

World Cultures & Environments

ENVI 130-007 (CRN: 51097), TR 8-9:15 am, Holmstedt Hall 0117, fall 2017 (8/22/17-12/15/17)

Foundational Studies (Global Perspective and Cultural Diversity)

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Course Purpose & Description: This course fulfills the Global Perspective & Cultural Diversity Requirement of the Foundational Studies Program at ISU.¹ It is designed to (1) describe cultural and environmental patterns in selected world regions, (2) explain the constructs of cultural diversity, and (3) examine how worldviews (or global perspectives) are often constructed and deconstructed via the manipulation of information. The concept of “culture” in this course goes beyond the popular representation of folklore or external appearances to include all manmade, shared, and learned patterns of thought & behavior such as beliefs, institutions, policy, technology, etc. Course materials pay particular attention to aspects of culture such as how people make a living, domestic and political realms of culture as well as the religious and ideological views held by world cultures. The course includes three components. First, an Introduction to World Cultures & Environments will (1) outline the world’s major cultural and geographic regions, (2) highlight the world’s major physical and cultural landscapes, and (3) examine some theoretical approaches and concepts used by social scientists to explain the social construction of reality (i.e., culture is not predetermined by the nature of things, but it is manmade/constructed/learned and therefore could be unmade/deconstructed/unlearned). Second, the above geographic framework, physical & cultural landscapes, and theoretical approaches will be used as tour guides of 12 major cultures/regions of the contemporary world to gain a better understanding of global diversity and how this rich range of perspectives and worldviews shape contemporary issues. In the meantime, we will be evaluating our own culture in comparison to others in terms of social organization and identity. Third, we will discuss selected current issues that raise critical thinking questions that impact the world and the United States. For example, why did the United States 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 million¹ Americans in poverty and rebuild America’s crumbling infrastructure? Why did President Obama build an international coalition of states to overthrow the Libyan & Syrian governments (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSBRk10E5R8>) for some undeclared reasons which were found buried in the Hillary Clinton Email Archive (https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/Clinton_Email_November_Release/C05794498.pdf) leaked by WikiLeaks on the eve of the US 2016 election? Course materials include (1) class presentations and discussions focused on issues raised in homework assignments and related current issues in the news; (2) textbook readings focused on the study guides for the exams; & (3) PowerPoint slides, online short readings, and in-class/online videos, focused on both (1) & (2).

Course Requirements & Grading: First, there will be two examsⁱⁱ (worth 53 percent of the final grade, each worth 26.5%) consisting mostly of multiple-choice questions, with few fill-in-the-blank questions, and one essay question, all drawn **entirely** from the textbook. A study guide for each exam will be posted on Blackboard at least two-weeks before the exam. Second, there will be four homework assignmentsⁱⁱⁱ (worth 40 percent of the final grade, each worth 10%) designed as problem-based assignments focused on learning, thinking, and writing about (1) the construction of worldviews, (2) the global economic divide, (3) a global religion, and (4) a global conflict. Homework assignments (posted on Blackboard, one at a time) will also help each student evaluate his/her own culture and worldview in comparison to others in regards to one or more of the following: race, ethnicity, gender, social class, regional culture, religion, intellectual approaches, political perspectives and geopolitical conflicts, to mention a few. Each homework assignment will ask the student to write a short paper addressing the question, issue, or project of the assignment (see “Guidelines and instructions for the content, structure, and format of each homework assignment” in this syllabus). Third, there will be one oral discussion component (worth 7 percent of the final grade). Each student should (1) select ONE of the “current issues in the news” stories posted on Blackboard course announcements during the term, (2) make a concise oral presentation (5 minutes) about its content and context, (3) explain how the story relates to (a) the ongoing rivalry between the two international coalitions of states defined in this course as Axis 1 (United States, United Kingdom, France, Israel, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia) and Axis 2 (Russia, China, Iran, and Syria), (b) the confrontation between the current **MAIN** adversaries² in the Middle East (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), and (4) demonstrate some ‘experiential learning’ (‘out-of-class-learning experience’) by presenting additional supporting or opposing facts that the student has personally encountered and documented either through his/her own ‘social media’ electronic communications with others or through his/her own face-to-face interaction with any identifiable and verifiable ISU or Terre Haute community group or individual. See Course Calendar (below) and Course Topics link on 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 oral and homework assignments) 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 browser crash, Internet connection or Blackboard access, or other technical or non-technical

