



**Learning Enabler:** Ismaila Odogba, Ph.D.

**Office hours:** MW: 12:00-1:30pm or by appointment

**Class Schedule:** Tuesday & Thursday: 11:00-12:15

**Email:** [iodogba@uwsp.edu](mailto:iodogba@uwsp.edu)

**Office:** Science B303

**Venue:** SCI D324

**Course Description:**

This course examines the components and spatial aspects of contemporary culture including the patterns and problems of population, migration, language, religion, settlements, and political and economic development. It introduces students to several traditional subfields of human geography as well as fundamental geographic concepts. This course focuses on concepts, *not* facts about places, which are traditionally associated with *regional geography*.

**U.S. National Geography Standards emphasized in the course:**

- The physical and human characteristics of places.
- The changes that occur in meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources
- The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlements
- The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.

**Enduring Understandings of the Course:**

- A spatial perspective of the social world is of crucial importance in the generation of a broad and informed understanding of the world.
- The world is an interdependent system of settlements within which people live their lives as part of a continual process of struggle and transformation.

**Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, successful students will possess the knowledge necessary:

1. To describe the major concepts in human geography (including place, space, scale, and landscape)
2. To recognize and assess the diversity of cultural backgrounds and personal experiences that influence people and how they perceive places.
3. To demonstrate a geography perspective in understanding and solving problems
4. To illustrate the interrelationships between people and places in the developed and less developed world

**General Education Program (GEP):**

This course fulfills the Human Cultures & the Sciences and the Social & Environmental Responsibility of the GEP. Geography tends to examine, from a spatial perspective, the diversity and range of the physical and human systems across the planet. Consequently, it complements and aligns with the learning outcomes in these categories.

### Human Cultures and the Sciences - Social Sciences

- Explain or apply major concepts, methods, or theories used in the social sciences to investigate, analyze, or predict human behavior. (Course Learning Outcomes 1 and 3).
- Examine and explain how social, cultural, or political institutions influence individuals or groups. (Course Learning Outcome 4).

Using the concepts of geography (such as place, scale, space, interdependence, etc.), students will examine population implications as well as the socio-economic problems associated with demographics in various societies. From a spatial perspective, the investigation will range from the global world to the local community.

### Social and Environmental Responsibility - Global Awareness

- Identify the components found within one or more cultures that are distinct from those found in predominantly English-speaking cultures. (Course Learning Outcome 2).
- Analyze key forces or processes that contribute to global interconnectedness and their implications. (Course Learning Outcome 4).
- Demonstrate curiosity and empathetic insight about diverse cultural perspectives. (Course Learning Outcome 2).

Students will identify and discuss diverse cultures, what constitutes culture, understand how cultures shape and influence settlements across time and space.

### **Course Format:**

Designed largely for classroom delivery, the course shall involve lectures, quizzes, discussions, assignments, and exams. A core set of beliefs about teaching and learning influence my teaching; one of which is that ***learning is an active student-centered activity and teaching is simply not the transmission of knowledge from the instructor to the students***. The process of instruction involves both the learning enabler (i.e., the instructor) and students (learners) engaging in an interactive environment to discover, understand, and apply knowledge to practical issues.

### **Tech Skills:**

Students should be competent in the use of computers, the World Wide Web, and commonly used software programs such as Microsoft Office Suite applications. In this course, we will use the university's management system, **CANVAS**. Students without experience using Canvas can contact the Student Help Desk at (715) 346.HELP (4357) or 1.877.832.8977 to arrange instruction.

**Course Policies:**

Readings. Complete the assigned readings prior to class. Be prepared to discuss the assigned readings in class. Being up to date on current events enhances one's geographical knowledge. Students should follow current world events by consulting a variety of sources. Sources include the internet (e.g., www.bbc.com or www.npr.com), national sources (e.g., *New York Times* or *Newsweek*), and magazines/journals (e.g., *Economist*). Students are responsible for all material presented in class and the assigned readings.

Participation. Participation in discussions is very desirable. You are strongly encouraged to participate during class. Do share your ideas, thoughts, and ask questions. If this is difficult for you due to language, shyness, or a disability, **please see me**. The purpose of the class discussion is to enhance understanding; **so, do respect the ideas, thoughts, and opinions of others**. Do note that each member of the class deserves to learn in an environment where they are all treated with the highest levels of dignity and respect. Abusive, offensive, discriminatory, or otherwise harassing behavior is not permitted.

