

POL 2090: WORLD REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY

Fall 2025
MWF 8:30-9:20 am
Dr. Rosco Williamson

rwilliam@pointloma.edu
Colt 112 – x2762
cell: 619-252-4515

COURSE READING – Required Texts

- Douglas L Johnson, et al (2015), *World Regional Geography*, 11th ed. (Prentice Hall)
- Jeffrey D Sachs (2015), *The Age of Sustainable Development* (Columbia University Press)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Geography is the study of the relationship between people and the physical world in which they live. “Where” a person lives often effects “how” a person lives. While important, this only gives us half of the picture. People have developed techniques of modifying the “where.” For example, maps are *artificial* ways of ordering the information of geography: they can change the way people see the “where” and, therefore, also change “how” people live. In this class, we want to better understand the relationship between people and their world, but we also want to emphasize the idea that human beings are *active* agents in the relationship.

From this broad, ambitious objective come several more manageable goals:

- (1) To learn some of the basics. We will gain a better understanding of how natural, political, economic, social, and cultural phenomena interrelate. We will compare these interactions in regions around the world and see how they create distinct cultural attributes, or more accurately, “ways of being in the world.”
- (2) To compare these “ways of being in the world.” Regional comparisons will allow the identification of many similarities and differences about how people live. Ideally, we want to identify what makes different groups of people distinct and in what ways they remain similar, despite different environmental circumstances.
- (3) To look more closely at the tools of the study of geography. The Uncertainty Principle says that the observer affects the thing that is observed. By grouping the world into regions, drawing maps, and other activities of geography, we change the nature of the thing we observe. Thus, while we learn how to “do” geographic analysis, we also want to look more deeply at the effect of its use.
- (4) To use this information to understand current events. If we do a good job with the first three things, the ideas we gain should allow us to have a new perspective regarding events in the world. Among the topics that we will focus on will be:
 - Globalization: the effects that new interdependencies in the world have and will have on local and regional distinctiveness
 - Economic inequality and development: the effects that environment has on creating and perpetuating global inequalities, and the means by which human beings work to end and/or perpetuate inequality
 - Role of the United States: the effects that a powerful scientific and economic nation has on the entire world. The goal is not to defend or condemn its role, but to understand its effects.
- (5) To make more informed value judgments. We (the professor and students in this class) are also active agents in the world and, as such, we are compelled to ask questions about what is “good,” “evil,” “just,” and “unjust.” The complexity of the issues involved is not an excuse for deferring judgment. We will use some class time to discuss what should be done collectively and individually.

Course Learning Outcomes

- You will be able to demonstrate and explain important characteristics of the major world regions and discuss and compare some of the major issues confronting those regions.
- You will be able to locate the world's major physical, political, and cultural features on a map.
- You will be able to apply course materials to better understand current events.

Program Learning Outcomes – International Studies

PL0 1: You will be able to recognize and appreciate the historical, political, social, cultural, and economic dimensions of international processes and issues

- Exams
- Map quizzes

PL0 4: You will be able to demonstrate a sense of global awareness, by critically evaluating your own culture and society in a global and comparative context

- Assignments – weekly reflections

CLASSROOM CIVILITY POLICY

Respect for the views and values of others is an essential characteristic of a thriving learning community. Although it is likely that we may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in our course, we will behave and express our viewpoints in a manner that is courteous and professional. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a respectful and profound manner is encouraged. Our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of topics as presented in the course as scholars, using research and data to defend our assertions.

COURSE GRADING

The following is the breakdown of how the final grade will be determined:

15%	Exam #1
15%	Exam #2
25%	Final Exam
10%	Map Quizzes
8%	Quizzes and Assignments
12%	Weekly Reflections
15%	Attendance and Participation

The final exam will cover material from the third part of the course and will also have a section that is cumulative.

Make-ups

NO MAKE-UP EXAMS OR QUIZZES WILL BE ALLOWED WITHOUT A UNIVERSITY-APPROVED EXCUSED ABSENCE OR DOCTOR'S WRITTEN PERMISSION. Any student receiving a university-approved excused absence should contact the professor BEFORE the absence to arrange a time to make-up the missed exam.

Attendance and Participation

Participation will be 8% of your total grade. There aren't a lot of people in class, so no one can hide in the crowd. Participation is not measured in quantity but in quality. The student who talks all the time, but doesn't add very much to the discussion, will fare no better than the student who says nothing. Good participation means being prepared for class, demonstrating it, *and* joining in on class discussions.