¹ US Census Bureau [Poverty in 2015], <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-256.html>

² 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/>

problems you may encounter during the semester (take care of your health, your time management, and your 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. In general students should (1) receive instructor responses to emails within 24 to 48 hours, (2) receive exam scores as soon as the instructor grades the one-essay question in the exam, and (3) receive feedback on homework assignments within two weeks (or an explanation for assignments requiring more than two weeks for grading). **Final grades** will be based on scores obtained out of a total of 100 points PLUS 10 possible extra credit points (each exam will include 1 or more extra credit questions worth 2.5 extra credit points drawn from the current-issues-in-the-news stories posted as announcements on Blackboard). Two extra credit points could be earned by participating in ONE discussion Board. Three extra credit points could be earned by simply completing course evaluation. 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%). See Blackboard for assignments & deadlines, which are part of this syllabus.

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 8:00 am, 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-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)

Week 4 (9/12-14): North America & Middle America (Chapters 3 & 4) **Homework 1, 9/14; 3-week attendance reporting**

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

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)

Week 8 (10/10-12): East Asia (Chapter 9) **Homework 2, 10/12**

Week 9 (10/17-19): Southeast Asia (Chapter 10)

Week 10 (10/24-26): Austral Realm (Chapter 11) **Homework 3, 10/26**

Week 11 (10/31-11/2): Pacific Realm (Chapter 12)

Week 12 (11/7-9): **Oral presentations and discussions**

Week 13 (11/14-16): **Oral presentations and discussions (Homework 4, 11/16)**

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

Week 14 (11/28-30): **Oral presentations and discussions**

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 and 12/14 at 10 pm**)

Course guidelines and instructions for the content, structure, and format of each homework assignment:

1. The content of the homework assignment MUST be based EXCLUSIVELY on the ASSIGNED course materials for the given homework assignment with some relevant references to your own culture or your own personal experience or your own 'experiential learning' ('out-of-class-learning experience').
2. The structure of the homework assignment should describe/define the issue/problem, give examples illustrating its manifestations, explain its roots and causes, and draw some conclusions about its solutions or consequences.
3. The format of the homework assignment should follow carefully the following guidelines. The paper should be 900-1200 words (around 1.5 to 2 single-spaced pages) with no cover page and no instructor name on it, top/bottom/right/left margins of 0.8"/0.8", full justification of the margins, Times New Roman as the base font for all text/headers/footnotes, your name and Indiana State University on two lines aligned (with the margins) as left headers, the course title and academic term on two lines aligned (with the margins) as right headers, the font point size of the headers should be 11, the title should be centered and should have bold appearance and a font point size of 16, the rest of the text should have a font point size of 12 (except footnotes whose font point size should be 10), there should be about four paragraphs per page, there should be one space between paragraphs, and there should be no indentation at the beginning of paragraphs.
4. You must use footnote citations at the bottom of each page according to the **Notes [without bibliography]** system of The *Chicago Manual of Style* Online, available at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. [For example:
 - a. Hillary Clinton, "USA Is FUNDING Al-Qaeda," *YouTube video clip*, Published on September 24, 2012, accessed December 26, 2016, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzQ2KZWfjgs>, PowerPoint slide number 38 of Homework 1.
 - b. Joe Stephens and David B. Ottaway, "From U.S., the ABC's of Jihad," *The Washington Post*, March 23, 2002, accessed December 26, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2002/03/23/from-us-the-abcs-of-jihad/d079075a-3ed3-4030-9a96-0d48f6355e54/>, PowerPoint slide number 38 of Homework 1.
 - c. Ishaan Tharoor, "The Taliban indoctrinates kids with jihadist textbooks paid for by the U.S.," *The Washington Post*, accessed December 26, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/12/08/the-taliban-indoctrinates-kids-with-jihadist-textbooks-paid-for-by-the-u-s/>, PowerPoint slide number 38 of Homework 1.
 - d. Benjamin Netanyahu, "America is a thing you can move very easily", Naomi Zeveloff, "What Do Israelis Think About Americans? Start With Disdain," *The Jewish Daily Forward*, 3/8/2015, accessed 7 August 2017, <http://forward.com/articles/216074/what-do-israelis-think-about-americans-start-with/>, PowerPoint slide 45 of Homework 1.