Attendance and Gadgets (Voodoo). I will take attendance regularly; school regulations require it. Arriving late and leaving early disrupts class and shall result in a reduction in your total course score by **2 points for each occurrence**. Everyone is permitted **only one unexcused absence**. Thereafter, every unexcused absence will cost you **2 points**. If you are unable to attend class, please inform me ahead of time (except in case of an emergency or illness). All electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, and similar devices are prohibited during class. Cellphones are to be turned off (or on vibrate) during class, and do not answer phone calls or text messages during class unless there is an emergency. Laptops and tablets may be used in class for note-taking purposes and for the in-class group activities. Please refrain from checking email, web browsing or other activities that are not related to the class as these activities are distracting to other members of the class and are also disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor. If you are using a laptop, sit in the front row and expect to be consulted during lectures to provide ancillary information. Note that you are responsible for all material presented in class and the assigned readings. Thus, if you miss a class, do not email me asking, "What did I miss?"

Exams, Tests, and Assignments. You must submit all assignments and take quizzes at the scheduled time. Some of the tests will be collaborative. The instructor will not accept late submissions without a verified excuse; **late submissions will receive zero credit**. Likewise, make-up quizzes will require a verifiable excuse.

Why let students take exams and quizzes collaboratively? There are several reasons, most of which have been *explored empirically*. When students discuss questions and possible answers, they intensely engage with the content, which increases the learning potential of an exam/quiz experience. The activity develops cooperation and communication skills. But the reason most

often given is that working with other students decreases exam anxiety, particularly for those students whose levels of anxiety compromise their ability to perform on exams.

HomeWorks (Geographic Thinking). There are four topic assignments. All your written assignments must be submitted as a Microsoft document MS.docx. When you upload your assignments, it is extremely important that you include your name in your document. When I download your work, I simply need to know who you are. It is also extremely helpful that when you name your file that you include your name in the title of the file. For example, you might give your first homework assignment the title, "smith\_homework1.doc". Assignments must be submitted in an MS Word Document.

Email. I strongly advise that you check your email regularly. If an unanticipated emergency necessitates a class cancellation or other last-minute change, you will be notified via email. Part of being professional is learning to communicate professionally with your professors and colleagues. The following are some etiquettes for sending good Email messages. I will not respond to unprofessional Emails.

1. Begin with a salutation (for example, "Hello, Professor SpongeBob")
2. Always include a subject heading so that your email does not get put into the spam folder and deleted.
3. Be concise and brief. Lengthy discussions should be held in person.
4. Pay attention to grammar and spelling. Emails are professional communication and should not read like text messages.
5. Be professional and polite. Ask for help rather than make demands or lodge complaints. Negatively tinged emails usually go over poorly with the recipient. It is almost always better to talk to your instructor in person.

**DO NOT** send an email about information you can easily find on your own (e.g., something on the syllabus, UWSP home page or the like) or that reads like a text message.

### Grading

This course is worth "260" points.

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|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Attendance                         | 15 pts.  |
| 2. Group Participation                | 25 pts.  |
| 3. Quizzes (3; 10 pts. each)          | 30 pts.  |
| 4. Topic Activity (4; 10 points each) | 40 pts.  |
| 5. Homework: Film Connection          | 30 pts.  |
| 6. Exams (3; 40 pts. each)            | 120 pts. |

Percentage ranges for letter grades

93-100% = **A**; 90-92% = **A-**; 87-89% = **B+**; 83-86% = **B**; 80-82% = **B-**; 77-79% = **C+**; 73-76% = **C**; 70-72% = **C-**; 67-69% = **D+**; 60-66% = **D**; Below 60% = **F**

University policy does not recognize grades for A+ or D-. An incomplete is not an option in this course. I will only honor a request for an incomplete under the most extraordinary and documented circumstance (such as an illness documented with a doctor's written excuse) which hinders the completion of course requirements.

Requirements for an Excellent Grade: 1) attend class regularly, 2) participate in discussions and class activities, 3) peruse the readings for each chapter, 4) complete and submit all assigned work on time and, 5) prepare adequately for quizzes. Do feel free to email me or drop by my office if you have any difficulties regarding this course; emails should contain ***your name, class, and section number***.

Informed Contribution

Students will get points for contributing to the class when they participate in class dialogues. A quality contribution to class discussions has any or all of these attributes:

1. It contributes new information to the dialogue. For instance, if a student agrees with a colleague's statement, the student must present reasons that were not cited by the initial speaker.
2. It raises a question that generates reflection on the subject.

