

Introduction to Human Geography

GEOG 1280

Introduction to the Course

Welcome

You are about to embark on a voyage of personal and intellectual discovery. During this voyage, you will have many opportunities, not only to understand how human geographers look at our world, but also to think and rethink about how you understand our world. As you begin studying, you will soon appreciate that human geography is both an interesting and a useful academic discipline. Perhaps the breadth of the discipline may be surprising as you encounter a variety of approaches and a wealth of subject matter, but with the online material and the textbook serving jointly as your guide, you will be able to place different ideas and different facts in an appropriate context. By the end of your travels, you will doubtless agree with the claim that Geography Matters.

Contacting your instructor

For information on contacting your instructor as well as other important information from your instructor see the Instructor Letter link in your course website.

Course description

The *Undergraduate Calendar* of The University of Manitoba describes GEOG 1280 Introduction to Human Geography as follows:

This course studies aspects of the human world: population, settlement, and resources.

There are no prerequisites for this 3-credit-hour course. Its 3-credit-hour companion course is GEOG 1290, Introduction to Physical Geography, and most students taking first-year geography, whether through distance and online education or on-campus, take both GEOG 1280 and GEOG 1290.

This course approaches the study of human geography in a comprehensive manner, acknowledging and incorporating different approaches and different methods and also presenting the full range of human geographic subject matter. When you have completed this course, you will have achieved a sound grasp of the discipline of human geography.

Target audience

Students in most faculties and at all year levels take this introductory course. The course content is specifically designed to be appropriate for incoming first-year students, many of whom do not have any substantial background at the high-school level.

Whatever your academic background, this course is designed to be comprehensible, intellectually satisfying, and challenging. For example:

- Beginning-level university students with little or no background in geography will discover a dynamic discipline that offers many insights into the world we live in and the way we live in that world.
- Beginning-level university students with a high-school background in geography will find that the human geography to which they have already been introduced is more fully developed to cover a wider range of topics, approaches, methods, problems, and issues. Many beginning students are attracted to take additional geography courses after having taken this course.
- Advanced-level university students discover a discipline that sheds light on many issues that have been encountered in other university studies, especially courses in anthropology, economics, history, political studies, psychology, and sociology.

- All students taking this course are provided with the opportunity to experience the delights and challenges of a discipline that is at the forefront of much contemporary research and that is both broad-ranging and consistently relevant.
- All students will discover and appreciate the importance of the key geographic concepts of space and place. In short, you will discover that geography is important.

Course goals

There are three general course goals:

- to provide you with a strong background in the academic discipline of human geography;
- to provide you with a sound basis for more advanced courses in human geography, regional geography, and geographic techniques; and
- to encourage you to read, think, and write critically and effectively.

Course overview

This course is organized into three units, each of which is of approximately equal length in terms of both required reading and overall workload. The three units are structured along similar lines.

Unit organization

At this time, the aim is to identify some of the features that all three units share. Specific information on how to work through a unit is included at the beginning of the unit under “How to proceed.”

First, each unit involves reading the online course materials and the textbook, and requires submission of a two-part assignment.

Second, each unit requires that you study several textbook chapters:

- Unit 1 relates to textbook Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
- Unit 2 relates to textbook Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9.
- Unit 3 relates to textbook Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

Third, each unit is focused on a major world region(s).

- Unit 1 focuses on Africa.
- Unit 2 focuses on Asia.
- Unit 3 focuses on Europe and the Americas.

Fourth, the sequence of content in each unit in this course is as follows:

- Introduction: Short general opening remarks are designed to prepare you for study of the unit, which includes reading both textbook and online material.
- Learning objectives: Several learning objectives are listed; these help you to identify essential content and focus on key themes as you work through the unit. They are statements of what you are expected to accomplish or be able to demonstrate upon completion of the unit.
- How to proceed: There is a statement concerning how to proceed with your studies.
- Key concepts: Several key concepts are noted.
- Chapter outline statement: There is an outline statement for each of the chapters included in the unit. As you look at these, it might also be helpful to look at the chapter summaries included in the textbook that are more factual in focus.
- Introduction to World Region(s): There is a descriptive introduction to the selected world region(s).