Please keep in mind that the instructor is NOT the author of the vast assigned material (books, book chapters, journal articles, articles in newspapers and popular magazines, websites, PowerPoint slides, videos/video synopses, current issues in the news stories...). For example, when you cite a PowerPoint slide, you should provide the FULL source and page number (if any) cited on the PowerPoint slide as well as the PowerPoint slide number. This will help the grader make sure that all your sources are from the assigned material that was shared by all class members, are referenced according to the designated Style, and can be easily checked and verified while grading the paper and writing feedback for students.

5. Your writing should reflect your own independent and original thought and your own critical thinking and synthesis. The Critical Thinking Community defines critical thinking as "*the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.*" **Critical thinking is indispensable in a digital age of hacking, leaking, and faking information.**
6. Your homework assignment MUST be uploaded through the TurnItIn link that can help detect **plagiarism**.
7. The grade of the homework assignment will be based on (a) demonstrating your learning from the relevant assigned material and your own culture and experiential learning, (b) drawing thoughtful conclusions and suggesting meaningful solutions from what you have learned, (c) turning in the homework assignment by the specified deadline, (d) following all the guidelines and instructions concerning the structure, format, and content of the homework assignment, (e) demonstrating your ability to think critically, reason clearly, and communicate effectively through English writing.

[Course] Universal Intellectual Standards:

Universal intellectual standards are standards which must be applied to thinking whenever one is interested in checking the quality of reasoning about a problem, issue, or situation. To think critically entails having command of these standards. To help students learn them, teachers should pose questions which probe student thinking, questions which hold students accountable for their thinking, questions which, through consistent use by the teacher in the classroom, become internalized by students as questions they need to ask themselves. The ultimate goal, then, is for these questions to become infused in the thinking of students, forming part of their inner voice, which then guides them to better and better reasoning. While there are a number of universal standards, the following are the most significant:

Clarity: Could you elaborate further on that point? Could you express that point in another way? Could you give me an illustration? Could you give me an example? Clarity is the gateway standard. If a statement is unclear, we cannot determine whether it is accurate or relevant. In fact, we cannot tell anything about it because we don't yet know what it is saying. For example, the question, "What can be done about the education system in America?" is unclear. In order to address the question adequately, we would need to have a clearer understanding of what the person asking the question is considering the "problem" to be. A clearer question might be "What can educators do to ensure that students learn the skills and abilities which help them function successfully on the job and in their daily decision-making?"

Accuracy: Is that really true? How could we check that? How could we find out if that is true? A statement can be clear but not accurate, as in "Most dogs are over 300 pounds in weight."

Precision: Could you give more details? Could you be more specific? A statement can be both clear and accurate, but not precise, as in "Jack is overweight." (We don't know how overweight Jack is, one pound or 500 pounds.)

Relevance: How is that connected to the question? How does that bear on the issue? A statement can be clear, accurate, and precise, but not relevant to the question at issue. For example, students often think that the amount of effort they put into a course should be used in raising their grade in a course. Often, however, the "effort" does not measure the quality of student learning, and when this is so, effort is irrelevant to their appropriate grade.

Depth: How does your answer address the complexities in the question? How are you taking into account the problems in the question? Is that dealing with the most significant factors? A statement can be clear, accurate, precise, and relevant, but superficial (that is, lack depth). For example, the statement "Just say No" which is often used to discourage children and teens from using drugs, is clear, accurate, precise, and relevant. Nevertheless, it lacks depth because it treats an extremely complex issue, the pervasive problem of drug use among young people, superficially. It fails to deal with the complexities of the issue.

Breadth: Do we need to consider another point of view? Is there another way to look at this question? What would this look like from a conservative standpoint? What would this look like from the point of view of...? A line of reasoning may be clear accurate, precise, relevant, and deep, but lack breadth (as in an argument from either the conservative or liberal standpoint which gets deeply into an issue, but only recognizes the insights of one side of the question.)

Logic: Does this really make sense? Does that follow from what you said? How does that follow? But before you implied this and now you are saying that; how can both be true? When we think, we bring a variety of thoughts together into some order. When the combination of thoughts are [sic] mutually supporting and make sense in combination, the thinking is "logical." When the combination is not mutually supporting, is contradictory in some sense, or does not "make sense," the combination is not logical.