The informed contribution points earned will be added to the overall course points before the course grade is determined. **Note:** This is subject to a student having attended at least 24 classes.

**Special Accommodations:**

UWSP is committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and temporary impairments. If you have a disability or acquire a condition during the semester where you need assistance, please contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of Albertson Hall (library) as soon as possible. DATC can be reached at 715-346-3365 or [DATC@uwsp.edu](mailto:DATC@uwsp.edu). In addition, I will accommodate religious belief according to UWSP 22.03.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

UWSP prohibits academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility to understand the issues concerning academic standards, disciplinary procedures, and students' rights and responsibilities at <https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx>

**Emergency Response Guidance:**

In the event of a medical emergency call 9-1-1 or use the nearest Red Emergency Phone. Help if trained and willing to do so. Guide emergency responders to victims. In the event of a tornado warning, proceed to the lowest level interior room in the building without window exposure. See [www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures/other/floor-plans.aspx](http://www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures/other/floor-plans.aspx) for floor plans showing severe weather shelters on campus. Avoid wide-span structures (gyms, pools or large classrooms). In the event of a fire alarm, evacuate the building in a calm manner and meet at a safe location more than 200 yards away from the building. Notify instructor or emergency command personnel of any missing individuals. Active Shooter/Code React – Run/Escapes, Hide, Fight. If trapped hide, lock doors, turn off lights, spread out and remain quiet. Call 9-1-1 when it is safe to do so. Follow instructions of emergency responders. See UW-Stevens Point Emergency Procedures at [www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures](http://www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures) for details on all emergency responses.

**Student Policies:**

**Course Materials:**

Rubenstein, James. 2019. *Contemporary Human Geography*, (Fourth Edition). New York: Pearson. Text is also available from Pearson Books as an [e-book](#). Other materials for the course (syllabus, PowerPoint slides, videos assignments, etc.) are available on Canvas.

**Tentative Schedule:**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus and schedule when necessary to meet the learning needs of the students or other unforeseen circumstances.

Week One (January 23, 25):

- January 23: Welcome to the Course, Course Overview/Meet the Professor – *Introductions, Course Policies, and Expectations*
- January 25: Foundational Concepts of Geographic Thinking
  - Readings: Chapter 1
  - Topic Activity: **Thinking Geographically 1 (Due February 2)**

Week Two (January 30, February 1):

- January 30: The Foundational Concepts of Geographic Thinking
  - Readings: Chapter 1
- February 1: Population and Health
  - Readings: Chapter 2

Week Three (February 6, 8):

- February 6: Population and Health
  - Readings: Chapter 2
  - **Quiz #1**
  - **Film Connections Assignment posted on Canvas (Due March 14)**
- February 8: Migration
  - Readings: Chapter 3
  - **Topic Activity 2: Migration and Intervening Obstacles (Due February 16)**

Week Four (February 13, 15):

- February 13: Migration
  - Readings: Chapter 3
- February 15: Folk and Popular Culture
  - Readings: Chapter 4

Week Five (February 20, 22):

- February 20: Folk and Popular Culture
  - Readings: Chapter 4
- February 22: **Exam 1 (Collaborative Testing)**

Week Six (February 27, 29):

- February 27: Exam 1 (Debrief)
- February 29: Cultural Geography
  - Readings: Chapters 5, 6, & 7

Week Seven (March 5, 7):

- March 5: Cultural Geography
  - Readings: Chapters 5, 6, & 7
  - **Quiz #2**
- March 7: Political Geography
  - Readings: Chapter 8
  - **Topic Activity: Non-state Spaces and Government (Due March 15)**

Week Eight (March 12, 14):

- March 12: Political Geography
  - Readings: Chapter 8
- March 14: **No Class. Workday to edit, proofread, and finalize Film Connections assignment. (Due March 14)**

**March 15 -24, 2023: Spring Break begins at 6:00pm on March 15**

Week Nine (March 26, 28)

- Development
  - Readings: Chapter 10

Week Ten (April 2, 4)

- April 2: **Exam 2 (Collaborative Testing)**
- April 4: Exam 2 (Debrief)

Week Eleven (April 9, 11):

- Agricultural Geography
  - Readings: Chapter 9

Week Twelve (April 16, 18)