- **Making connections:** There are discussions of two topics that are addressed in the context of the world region(s) with references made to relevant textbook passages. Links with textbook content outside the unit chapters are noted to encourage you to see Human Geography as a whole, to see links between chapters rather than a set of separate chapters. As you read these, you will appreciate that the two topics are closely related but quite different ways of thinking about geography and geographies.
- **Critical thinking challenge:** At this stage in each unit, for each of the chapters, several points for discussion are raised that invite you to think critically about the chapter contents. Several of the study essay questions included at the end of each unit flow from the content of these discussions and, in turn, the study essay questions are the basis for the essay questions included in the final examination.
- **Multiple-choice questions:** There are 40 multiple-choice questions. These are for your own use only and are not to be submitted for grading. The answers can be found by carefully reviewing the assigned textbook reading. These multiple-choice questions serve three purposes:
 1. They provide some indication of what you have been learning and how well.
 2. They serve to sharpen your thinking about the course content.
 3. The 20 multiple-choice questions included in the Final Examination are selected from these 120 questions (40 in each unit).
- **Essay questions:** There is a list of study essay questions that are designed explicitly to assist your examination preparation. As noted above, some of these flow directly from the discussion topics, and some form the basis for the essay questions included in the Final Examination.
- **Assignments:** In each assignment there is an essay question to be answered and an opinion piece to be written. So far as is possible, it is recommended that you do not look at the assignment before completing all of the online course material and textbook reading. The reason for this recommendation is that if you know the contents of the assignment beforehand you may be influenced in the way that you read. This may mean that your understanding is too specific—a situation that will not aid you when studying for the Final Examination.

Two specific features of this Distance and Online Education course offering

It is important to appreciate that this offering of GEOG 1280 is organized in two distinctive ways to help you derive maximum benefit from the Distance and Online Education learning format.

- First, the online course material moves beyond the textbook, with each of the three units centring not only on a group of textbook chapters but also on a major world region(s). This strategy is employed to encourage you to learn about the key ideas and subject matter of human geography that is presented in the textbook in a specific regional context.
- Second, the online course material moves beyond the textbook by demonstrating the links between the contents of different textbook chapters and the human geography content included in this course manual. This strategy is employed to highlight the many important connections between what might appear at first sight to be very different bodies of subject matter. The textbook suggests some links between each chapter, but in this Distance and Online Education course, links are explicitly identified and discussed.

Course materials

Required materials

The following required materials are available for purchase from the [University of Manitoba Bookstore](#). Please order your materials immediately, if you have not already done so. See your [Distance and Online Education Student Handbook](#) for instructions on how to order your materials.

Textbook

Norton, William. 2013. *Human Geography*, 8th edition. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

This textbook provides a comprehensive overview of the discipline of human geography; it includes an introduction and a conclusion, two short factual appendices, and fourteen substantive chapters. Students will benefit from reading the introduction and conclusion, but it is the fourteen substantive chapters that are the key learning content.

After you have finished reading this course syllabus, take the opportunity to examine the textbook. Focus on the chapter headings and first-order subheadings. Look at the list of boxes, at the titles of the tables and, especially, at the contents of the many figures. As you will readily appreciate, human geography is an eclectic and challenging discipline that has a great deal to offer both as a body of factual knowledge and as a way of thinking about the world.

Optional materials

The only materials that you are required to use are the online course materials included in the course site and the textbook. It is possible to receive a high grade in this course if you can demonstrate your mastery of these two sources. Note that the online course materials do not include references or a glossary of terms. This is because the textbook has an annotated list of references at the end of each chapter and also an extensive glossary. (Indeed, these online course materials were written explicitly with the textbook in mind, so there is a close integration between the two. This should be of great value to you as you work through the course.)

You are encouraged to use additional sources. Because much of the content of this course involves an appreciation of basic geography and of links between that geography and current issues, there are seven other categories of source material that you will find helpful:

- First, like any geography course, it is always useful to have a good atlas. This will help you locate and put into context places mentioned in the textbook and in the online course materials.
- Second, other introductory human geography books will provide useful additional content. There are many of these available in university and other libraries.
- Third, the Internet is a valuable source if used with discretion. If you conduct research on the Internet, make sure that the sites used are reliable. The textbook identifies selected appropriate sites at the end of each chapter.
- Fourth, the annotated list of readings at the end of each chapter provides a wealth of options if you choose to investigate a specific textbook content.
- Fifth, there is often much useful material in good quality newspapers and magazines such as *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Maclean's*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *Economist*. Bear in mind that, unlike academic writings, many of these are aimed at a mass popular readership and may sensationalize material. Further, many of these outlets have a specific political agenda and may not attempt to provide the balanced perspective that is the hallmark of good academic work.
- Sixth, a dictionary and thesaurus will help you both with textbook reading and essay writing.
- Seventh, talk to others about what you are studying and ask for their opinions. Use your parents, your children, your significant other, and your friends as sounding boards for your own ideas.

