Request for Renewal of Geography 151: Geography & Contemporary Society as an FG course

Kapi‘olani Community College
Spring 2006

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I. Course Description (Course Outline, 1/9/06)

COURSE INFORMATION:

GEOG 151: Geography & Contemporary Society (3)
AA/FGC, AA/DS, AS/SS
3 hours of lecture per week,
Prerequisite(s): Qualification for ENG 100, qualification for MATH 24

Geography 151 provides a global thematic survey of human society and culture. Geographic distribution, historical development, and current issues in economic, resource, population, political, and environmental systems are examined. Emphasis is placed on relating subject matter to Asia, the Pacific, and Hawai‘i.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/COMPETENCIES:

Upon successful completion of GEOG 151, the student should be able to:

• Identify major themes in human society and culture and be familiar with their distribution.
• Explain the nature, history, and diffusion of cultural and societal characteristics.
• Synthesize cross-cultural perspectives on current issues in population, economic, politics, language, religion customs and conflict.
• Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to apply geographic and scientific methodology to the study of human societies.
• Critically analyze problems within the framework of the course using appropriate geographic methods and tools and communicate this knowledge in written form.

II. Changes

No significant changes have been made in Geography 151 since the original request for foundations designation was approved.
III. Assessing of Course. Below are samples of course materials that illustrate how the course meets the Foundations Hallmarks. Original course materials may be viewed upon request.

**Hallmark 1: From multiple perspectives, the course analyzes the development of human societies and their cultural traditions through time and throughout the world, including Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania.**

The course involves a thematic approach to describing and analyzing the myriad of social forces shaping human geography in the 21st Century. A small sample includes:

**Class Lectures:**

**Political-Economy:**

- What is the state?
- What is state deregulation?
- What is the free market?
- What are neoliberal policies?
- What is gross domestic product (GDP)?
- What is externalization of costs?
- What is civil society?
- What is globalization?
- What is time-space compression?
- What are free trade zones or Export Processing Zones (EPZs)?
- What is the “digital-divide?”
- What is the “fast-world,” “slow-world?”
- What are Transnational Corporations (TNCs)?

**Demography (Human Population):**

- Why are there spatial differences in the distribution of people on Earth?
- What social factors influence human population trends?
- What is doubling time?
- What is exponential growth?
- Who was Thomas Malthus?
- What is Total Fertility Rate (TFR)?
- What is Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)?
- What is the demographic transition model?
- What was Y6B (Year of the Six Billion)?

**Nature, Society, and Technology:**

- What is nature?
- How do ideas of nature differ by culture?
- What is animism?
• What is the mechanistic worldview?
• What is reductionist thinking?
• What is ecotheology?
• What is progress?
• Who are technocrats?
• What is the Impact Law (Population X Affluence X Technology)?
• What is the Gaia Theory?

Multimedia:

• Life & Debt (New Yorker Video): A documentary that examines the outcomes of twenty-five years of IMF & World Bank imposed economic reforms on the country of Jamaica. Key areas of inquiry include: state restructuring, shifts in cultural norms result from globalization, changes in land-use patterns, local views of global tourism, export processing zones and income inequality.

• Population Counts (CNN): The students are introduced to the Chhetri sisters; three women in Nepal in their early 30s who are unmarried, childless and own a mountain tracking-guide business. The traditional life of women in Nepal is discussed and the social tensions that have arisen with the Chhetri sisters’ life choices. This case-study illuminates how the reproductive patterns of a culture are often linked to the status of woman.

Study Questions:

• Who are considered the primary agents of globalization?
• Globalization is not like the former British-Empire. Why?
• Why are U.S. automakers scrambling to get a foothold in China?
• What is the information-superhighway?
• What are maquiladoras?
• Some producers use maquiladoras because of what key advantage?
• Why do maquiladoras prefer to hire women?
• The Human Development Index (HDI) was created by the United Nations (UN) to act as a better measure of quality of life than such statistics as gross domestic product (GDP). Besides material wealth, what other three variables does the HDI calculate?
• What is environmental determinism?
• What is possibilism?
• What are three values that underscore teleology?
• The authors stipulate on page 89 that (certain) early Christians believed that the Earth was given to humans for their use. How did this belief shape the attitudes of some Christian thinkers to the Earth?
• On page 89, the authors postulate that quote: “The Judeo-Christian religious heritage, in short, has for millennia promoted an instrumentalist view of nature that is potentially far more damaging to the habitat than the organic view of nature in which humans and nature exist in balance. By contrast, the great religions of Asia and many animistic tribal faiths highlight
teachings and beliefs that protect nature.” Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan questions this line of reasoning put forward by the authors. Why?