Attendance will be 7% of your total grade. Of the 41 total class sessions:

<i>If you miss</i>	<i>0-1 classes</i>	<i>= you get the full 7%</i>
	2	= 6%
	3	= 5%
	4	= 4%
	5	= 3%
	6	= 2%
	7	= 1%
	8	= 0%
	<i>9 or more</i>	<i>= you will be dropped</i>

In terms of tardiness: the first two times you are tardy, I just give you a dirty look. On your third tardy, the “passive” in my passive aggressiveness wears off and every tardy after it will count as an absence. Class is only 50 minutes long, so there is no time to waste. If tardiness is going to be a thing for you for some legitimate reason, please talk with me about it before it becomes a problem (I’m very understanding of legit stuff).

You never know when some new idea is going to strike you and change the way you think about the world. So, take advantage of every opportunity that you have and immerse yourself in learning – even when you’d rather be asleep in your bed.

Quizzes

Quizzes can cover material from the readings for the day, readings for the previous lecture, and content from the previous lecture. Quizzes will be announced the day the quiz will be given. They will be given at the start of the class session and turned in before the lecture for that day begins. Students can be best prepared for quizzes by (1) keeping up with the reading for each lecture, (2) reviewing lecture notes from the previous lecture before class, (3) attending class regularly, and (4) being on time to class (since quizzes are at the start of class).

Some of the quizzes will be map quizzes. These will be announced in advance and students will be given the terms and a sample map in order to be prepared for the quiz. Map terms and blank maps are available on Canvas.

Reflection Assignments

Every Monday, each student will turn in on Canvas a 1-1 ½ page reflection (single-spaced, typed) on the *collateral* reading (Reading for Reflection) for the previous week. Collateral reading means all of the readings that are not from the Johnson textbook and the Sachs textbook. A list of these readings (usually several articles or excerpts per week that are related to and building upon the topics of the week) will be made available on Canvas on Mondays, a week before they are due.

The reflection must be submitted before class begins on Monday. No late reflections will be accepted. You get one freebie over the semester, meaning you can skip turning in a reflection with no penalty – but use your freebie wisely.

The reflection should include your reactions to the things that you learned about in these readings. Ask yourself if there was anything you had a strong reaction to (such as “I was fascinated with...”, “This really ticked me off...”, etc.), if there were things you disagreed with, and/or if there were things that you’d be interested in finding more information about. One of the goals of these reflections is to be able to look back over the course of the semester and see if you can better identify what it is in the world that YOU really care about. So, think about the reflections as being a way to get a better idea of who you are and who you want to become.

OFFICIAL INFORMATION

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

Artificial Intelligence Policy

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. Your work should be your work. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability,

class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.

Use of Technology

In order to be successful in the online environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers compatible with their computer available to use. If a student is in need of technological resources please contact student-tech-request@pointloma.edu. Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3 unit class delivered over 14 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes (roughly 7.5 hours per week, including class sessions). The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

PLNU Mission To Teach – To Shape – To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modelled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

WORLD REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY LECTURE SCHEDULE

Readings should be done *before* coming to class in order to facilitate discussion and clear up any difficulties. There are additional short readings for most days. **Check Canvas frequently to see what additional readings have been assigned.**

(*) – an asterisk before a date means that there will be a map quiz on that day!

PART I: KEY CONCEPTS

- 9/3 **Introduction**
- 9/5 **Why Geography Matters**
- Johnson, 1-20
 - Sachs, 1-14
- 9/8 **Why Does Place Matter to People?**
- Johnson, 20-31
 - Sachs 14-27, 34-42
- 9/10 **Global Sustainability: Will the World Need a “No Vacancy” Sign?**
- Johnson, 32-42
 - Sachs, 181-218
- *9/12 **What Does “Development” Mean and Why Do We Want It?**
- Johnson, 43-54
 - Sachs, 27-34, 139-59
- 9/15 **Get-Rich-Quick Schemes?: Theories of Development**
- Johnson, 54-56
 - Sachs, 101-38

PART II: EUROPE

- 9/17 **Europe: More than Just a Tourist Attraction...**
- Johnson, 168-91
- 9/19 **Many Europes**
- Johnson, 191-201
- 9/22 **Who is Us?: Social Inclusion**
- Sachs, 219-50
- *9/24 **Nationalism and Supra-nationalism: The European Union**
- Johnson, 201-16

