

# Global Geography

ENVI 419 - 001 (CRN: 51627), TR 2-3:15 pm, Holmstedt Hall 0117, fall 2017 (8/22/17-12/15/17)  
Foundational Studies (Integrative and Upper Division Electives)

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Mohamed Elyassini, Department of Earth and Environmental Systems, 159J Science Building, Office Hours: TR 11-12 pm, Email: [mohamed.elyassini@indstate.edu](mailto:mohamed.elyassini@indstate.edu); Website: <http://faculty.indstate.edu/melyassini/>

**Course Purpose & Description:** Geography is an interdisciplinary field of study straddling nature and culture. It integrates a range of academic disciplines and intellectual approaches designed to acquire and create knowledge. **Global geography** takes students into a **broad educational world tour**. It outlines **selected natural and human patterns and trends in twelve major geographic realms** and their constituent regions. It **raises critical thinking questions** about the process of globalization and the main social, economic, and political developments in each geographic realm. The course combines a global perspective, a regional framework, and a critical thinking approach to ensure that the students will be able to (1) analyze problems, (2) think critically and creatively, (3) integrate a variety of approaches (e.g., scientific, historical, artistic, literary, ethical, social behavioral) to gain knowledge, (4) recognize the ethical, social, and cultural implications of issues, and (5) communicate professionally, persuasively, and effectively. The course fulfills the Foundational Studies (Integrative and Upper Division Electives) course requirements at Indiana State University. Course materials include (1) class presentations and discussions, (2) textbook and online short readings, (3) PowerPoint slides, (4) in-class and online videos, and (5) current issues that impact the world and the United States. The latter are selected current global affairs stories posted on Blackboard course announcements to highlight the ongoing confrontation between TWO loose international coalitions of states or geopolitical axes (defined in this course as Axis 1 and Axis 2). The current LEADING members of Axis 1 include the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the State of Israel, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. The current LEADING members of Axis 2 include Russia, China, Iran, and Syria. The current MAIN adversaries<sup>1</sup> within the TWO axes are the **United States & Israel** against **Iran & Syria** (because Iran & Syria support Palestinian Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah in their armed resistance against the Israeli occupation of Palestine). Other leading states (including Russia and China) come and go, and are essentially aligned with one axis or the other for specific national or strategic goals. For example, Russia supports the Syrian government but has normal relations with Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey, which all support the Israeli-inspired US goal to overthrow the Syrian government. US support for overthrowing the pro-Russian government in Ukraine in 2014, the rise of media-inspired Russophobes in the US, and the various attempts to drive a wedge between President Trump and President Putin are all targeting Russian relations with Syria and Iran. By the same token, China has normal relations with Axis 1 countries but US-Chinese relations were affected by China's repeated use of the veto power at the UN Security Council to deflect repeated actions against Syria (even so, US President Donald Trump did not see it inappropriate to inform Chinese President Xi Jinping 'over dinner' that he 'just' launched attack on Syria with 59 tomahawk cruise missiles). Understanding the geopolitics and dynamics of those wars and conflicts will provide critical answers to burning questions such as are American and Russian military interventions serving more their national interests or the national interests of their Middle East allies? Why overthrowing the Syrian government is a common goal shared by ISIS, Al-Qaida, and the United States? Why did the US spend \$6 trillion (according to President Trump) on Middle East wars <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYLUli7Aefo> instead of spending the money to assist some 43 million<sup>2</sup> Americans in poverty and rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure? Why did President Obama build a series of international coalitions of states to overthrow governments in Libya, Syria, & Yemen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSBRk10E5R8> for some undeclared goals which were partly found buried inside the over 30,000 emails & email attachments in the Hillary Clinton Email Archive [https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/Clinton\\_Email\\_November\\_Release/C05794498.pdf](https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/Clinton_Email_November_Release/C05794498.pdf) leaked by WikiLeaks on the eve of the US 2016 election?

**Course Requirements & Grading:** This course has two exams (worth 50 percent of the final grade, and consisting mostly of multiple-choice questions plus few fill-in-the-blank questions drawn **entirely** from the textbook), two critical thinking research essays (worth 25 percent of the final grade, and focused on one global religion and one global conflict), and five blogs (worth 25 percent of the final grade, and focused on selected current issues in some of the 12 major geographic realms). Detailed study guides for exams and detailed instructions for research essays and blogs will be posted on Blackboard (see Blackboard for assignments & deadlines, which are part of this syllabus). In general there should be no late submission or make-up work for short assignments (such as blogs and research essays) because you will be given the opportunity to earn up to 10% extra credits for the final grade to offset the loss of points when missing short assignments due to emergency or health reasons, computer or

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<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 11/14/2001, <http://www.fpri.org/article/2012/08/next-stop-iraq/>  
*The Christian Science Monitor*, 8/30/2002, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0830/p08s01-wome.htm>  
*US General Wesley Clark*, Published 8/13/2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xmms5Eoixfs>  
*RT*, 1/20/2016, <https://www.rt.com/news/329502-isis-iran-threat-israel/>

*The Atlantic*, April 2016 Issue, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>

<sup>2</sup> *US Census Bureau [Poverty in 2015]*, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-256.html>

browser crash, Internet connection or Blackboard access, or other technical or non-technical problems you may encounter during the semester (take care of your time management and IT equipment and skill!). Make-up exams could be arranged ONLY if the student has documented an extreme circumstance for not being able to take the exam as scheduled. **Final grades** are assigned according to the following scale: A+ (100% and above), A (96 to 99%), A- (90 to 95%), B+ (86 to 89%), B (83-85%), B- (80 to 82%), C+ (76 to 79%), C (73 to 75%), C- (70 to 72%), D+ (66 to 69%), D (63 to 65%), D- (60 to 62%), and F (below 60%).