• What is the J-shaped population curve?
• What is the population explosion?
• Geographers use maps to describe spatial patterns observed on the Earth’s surface. Examine the Population Density map on pages 214-215. Observe the population density trends for Alaska (USA), Hudson Bay (Canada), Greenland, Siberia (Russia), Mongolia, the Plateau of Tibet (China), Central Brazil (South America) & Australia. Why do these locations have low population densities?
• The Rule of 72 helps demographers to determine the time in years it takes for a country or the world to double its human population. What insights does calculating doubling time provide?
• Analyze the definition of gender roles on page 227. In some cultures, the number of children a man or woman has confers what type of social status?
• What is the world pattern of youth and old age?

Exam Questions:

• What is globalization?
• Transitional Corporations are considered a global force. Why?
• What is the digital divide?
• You have been asked to give a speech at a public Earth Day rally in downtown Honolulu. During your presentation a person in the audience yells out the question: What is Nature? What reply would be the most apt to render based on the principles explored in class?
• Why is there a link between female literacy & total fertility rate (TFR)?
• Gender preferences have resulted in what type of social practices around the world?
• What critical question do ecotheologists ask?
• What are two values that define the organic view of nature?
• What thoughts about nature have been most persistent in Western Culture?
• How was progress measured in the 18th Century?
• What view of the Earth does the Gaia Theory present?
**Hallmark 2. Offer a broad, integrated analysis of cultural, economic, political, scientific, and/or social development that recognizes the diversity of human societies and their cultural traditions.**

Dynamic spatial tensions today inform geographic studies. The changes associated with globalization have sparked a wide debate about the future of the human condition. A critical question is what does a more integrated world mean for the cultural heritage of humanity? Having a solid grounding in geographical thought can help the students to better understand the nature of the world they live in. Samples of course inquiry include:

**Class Lectures:**

**What is Geography?**

- What is cultural geography?
- What is the scientific method?
- What are the subdivisions of geography?
- What is holistic thinking?
- What are the fundamental concepts of spatial analysis?
- What are spatial scales (global, national & local)?
- What are the tools of geography (maps, GIS)?
- What are the **Geography for Life: National Geography Standards**?
  1. the Existential Reason
  2. the Ethical Reason
  3. the Intellectual Reason
  4. the Practical Reason

**The Cultural Mosaic:**

- What is culture?
- How is culture transmitted?
- What is ethnicity?
- What are cultural traits?
- What is cultural diffusion?
- What are gender issues?
- What is popular/global culture?
- What are replicated landscapes?

**Study Questions:**

- What are cultural borders?
- What conclusion might a perceptive person from another culture reach about the ideology of the culture that produced the Toronto landscape?
- How is popular culture reflected?
- Do cultures differ in their relationship with the physical environment?
- What is indigenous technical knowledge (ITK)?
- What are polytheistic religions?
- What are monotheistic religions?
• In what forms does religion appear in the cultural landscape?
• What are the major linguistic cultural regions of the world?
• Why is language an important form of cultural expression?
• How did the mosaic of languages and dialects come to exist?
• What is folk culture?
• What is world music?
• Is English taking over the world, virtually?

**Multimedia:**

• *The Merchants of Cool* (Frontline, PBS): An investigation into how large media conglomerates are reshaping the landscape of youth-popular culture as a result of globalization. The program explores such concerns as: the commodification of cultural expression, global branding, homogenous images, materialistic-based lifestyles, reinforcement of patriarchal gender roles and social reactions to commercialized, global media culture.