PART III: RUSSIA AND THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

- 9/26 **What Does Russia Have to Work With?**
- Johnson, 218-35
- 9/29 **Transitology: The Tricky Switch from Communism to Capitalism**
- Johnson, 235-54
- *10/1 **The “Stans”: Russia’s “Near Abroad”**
- Johnson, 256-80

PART IV: THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

- 10/3 **Oceania: Australia and Its Neighbors**
- Johnson, 548-71
- 10/6 **Life at Sea Level: Antarctica, Global Warming and the Rising Oceans**
- Johnson, 538-48
 - Garrett Hardin (1968), “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science*
 - Sachs, 447-69
- 10/8 **MID-TERM EXAM #1**

PART V: ASIA

- 10/10 **Meteorology 101: The Significance of Weather in Asia**
- Johnson, 406-13, 448-57, 502-08
 - Sachs, 159-71
- 10/13 **Japan**
- Johnson, 484-500
- 10/15 **China**
- Johnson, 457-64, 479-84
 - Sachs, 317-34
- 10/17 **Capitalist-Style Communism or Communist-Infused Capitalism?**
- Johnson, 465-79
 - Sachs, 334-47
- 10/20 **Southeast Asia**
- Johnson, 508-35
- *10/22 **India**
- Johnson, 414-38
 - Sachs, 347-54

10/24 No Class (Fall Break)

PART VI: THE NEAR MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA)

10/27 **Life in the Desert: At Least It's a Dry Heat...**

- Johnson, 286-306

10/29 **The Mediterranean Coastline**

- Johnson, 307-22
- Sachs, 251-63

*10/31 **Oil: A Blessing...and a Curse**

- Johnson, 322-39
- Sachs, 263-74

11/3 **Peace in the Middle East**

- See Canvas

PART VII: AFRICA

11/5 **Colonialism in Africa**

- Johnson, 342-62

11/7 **Identity in Africa: Nation, Tribe, Family, Clan, Continent...**

- Johnson, 362-79
- Sachs, 275-87

11/10 **West Africa**

- Johnson, 380-85
- Sachs, 287-305

*11/13 **Kicking the Colonialists to the Curb?: Southern Africa**

- Johnson, 392-403
- Sachs, 171-80

11/14 **"Never Again...": Why Genocide Keeps Happening**

- Johnson, 385-92

11/17 **Review for Exam**

11/19 **MID-TERM EXAM #2**

PART VIII: THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

- 11/21** **The “New” World: Hispanic America**
• Johnson, 114-38
- 11/24** **Central America**
• Johnson, 139-52
- 11/26** **No Class**
- 11/28** **No Class**
- 12/1** **Right and Left: South America**
• Johnson, 152-58
- 12/3** **ABC: Argentina, Brazil, and Chile**
• Johnson, 158-66
• Sachs, 469-80
- *12/5** **GBA [God Bless America] and GSK [God Save the King]: North America**
• Johnson, 58-84
- 12/8** **Urban Geography**
• Johnson, 85-99
• Sachs, 355-78
- 12/10** **A “Melting Pot?”**
• Johnson, 100-12
• Sachs, 378-92
- 12/12** **So What?**

FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 7:30-10:00am

Outline of Course – POL2090 World Regional Geography

EXAM 1 MATERIAL

A. Key Concepts

1. Why Geography Matters
2. What Does Place Matter to People?
3. Global Sustainability
4. What Is “Development?”
5. Theories of Development

B. Europe

1. Physical Geography
2. Many Europes
3. Social Inclusion
4. Nationalism and Supra-Nationalism

C. Russia and the Former Soviet Union

1. What Russia Has to Work With
2. Transitology
3. The “Stans”

D. The Pacific Islands

1. Oceania
2. Life at Sea Level

EXAM 2 MATERIAL

E. Asia

1. Meteorology 101
2. Japan
3. China: Physical Geography
4. China: Capitalist-Flavored Communism
5. Southeast Asia
6. India
7. India’s Neighbors

F. The Middle East and North Africa

1. Life in the Desert
2. The Mediterranean Coastline
3. Oil
4. Peace in the Middle East

G. Africa

1. Colonialism
2. Identity in Africa
3. West Africa
4. Southern Africa
5. Why Does Genocide Keep Happening?

FINAL EXAM MATERIAL

H. The Western Hemisphere

1. The “New” World
2. Central America
3. South America
4. The ABC Countries
5. North America
6. Urban Geography
7. A “Melting Pot?”

I. So What

