available under Course Documents. When you click on “units” you will see a series of 8 folders (Unit 1, Unit 2, Unit 3, etc.). All the necessary material for each respective Unit is available within these folders. For example, you will find the following under the folder labeled “Unit 1”:

- 1) A brief introduction, outlining the assignments for this Unit
- 2) “Lecture 1 Slideshow” – a series of power point files outlining the material in book chapter you were assigned to read; there may also be additional readings
- 3) “Lesson 1” – this link includes a series of multiple choice, true-false and short-answer questions. NOTE, THIS IS THE MECHANISM THAT YOU NEED TO USES TO SUBMIT THE ANSWERS, E-MAILED ANSWERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. The system automatically grades the multiple choice/true-false questions, I grade the short answer questions myself separately.
- 4) “Lesson 1 Discussion” – this link poses a few discussion questions pertaining to some topic related to the lecture material. You can answer/address the questions by adding a new thread. This assignment is supposed to function as an on-line chat where students are to “chat” or discuss the material in question.

Research Paper: Throughout the semester, you should be researching a geography topic of interest to you. To choose a topic, it may be best to choose an area of interest (a country, city or region) and research an important issue for that particular area (e.g., beauty pageants in Venezuela; the sex trade in Russia). Research papers should be between 7-9 pages (typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, 1 in. margins, sources cited). Research paper ideas should be determined by and submitted to the instructor by Friday, March 2 (see Prospectus below). Final research papers should submitted to the instructor (jstrait@shsu.edu) by midnight on Thursday, April 10.

Research Prospectus: This assignment requires you to turn in a brief discussion (no more than 1 page) that summarizes and outlines your topic. This prospectus should also include potential sources that you plan to utilize for your research. The prospectus is designed to frame the purpose of your work (what are you trying to accomplish), discuss the relevance of the paper (why is it an interesting and worthwhile topic to pursue) and how the topic pertains to the quest for geographical study. The paper should be well-written, clearly written and concise. THE PROSPECTUS, not the paper, IS DUE ON FRIDAY, MARCH 2.

Important Dates:

Introductory Assignment: Introduce Ourselves, due – Wednesday, January 24th
Lesson 1 Assignment and Discussion Responses due – Thursday, February 1st
Lesson 2 Assignment and Discussion Responses due – Thursday, February 15th
Lesson 3 Assignment and Discussion Responses due – Thursday, March 1st
Lesson 4 Assignment and Discussion Responses due – Friday, March 9th
Lesson 5 Assignment and Discussion Responses due – Thursday, March 22nd
Lesson 6 Assignment and Discussion Responses due – Thursday, April 5th
Lesson 7 Assignment and Discussion Responses due – Thursday, April 19th
Lesson 8 Assignment and Discussion Responses due – Friday, May 4th
Research Prospectus (Paper Topic; emailed to instructor) – Friday, March, 2nd
Research Paper due (emailed to instructor) – Thursday, May 10th

Student Responsibilities:

This is an Internet course. The entire course is Internet-based with no classroom time --- there is no need to come to campus for this course. All lessons and assignments are on Blackboard. You may take this course from ANY location ***as long as you have STABLE, DAILY INTERNET ACCESS to Blackboard and your email account**. This means that you must make the necessary plans to have Internet access if you go on a trip/vacation. Not having computer/Internet access will NOT be a valid excuse for missing readings, assignments, or deadlines. An unstable Internet connection will not be an excuse either --- make arrangements now to have a stable connection. There are no exceptions to these rules. Lastly, because this is an Internet course, there are a lot of short answer questions on the lesson assignments and written responses on the discussion board. Please be sure to avoid plagiarism. Cite your work properly. Student work may subject to programs (ex. Turnitin, or other programs that check for plagiarism and/or originality of work) that evaluate intellectual originality. Students violations of university policy regarding plagiarism WILL be subject to disciplinary action, so all students should peruse the section of the student handbook that discusses these policies.

*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!*