• *Local Futures. Beyond the Global Economy* (International Society for Ecology & Culture): Ladakh or “Little Tibet” is a desert land in the Himalayas. It is a place of few resources and a harsh climate. Yet, for more than a thousand years, it has been home to a thriving culture. Traditions of frugality and cooperation, along with an intimate knowledge of their environment, have enabled the Ladakhi to prosper. Now, however, the traditional culture and physical landscape of Ladakh are undergoing radical changes as a result of industrial-based globalization. *Local Futures* raises poignant questions about commonly-held Western beliefs to do with development and progress.
Hallmark 3. While recognizing diversity, the course also examines processes of cross-cultural interaction and exchange that have linked the world’s peoples through time.

Cultural interaction is nothing new. Indeed, cross-human contact has occurred for millennia. Today, however, the advent of a global communications network such as satellite TV and the internet and the jet-aircraft has added a new dimension to the human experience. Sample course materials that address inter-societal interactions and change include:

Class Lecture:

Cultural Diffusion:

- What is cultural diffusion?
- How does cultural diffusion occur?
- What is cultural globalization?
- What are cultural hearths?
- Is global media impacting cultural diversity?
- What cultural shifts occurred in Fiji with the introduction of Western media (TV, movies, music & literature) in 1995?
- What is Manifest Destiny?
- What impact did Manifest Destiny have on the cultural & physical landscapes of North America?
- How did European diseases such as smallpox change the “New World?”

Earth-Use Patterns:

- Where the Mississippi River flows into the Gulf of Mexico exists one of the world’s largest Dead Zones. What is a Dead Zone? What causes Dead Zones?
- The ocean has become a dumping ground for human trash. What are three land-based sources for marine debris in Hawai‘i?
- Why is marine debris a threat to such sea-birds as the Albatross of Midway Island?
- What vital function do marine reserves (or conservation districts) serve?
- What is long-line fishing? What is by-catch?
- What is a keystone species (ie: the Pacific Gregory)?
- Why are consumers key in determining the fate of the world’s fisheries?
- What impacts does meat production have on the Earth?
- How are patterns of livestock consumption changing around the world?
- Why is eating a vegetarian diet considered less harmful to the planet?
- Why has global soybean production increased?
- Why is the advent of a global cattle industry linked with deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil?
Multimedia:

- *Bhutan, Asia (Frontline World)*: Bhutan, a Buddhist kingdom in the Asia, is the last place on Earth to obtain television. This case study considers: What does the bombardment of mainly Western images, such as the World Wrestling Federation (WWF), mean for the long term integrity of the culture of Bhutan?

Study Questions:

- How did the geographical distribution of religions come about?
- What is the patterning of religious faiths?
- What is the origin and diffusion of agriculture?
- What is the Indus-Ganga Hearth?
- Will growing cultural interactions enhance or reduce the world’s cultural heterogeneity?
- Do the diverse hues of the human mosaic as revealed in maps shine less brightly than before?
- What is glocalization?

Exam Questions:

- Why is culture a powerful social force?
- Fiji is an island country in the South Pacific. What impact has the arrival of Western television had on the people of Fiji?
- How can television help change culture? Give an example to support your response.
- How is culture transmitted? Give an example to support your response.
- What impact did Manifest Destiny have on North America?
Hallmark 4. The course includes at least one component on Hawaiian, Pacific, and Asian societies and their cultural traditions.

A core aspect of this course covers the Asian and Pacific (including Hawaii) region. Examples of course material include:

Class Lecture:

Kana Wai (Law of Water):

- What is kana wai?
- Why was there a Kapu (cultural sanction) on the use of fresh-water in Hawai‘i?
- *Wai* in Hawaiian means water. *Waiwai* means wealth. What insights does such language reveal about the culture of the ancient Hawaiians?
- How did early Western businessmen in Hawaii begin to deplete Oahu’s fresh-water lens?
- Why was the Honolulu Board of Water Supply created?