- Industry and Location
  - Readings: Chapter 11
  - **Quiz #3**

Week Thirteen (April 23, 25):

- Urban Patterns & Services
  - Readings: Chapters 12 & 13
  - **Group Evaluation survey (Due May 2)**

Week Fourteen (April 30, May 2):

- December 7: Human Environment Interaction
  - Readings: Chapter 14

Week Fifteen (May 7, 9):

- May 7: **Topic Activity: Earth - Resiliency or Doom? (May 7)**
- May 9: Human Environment Interaction - Documentary

**Week Sixteen: Exam III (Open testing). Monday, May 13 21, 2024, from 12:30 - 2:30**





Students are strongly encouraged to check their UWSP email and Canvas regularly for information pertaining to the course.

**Some Important Dates:**

January 31, 2024: Last day to add or drop a 16-week course without a grade.

March 15-24, 2024: Spring Break begins at 6:00pm on March 17.

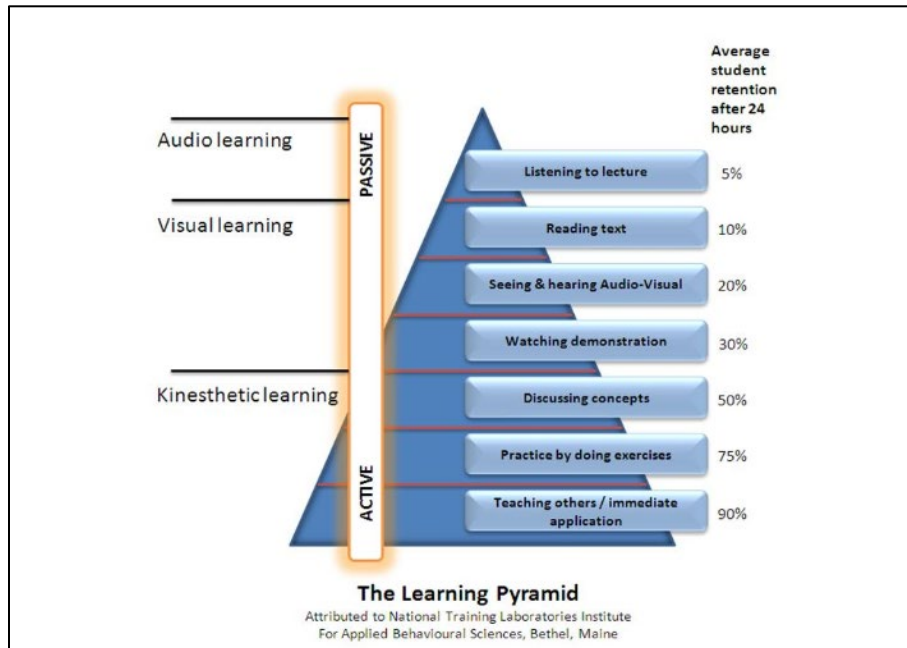
April 5, 2024: Last day to drop a 16-week course.

May 10, 2024: Last day of classes

May 18, 2024: Commencement

**Teaching Philosophy:**

Teaching is a fundamental component of my scholarly life. Over the last few years, I strived and continue to strive to improve the ability of my students learn, think critically, and augment their problem learning skills. I design and conduct my courses in a manner that is most conducive to developing in my students a life-long interest in learning and a greater capacity to think critically. My teaching philosophy is that learning is a student-centered lively activity and knowledge should be largely applicable to the resolution of real-world problems. Due to this belief, this syllabus is structured using backward design, core performance tasks, and other teaching techniques to create an interactive learning environment that hopefully helps the students improve their learning and to engage in critical thinking. The process of instruction, for me, involves both the learning enabler (i.e., the instructor) and students (learners) engaging in this interactive environment to discover, understand, and apply knowledge to practical issues.



Bligh (1998) gives some evidence for the effectiveness of different teaching methods. In 1954, a similar pyramid with slightly different numbers had appeared in a book, *Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching*, published by the Edgar Dale Dryden Press, New York.

### Contractual Agreement:

This syllabus is a contract between the professor and the students. Please study it carefully, as you are expected to prepare for the quizzes and tests, follow instructions, and complete the assignments contained in the syllabus on time even if the professor doesn't remind you. Lecture materials and recordings for Human Geography are protected intellectual property at UW-Stevens Point. Students in this course may use the materials for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may not copy or share lecture materials outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWSP Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.