Evaluation and grading

You should be familiar with the University's policies on plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and requirements section of the *University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar*. Note: These policies are also located in your *Distance and Online Education Student Handbook*, or refer to Student Affairs at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/student/advocacy>

Distribution of marks

Assignment	Percentage
1 (Unit 1)	16%
2 (Unit 2)	17%
3 (Unit 3)	17%
Final examination (all units)	50%
Total	100%

Grading scale

Letter grade	Percentage range	Description
A+	90–100	Exceptional
A	80–89	Excellent
B+	75–79	Very good
B	70–74	Good
C+	65–69	Satisfactory
C	60–64	Adequate
D	50–59	Marginal
F	0–49	Failure

Please note: All final grades are subject to departmental review.

Assignments

The assignments are located under the Assignments Widget of your course. See “How to Submit” under the Assignments Widget for further instructions on submitting your assignment. Each assignment requires that you:

- answer the essay question appropriate to your course section; and
- provide a written opinion on the stated controversial issue.

As explained in the assignment instructions, each of the three essay questions is worth 15 marks, while the written opinion for assignment 1 is worth 1 mark, and for assignments 2 and 3 is worth 2 marks.

- Each of the **three essay-question answers** should be between about 1,200 and 1,500 words.
- Avoid spelling and grammatical errors.
- Employ a consistent referencing style. You can use, for example, American Psychological Association (APA) or Modern Language Association (MLA) styles if you know these from other courses. If you do not know a specific style, then simply adopt the style used in your textbook.
- The mark out of 15 that you receive is determined by the quality of the answer in terms of the relevance of the facts included, and the coherence and appropriateness of the arguments employed.
- Each of the **three written opinions** should be 200-250 words.
- Remember that a statement of opinion is precisely that—there is no **one** correct opinion. Accordingly, you will be awarded maximum marks for this submission on the condition that your opinion on the controversial issue is of sufficient length and clearly stated.

Assignment due dates

Assignment	Sept.-Dec.	Jan.-April	May-Aug.
1	Sept. 30	Jan. 31	May 24
2	Oct. 21	Feb. 21	June 14
3	Nov. 10	March 10	July 5

Note : If you are unable to submit an assignment on time, contact your instructor well in advance of the due date, for we cannot guarantee that the instructor will accept late assignments.

Final examination

The **two-hour** final examination consists of:

- 20 multiple-choice questions worth one mark each for a total of 20 marks
- 2 (from a choice of 4) essay questions worth 15 marks each for a total of 30 marks

The **multiple-choice** questions are selected from those included in the multiple-choice study questions for each unit. There will be approximately equal numbers of questions from each of the three units.

The **essay questions** are selected from those included in the essay study questions included for each unit (possibly with small wording differences that will not affect the basic question asked). Answers are expected to be about 500-600 words; references and footnotes are not required. There will be at least one essay question from each of the three units.

The final exam will be conducted at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry campus or at an alternate location off-campus. **All students must declare an exam location.** The Registrar's Office is responsible for scheduling the final exam. Once finalized, the exam date and time information will be posted on the University of Manitoba Exam site.

Writing essays

Most of the assignment marks and 30 of the 50 final examination marks are based on essays; therefore, it is important that you write these essays in an effective and relevant way. Essays provide you with an opportunity to sharpen your thinking skills and to express your thoughts by writing in a carefully reasoned manner. Essays are an opportunity to express your reasoned and well-justified opinions on the issue raised in the essay question. As such, essays include both factual content and interpretations of those facts.

The following comments refer specifically to assignment essays, which provide opportunities to write and rewrite; examination essays are usually less polished. Many style manuals suggest that essays are best structured as follows:

- The **introductory paragraph** is no more than 100 words. The introduction serves one purpose: to introduce the essay. As such, the introduction *may* include any necessary definitions of terms, a statement of the structure of the essay, and reference to key content. The introduction *must* include a thesis sentence. It is often good practice to begin the introduction with general statements and to conclude it with the thesis sentence. The thesis sentence informs the reader of the basic theme of the essay.
- The **body** of the essay comprises a series of paragraphs, probably 3 to 5, each about 100-150 words in length. Each of these paragraphs presents a specific argument that relates directly back to the thesis sentence. It is helpful to begin each of these paragraphs with a topic sentence and conclude each with a linking sentence to the next paragraph. The body of the essay will probably include both facts to support the argument being presented and also generalizations designed to accommodate complex ideas.