Multimedia:

- Hawaiians Reflecting Spirit (Filmworks): This film presents the viewer with important cultural insights about the Hawaiian people, their origins, historical challenges and current social conditions. It also details the revival of an indigenous people whose identity is intrinsically linked to the geography of the Hawaiian Islands.
Hallmark 5. The course engages students in the study and analysis of writings, narratives, texts, artifacts, and/or practices that represent the perspectives of different societies and cultural traditions.

The course uses multiple modes of presenting cross-societal perspectives, such as:

Writing Assignment: See assignment entitled Power of One (page 14).

Multimedia:

• *In the Light of Reverence* (Bullfrog Films): the Lakota of the Great Plains of North America are seen in a struggle to practice their land-based religion and to protect *Mato Tipila* (Devil’s Tower, Wyoming), a site they consider most sacred. The film explicitly reflects how ideas of nature vary from one culture to another.

• *Brother IZ. The Man and His Music* (Island Music): This DVD contains a selection of music by Hawaiian artist, Israel Kamakawiwo’ole (1959-1997). It is used to provide an example of how music is utilized as a medium to convey the values and perspectives of a culture.

• *Earth & the American Dream* (Direct Cinema Limited): This film chronicles the clash of cultural beliefs; Native American/European settlers, and the transformation of the physical geography of North American that has ensued since the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 up to the 21st Century.
Hallmark 6. In combination, a student’s two FG courses will provide a large-scale analysis of human development and change over time from prehistory to the present.

As noted in the original Foundations designation request, Geog 151 meets the requirements of category C (prehistory to present). Samples lessons include:

**Class Lectures:**

**Earth-Human Relationship:**

- What is the pristine myth?
- How have humans been spatial actors (force of change) on the planet throughout history?
- How did early humans (Stone Age) modify the environment?
- What geographical changes did the Agricultural Revolution produce?
- What did the arrival of Europeans to the “New World” in the 15th Century mean for the Americas?
- Why did the Industrial Revolution transform humanity’s relationship to the Earth?
- What is the Environmental Revolution?

**Geography & Race:**

- What is race?
- Why does humanity display a variety of physical features?
- How are people a reflection of the Earth itself?
- What is racism?
- Why is racism a social construct?

**History of Demography:**

- What is the current number of living human inhabitants on Earth?
- What has been the pattern of human population growth dating back 2 millions years?
- At what historical point did human population figures begin to increase?
- How long did it take for humanity to reach 1 billion people?
- Since the 1950s, what factors have produced the “population explosion?”
- What did Karl Marx contend was the underlining causes of human poverty and environmental impact?
- Today, in what parts of the world is there a stabilization or decline of population numbers?
- Which countries of the world are experiencing rapid population growth? Why?
Study Questions:

- What forces might be at work to produce the geographical distribution of wheat agriculture around the world?
- What is subsistence agriculture?
- Who are hunter-gathers?
- What is nomadic herding?
- What is the global chicken?
- Why is rice cultivated in such hilly areas in Asia, whereas in the United States rice farming is confined to the flat planes?
- What is a natural hazard?
- How has Western Culture sought to mitigate (diminish) the impact of natural hazards? Give an example to support your response.
- Why do people throughout the world inhabit hazard zones?

Multimedia:

- **Skin (National Geographic)**: This National Geographic special takes a holistic look at human skin. The viewer is taken around the world to understand why humans look different and how human skin is often a cultural template. Critical questions are explored such as: Why people evolved different types of skin tones? How physical characteristic are a biological adaptation to geography? How body art (tattoos) is used by different cultures as a form of expression? What is skin inequality? How cultural diffusion has shaped ideas of beauty? What is skin bleaching?

- **World Population (Population Counts)**: Dots representing 1 million people are plotted on a world map showing the rate of growth and spatial distribution of humanity from 1 A.D. projected to the year 2020. Historical reference points (via visual cues) and a heart-beat are further used in the short film.
Sample Writing Assignment for Hallmark 5

Geography & Contemporary Society

Guidelines: Power of One

A Chinese proverb exalts: “Those who say it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it.” How poignant. It seems that the human psyche has become stifled by a curious condition; a myth of all things. Yes, a myth. This myth knows no boundaries. It is universal in scope. No culture is immune to its grip. It often lays dormant in the recesses of the mind. It reveals itself through the medium of language. If one listens carefully it can be detected in such quips as: “what can I do?” or “I’m only one person.” It is the myth of disempowerment, an ugly perversion of truth. It is the myth that one person cannot change the world. It is a false goof. Our-story resonates with bewildering acts of selflessness, of individuals from all walks of life who have made a difference. It is a legacy that should be celebrated; a source of much inspiration. Of course, there is still a lot to do, problems alas are abound. But never doubt the power of one—that includes YOU!