Fairness: Do I have a vested interest in this issue? Am I sympathetically representing the viewpoints of others? Human think is often biased in the direction of the thinker - in what are the perceived interests of the thinker. Humans do not naturally consider the rights and needs of others on the same plane with their own rights and needs. We therefore must actively work to make sure we are applying the intellectual standard of fairness to our thinking. Since we naturally see ourselves as fair even when we are unfair, this can be very difficult. A commitment to fairmindedness is a starting place. Source: R. Paul and L. Elder, Foundation For Critical Thinking, June 1996, <http://www.criticalthinking.org/articles/universal-intellectual-standards.cfm>

ⁱ Detailed Course Objectives, Goals, and Applied Skills:

Upon completion of this course, students will fulfill and meet the learning objectives for Global Perspectives & Cultural Diversity (GPCD) of the Foundational Studies 2010 Program (FS) as follows:

GPCD-1 Demonstrate knowledge of cultures and worldviews;

GPCD-2 Identify social, economic, political, and environmental inter-relationships between cultures and worldviews;

GPCD-3 Use multiple lenses such as race and ethnicity, gender, social class, regional culture, and religion to evaluate one's culture in comparison to those studied; and

GPCD-4 Articulate how the social construction of culture and worldviews shapes contemporary social and political issues

In addition, upon completion of this course, students will partially fulfill and meet the learning objectives of the Foundational Studies 2010 Program (FS) as follows:

FS-1 Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems;

FS-2 Critically evaluate the ideas of others;

FS-3 Apply knowledge and skills within and across the fundamental ways of knowing (natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, mathematics, and history);

FS-4 Demonstrate an appreciation of human expression through literature and fine and performing arts; NOT APPLICABLE IN THIS COURSE

FS-5 Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship; NOT APPLICABLE IN THIS COURSE

FS-6 Demonstrate an understanding of diverse cultures within and across societies;

FS-7 Demonstrate the skills to place their current and local experience in a global, cultural, and historical context;

FS-8 Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of decisions and actions; NOT APPLICABLE IN THIS COURSE

FS-9 Apply principles of physical and emotional health to wellness; NOT APPLICABLE IN THIS COURSE

FS-10 Express themselves effectively, professionally, and persuasively both orally and in writing.

Finally, the Foundational Studies program has developed a set of Skills/Applied Learning Objectives (SAL), which can broadly be applied to one's academic, personal, and professional life. Upon completion of this course, students will partially fulfill and meet these learning objectives as follows:

SAL-1 Develop critical thinking skills

SAL-2 Develop information literacy skills

SAL-3 Develop developmental writing skills

2 The learning objectives mandated by the Foundational Studies Program that will be addressed in this course are listed in bold type.

Based on the above learning objectives, by the completion of the course students will be able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge of cultural diversity around the world and how these shape global perspectives; [meet objectives GPCD-1, FS-1, FS-2, FS-3, FS-6, FS-7, FS-10, SAL-1, SAL-2]

2. identify the inter-relationships between the environment and aspects of culture such as but not limited to work effort, economics, political and how these shape individual cultures and worldviews [meets objectives GPCD-1, GPCD-2, FS-1, FS-2, FS-3, FS-6, FS-7, FS-10, SAL-3]

3. evaluate other cultures to one's own in terms of cultural identities such as but not limited to social-class and religion [meet objectives GPCD-1, GPCD-3, FS-1, FS-2, FS-3, FS-6, FS-7, FS-10, SAL-1, SAL-2, SAL-3]

4. articulate how contemporary issues and worldviews are shaped by how individual cultures are constructed [meets objectives GPCD-1, GPCD-4, FS-1, FS-2, FS-3, FS-6, FS-7, FS-10, SAL-1, SAL-3]

ⁱⁱ Collectively the two exams will measure: FS-2, FS-3, FS-6, FS-7, FS-10, SAL-3, GPCD-1, GPCD-2, GPCD-3, and GPCD-4. The essay questions on the two exams will measure: FS-2, FS-10, SAL-3, GPCD-3, and GPCD-4.

ⁱⁱⁱ Collectively the four homework assignments will measure: GPCD-1, GPCD-2, GPCD-3, GPCD-4, FS-1, FS-2, FS-3, FS-6, FS-7, FS-10, SAL-1, SAL-2, and SAL-3.