**Course Standards & Policies:** Students are responsible for announcements on Blackboard, via email, or during class meetings. Students are expected to enter class on time and remain during the entire scheduled period. By 2:00 pm, each student should have printed his/her **FULL name on the attendance sheet**. Each student is entitled to **THREE absences with no question or grade penalty** during the semester. Each additional absence (with or without justification) means missing some course content and will incur a **grade penalty of 2 points** which will be deducted from the student's score. Tardiness (coming late or leaving early) with or without justification will be treated as an absence. **All electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, etc.) must be turned off BEFORE entering the classroom and kept OUT OF SIGHT.** Taking class notes should be only on a piece of paper. While the University has chosen to require laptops of its students, the University also recognizes and respects the right of faculty to conduct their classes as they deem appropriate. In this course, laptop usage is forbidden in the classroom. Be courteous, treat class members with respect, and try to keep the same classroom seat throughout the semester. Avoid anything (including eating, drinking, sleeping, reading, recording class, using phones or computers, coming late, leaving early, or conversing during lectures) that can disturb the class learning process or distract you or distract others. Failure to comply with course standards and policies will be reported as a misconduct activity. 'In the academic community the high value of honesty mandates a corresponding intolerance of dishonesty', which includes cheating, plagiarism, falsification, forgery, obstruction, multiple submission, facilitating academic dishonesty, misconduct in research and creative endeavors, misuse of academic resources, misuse of intellectual property, and violation of ethical and professional standards (See the Code Of Student Conduct at: <https://www.indstate.edu/code-of-student-conduct/academic-policies/defining-misconduct>). Homework assignments must be uploaded (by the deadline) through the TurnItIn link, which can help detect plagiarism (email and other and forms of submission will NOT be accepted). Academic dishonesty will subject its author(s) to 0 points on the given assignment or failure in the course, and could also lead to further disciplinary action. University policies regarding *academic freedom, documented disabilities, expected personal responsibilities, student disclosures of sexual misconduct, it's on blue online education program*, and other matters apply to this course and are available at the following links. Students with disabilities should register with Student Support Services in Normal Hall, first floor, in the Center for Student Success (Te. 812-237-2700), <https://www.indstate.edu/services/student-success/cfss/student-support-services/disability-student-services>, <https://www.indstate.edu/student-conduct/code-of-student-conduct/standards>, <https://www.indstate.edu/administration/ogc/policy-index/921>, <https://www.indstate.edu/administration/ogc/policy-index>, <http://faculty.indstate.edu/melyassini/recommended%20syllabus%20statement.pdf>

**Course Required Textbook:** H. de Blij, P. Muller, J. Nijman, *Geography: Realms, Regions and Concepts*, 16th Edition, 2014 (paper copies are available at ISU Bookstore).

**Course Blackboard Documents** (*assigned short readings, PowerPoint slides, videos or video synopses, current issues in the news, study guides, assignment instructions, and deadlines for assignments*) are available at: <http://blackboard.indstate.edu>.  
**Check your Blackboard course site & email on a daily basis for announcements & details not in the syllabus.**

**Course Calendar (details about assignments and deadlines are posted on Blackboard):**

Week 1 (8/22-24): Introduction to syllabus and course

Week 2 (8/29-31): World Cultures & Environments (Textbook, Introduction and Appendices)

Week 3 (9/5-7): Europe and Russia (Chapters 1 and 2) **Blog 1, due on 9/7**

Week 4 (9/12-14): North America & Middle America (Chapters 3 & 4) **Blog 2, 9/14; 3-week attendance reporting**

Week 5 (9/19-21): South American and Sub-Saharan Africa (Chapters 5 and 6) **Blog 3, 9/21**

Week 6 (9/26-28): North Africa/Southwest Asia (Chapter 7) **Exam 1, 9/28; interim grading**

Week 7 (10/3-5): South Asia (Chapter 8) **Review and discussion of critical thinking research essay 1**

Week 8 (10/10-12): East Asia (Chapter 9) **Review and discussion of critical thinking research essay 1**

Week 9 (10/17-19): Southeast Asia (Chapter 10) **Critical thinking essay 1, due on 10/19**

Week 10 (10/24-26): Austral Realm (Chapter 11) **Blog 4, due on 10/26**

Week 11 (10/31-11/2): Pacific Realm (Chapter 12) **Blog 5, due on 11/2**

Week 12 (11/7-9): **Review and discussion of critical thinking research essay 2**

Week 13 (11/14-16): **Review and discussion of critical thinking research essay 2**

**Thanksgiving Break (11/21-23): No classes**

Week 14 (11/28-30): **Critical thinking essay 2, due on 11/30**

Week 15 (12/5-7): Study Week: Review and conclusion

Week 16 (12/12-14): Final examinations (**Exam 2, deployed on Blackboard between 12/13 at 10 pm & 12/14 at 10 pm**)