You are to write a biography on:

Aung San Suu Kyi (f.)
- Myanmar (Burma)
- Social Reformer

A biography is about telling the life story of a person. You want to paint an in-depth portrait of the person to the reader. Apply the six questions of critical inquiry to your research: who, what, when, where, how & why. Below is a list of questions that you can use to form the basis of your biography. Your biography should be written as a narrative; a story, not just a syntax (list) of questions and answers.

- Where were they born? (region, city, country)?
- When were they born (day, month, year)?
- Where were they raised?
- Who were they raised by?
- What events shaped their lives?
- What obstacles did they overcome?
- What risks did they take?
- Who was a large influence on their life?
- What human qualities does (did) the person possess?
- How have they made a difference? (be in-depth)
- What is their legacy to the world?
- Why is (was) this person a force of change?
- What does it mean to be a hero? How is a hero different from a celebrity?
Was the person you profiled a hero? Why?
**REQUIREMENTS**

**Word Length:** Your paper must be **1200 words** in length excluding titles, tables, graphs, pictures, etc. This amounts to the following:

**Typed**
- four (4) **full** pages
- size 12 font
- single-sided
- doubled-spaced
- ink print must be readable

**Hand Written**
- seven (7) **full** pages
- single-sided
- doubled-spaced
- your hand writing must be legible to the reader
- you must use an ink pen **not** pencil.

These are minimum word lengths. You are welcome to submit papers of additional length. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the automatic forfeiture of one (1) full letter grade.

**Front Coversheet:** On a coversheet at the front of your paper indicate your name, person’s name, course title (Geography & Contemporary Society) and class time.

**Sources:** Your paper must be factually based. Your paper must be written by you and not plagiarized. Any paper found to have been plagiarized will result in the forfeiture of all course points. The discourse (content) of your paper must be informed by a minimum of **three** published sources. This may include such materials as the Internet, journals, newspapers, books, scientific research, etc.

**Internet Sources:** Ensure that any information you obtain from the Internet is derived from a legitimate website such as a government agency or non-profit organization.

**Bibliography Page:** Your sources must be cited on a separate page that is attached at the back of your paper. Only providing the web-address of an Internet site is not sufficient. You must fully source all Internet material. Cite your sources using the Modern Language Association (MLA) format. See attached.
Deadline: Your paper & oral synopsis are due (write in your due date):

No electronic copies of your paper (fax or email) will be accepted. Late papers will be subject to a grade penalty of 20 points for each weekday it is outstanding. Late papers must be submitted in person either to me or the Social Science Division office in Kalia 101. DO NOT submit a late paper via e-mail, snail-mail or by slipping it under an office door. This will avoid the possibility of it being unaccounted for. Failure to give your oral synopsis in class will result in the forfeiture of 30 points. Turn in your paper earlier if you are unable to submit it on the deadline.

Draft Review: You are more than welcome to submit a draft copy of your paper for review. It is up to you to request this option. Do not leave it to the last minute.

ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC WRITING

The following is used as a basis for assessing student performance with respects to their written work in this class. Such is intended to be a guide only.

• Did the student answer the question/topic?

• Did the student’s paper contain information, facts, statements that were relevant to the question?

• Did the student’s paper flow in a logical manner or was it disjointed?

• Did the student state their opinion (if required by the question)? Was it backed up with well throughout ideas and examples?

• Was the student’s paper based on academic theory, research or facts, or did it mainly contain personal opinion and experiences?

• Did the student demonstrate reasonable knowledge of the subject matter?

• What was the standard of English comprehension: sentence structure; grammar; spelling; and tense (past, present, future)?