- The **concluding paragraph** is closely linked to the introduction. Indeed, it is often helpful to reiterate your thesis sentence (the final sentence of the introduction) as the first sentence of the conclusion. The conclusion should be one paragraph of about 100 words. The conclusion *may* include an acknowledgment of ideas/facts that present a different view of the topic and suggestions for additional essay content. The conclusion *must* include your clearly stated decision on the topic being discussed

Of course, a good essay is always on topic, includes a logical flow of ideas, and provides an answer to the issue raised. There needs to be evidence that you are using and understanding the textbook and online course material content. This does not mean repeating that content, but rather using the content in the context of the particular essay question. Good essays integrate and synthesize content from the course materials and other sources as appropriate. The essay also should reflect your views and interpretations. These more individualistic comments must be reasoned, not simply asserted, and must relate to the other essay content.

The essays you will write, both for the three assignments and for the final examination, are fairly general in character. This means that they do not require one correct answer; rather there are usually several different approaches that can be taken in responding to these essay questions. The essay questions are invitations providing you with the opportunity to think critically and creatively about the topic raised in each question.

How your essays are graded

A	"A" essays present a thorough exploration of the topic. They show depth and complexity of thought, focused and coherent organization, and a superior control of vocabulary and sentence structure. They demonstrate thorough knowledge of content. (An A+ paper is synonymous with "scholarship" level.)
B+	"B+" essays present a logical flow of information, but at times, transitions between paragraphs are lacking. They show good use of creative expression, and the body of the paper contains most of the expected elements of the topic.
B	"B" essays present a substantial treatment of the topic, although not as thoroughly or as effectively organized as an A paper. They show some depth of thought, coherent organization, and control of vocabulary and sentence structures.
C+	"C+" essays present only a moderate treatment of the topics. Similar to B papers they show clarity of thought, but they may lack complexity. These essays demonstrate coherent organization, although some digressions may be evident. The writing shows an overall control of vocabulary and sentence structure.
C	"C" essays may neglect or distort one or more of the writing tasks. They demonstrate problems with organization and analysis of the topic. They may contain recurrent mechanical errors, resulting in language that occasionally is difficult to follow.
D	"D" essays seriously distort one or more of the writing tasks. They demonstrate problems with organization and analysis of the topic. They may contain recurrent mechanical errors, resulting in language that occasionally is difficult to follow.
F	An "F" essay is not a pass.

(Adapted from Bresnick, S., 1996, pp. 712-713.)

A word of caution about the assignments and the final examination

Some students find that they do very well on the assignments, but they do not do nearly as well on the final examination. While your grades on the assignments will give you some idea of how well you are mastering the material they may not indicate how well you will do on the examination, because the examination is written under very different circumstances. Because the assignments are open-book, they do not require the amount of memorization that a closed-book examination requires nor are they limited to a specific time period. Some students have told us that, based on the high marks they received on the

assignments, they were overconfident and underestimated the time and effort needed to prepare for the final examination.

Keep all this in mind as you prepare for the examination. If your course has a sample exam or practice questions, use them to practice for the examination by setting a time limit and not having any books available. Pay careful attention to the description of the type of questions that will be on your final examination. Preparing for multiple-choice questions involves a different type of studying than preparing for essay questions. Do not underestimate the challenge involved in writing a time-limited examination.

Learning strategies for students

As far as is possible, set regular time aside for this course and stay with your schedule. Use studying and learning strategies that work for you. If you are uncertain how best to study it is worth noting that, for many students, a useful way to read text content is to employ the **SQRRR** strategy. This strategy is noted below.

- **Survey:** acquire an overview of the textbook chapter by focussing on any introductory and concluding comments and by using headings and subheadings as reference points.
- **Question:** look over the chapter a second time, thinking about what you are reading in greater detail; as you read, question the content by taking notes or marking the text as you choose.
- **Read:** read in detail; many of us are tempted to do this first, but it is usually a good idea to delay this stage as you acquire a more detailed understanding once you have the larger context that is provided by working through the first two stages.
- **Recite:** read the key ideas aloud, again asking questions.
- **Review:** accomplish a final reading to make sure that you have grasped both the key ideas and the needed factual content.

Note that there is a “How to proceed” section near the beginning of each unit that incorporates this SQRRR approach. Of course, as noted, the important thing as you work through this course is that you adopt studying and learning strategies that work for you.

Plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation

You should acquaint yourself with the University’s policy on plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and Policy section of the University of Manitoba *Undergraduate Calendar*. Note: These policies are also located in your *Distance and Online Education Student Handbook* or you may refer to Student Affairs at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/student>.

Distance and Online Education (DE) Student Resources

In your course website there are links for the following:

- Contacting Distance and Online Education Staff
- Distance and Online Student Handbook
- Distance and Online Education Website

Acknowledgments

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University of Manitoba, Distance and Online Education