

General Studies 2015-16 Course Review

Geography 205

I. Course Description: Geography 205 Introduction to Geography (3 credit hrs.)

"World distribution of various elements of the natural environment and man's adjustment to this distribution; resultant changes in cultural, politics and economics" -WLU Bulletin

II. Student Learning Outcome (SLO): Self and Cultural Awareness

Since Eratosthenes coined the term "geography" more than 2200 years ago, the focus of the discipline of geography has been on the relationships between ways of life and the landscapes, both cultural and natural, that host them. These relationships are mediated by the patterns and distributions of cultural traits around the globe. In order for students to gain insight into their place in the world, they must have to opportunity to learn about the geographical frameworks for understanding the world and their place in it. Hence, Geography 205 addresses the general studies *Self & Cultural Awareness*, SLO comprehensively and in terms of one of the oldest and traditional disciplines in the Academy.

III. Course Assessment:

The *Self and Cultural Awareness* SLO is assessed in several ways in Geography 205.

1. Examinations (multiple choice): Students are asked to recognize key terms and concepts in physical and human geography.
2. Census Data Mapping Project: Students complete a Mapping project in which they analyze the distribution of social and cultural variables in a particular area in the United States. This project requires that students create online maps based upon census data and analyze the ways in which the variables are distributed geographical and how they may be spatially correlated.
3. Short Response Paper (LiveText): In an assignment due approximately 2/3 of the way through the semester, students are required to choose among journal articles that address various themes in geography. They are then required to compose a 3-5 page paper that addresses specific questions aligned with three of the areas of the *Self and Cultural Awareness* rubric. The three areas used to assess this assignment are:
 - a) Global Self Awareness
 - b) Perspective Taking
 - c) Understanding Global Systems
4. The LiveText Short Response Paper Assignment instructions for Geography 205 are as follows.
 - a) Introduction to Geography
 - b) Please peruse the Short Response Paper articles in the Resources file and select one that interests you.
 - c) Read the article several times.
 - d) Write 3-5 page paper that has the following parts:
 - i. SUMMARY (about 1.5 pages)
 - ii. RESPONSE AND REFLECTIONS (2-4 pages)
5. Please make sure this section addresses the following:
 - a) Identify the different viewpoints or perspectives expressed in the article. Compare and contrast them in terms of power structures and global cultural patterns.
 - b) Identify ways in which the article addresses the relationships between human activity and the natural environment.
 - c) What types of decisions, ethical dilemmas or issues of personal responsibility might arise from the topic described in the article. What would some possible impacts of those decisions be?
 - d) Please use 12 pt. Times New Roman Font and Double-space your paper.

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WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR PAPER, PLEASE UPLOAD IT TO THE ASSIGNMENT IN LIVETEXT

IV. Course Delivery and Consistency:

In the past, Geography 205 has been offered both online and in classroom sections with approximately 40 students per section. At this time, the course is only offered in classroom sections. With my return to full-time teaching, I now teach three sections of Geography 205 each semester and use the same syllabus and text in each section. Opportunities are offered to students with diverse learning styles such as:

- a) Audio files of lecture summaries available on Sakai
- b) Video instructions for the Census Data Mapping Project available on Sakai
- c) PowerPoint lecture slides available on Sakai

V. Course Syllabi and Documents: submitted via LiveText