GEOG 331 - Syllabus

Population, Consumption, and Environment

3 credits

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Catalog course description:
POPULATION, CONSUMPTION, AND ENVIRONMENT (3). An examination of population patterns and trends, emphasizing historical growth and more recent demographic changes; using geographic tools to understand patterns of spatial distribution, to use and analyze data sources, and to gain experience interpreting and displaying data about population structure and dynamics; and developing the ability to evaluate the relationship between population, consumption, resources, and quality of life. Patterns of consumption, as individuals and societies will be examined and different future scenarios will be examined with reference to environmental, social and economic sustainability. (SS) (Bacc Core Course in the Synthesis/Contemporary Global Issues category) PREREQs: Upper-division standing.

Course Description:
GEOG 331 examines the impact of the growth of human populations on individuals, societies and the earth’s physical and biological environment. Beginning with an analysis of some of the general issues associated with human population growth, environmental change, and the social, economic and philosophical dimensions, we will gradually move to an exploration of these issues through weekly themes aimed at understanding past patterns, current trends and future possibilities.

Course Resources:
- Various articles, videos and other materials posted to the course Canvas site.
Course Organization:
The course is organized into five two-week modules. Each module includes reading assigned portions of the text and supplemental readings, participation in two weekly discussion boards, and completion of a quiz. Students will gain points in lecture-learning activities during each class session and complete two research and writing exercises.

Course Schedule:

Module 1
Week 1: Intro, Population issues and Geography as a Perspective (Textbook Chapter 1)
  -Week 1 Discussion: Introductions and Content Knowledge
Week 2: Population History (Textbook Chapter 2)
  -Week 2 Discussion: Long and short term changes
  -Module #1 Quiz

Module 2
Week 3: Population Dynamics and Demographic Trends (Textbook Chapter 3)
  -Week 3 Discussion: Understanding Demographic Transition
Week 4: Fertility and Growth (Textbook Chapter 4)
  -Week 4 Discussion: Fertility
  -Module #2 Quiz

Module 3
Week 5: Mortality (Textbook Chapter 5)
  -Week 5 Discussion: Mortality and the Existential Crisis
Week 6: Longevity (Textbook Chapter 6)
  -Week 6 Discussion: Geography and Life Expectancy: Blue Zones
  -Module #3 Quiz

Module 4
Week 7: Migration Patterns (Textbook Chapter 7)
  -Week 7 Discussion: Migration Histories
Week 8: Population Policy (Textbook Chapter 8)
  -Week 8 Discussion: Policy Success and Failures
  -Module #4 Quiz

Module 5
Week 9: Urbanization and Cities (Textbook Chapter 9)
  -Week 9 Discussion: City Life?
Week 10: The Future? (Textbook Chapter 10)
  -Week 9 Discussion: Where are we going?
  -Module #5 Quiz
Grading:
30 pts. - Weekly Discussion Posts 10 x 3 pts. - posted to Canvas each Friday by midnight*
15 pts. - Module Quizzes 5 x 3 pts. - taken in Canvas every two weeks
20 pts. - Research Paper - due in stages: See Canvas for more instructions
35 pts. - Lecture-Learning Activities 7 x 5 pts. -in-class participation activities
100 pts. = Total possible**
*our first discussion will be due the second Friday of the term, followed by a discussion each week by 9pm Friday until week 9, which will be due Sunday at midnight
**extra-credit opportunities will be available in the assignments folder!

Discussions:
Active participation in the weekly discussions in Canvas is very important in this course. Strong participation will significantly enhance your learning--and is necessary to get a good grade! In each discussion you need to (a) post an original contribution and (b) respond to two other students’ posts by midnight Friday. No credit will be earned for contributions to the weekly discussion board after this deadline.

Each week you can receive up to 4% points for participation in the weekly discussion board. If you do not make one of the three or more weekly postings by the deadline, you automatically lose 2 points. I encourage you to participate much more than simply these required weekly postings; students who want a high grade in the course will often make 4 or more postings weekly. The discussions function best when you check several times a week and engage other students as you might in a friendly but curious face-to-face discussion.

The quality of your writing in the discussion boards is important. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar do matter in that they help us understand what you are trying to convey. Please also keep in mind that a discussion board is a form of academic discourse that is in many ways comparable to a classroom discussion. You are invited to freely express ideas, information and opinions on the discussion boards, while observing the same standards of mutual respect and maintaining the same conversational etiquette you would use in face-to-face conversation with colleagues in a professional environment.

The grading scheme for the weekly Canvas discussions is as follows:
4 - 3.5 pts. - Exceptional Participation;
3.4 - 3.0 pts. - Very Good Participation
2.9 - 2.0 pts. - Average Participation
1.9 or < pts. - Below Average Participation;
0 - Did Not Participate (or posted plagiarized content, or made a disrespectful or inappropriate comment—you will get one warning before being referred to student services)

If you have questions about content, grading or anything else involving discussions, please contact your Teaching Assistant. Also, please check the General Discussion—always available in the discussions folder—at least a few times per week; that is a place for asking about or sharing anything course-related, especially material which does not fit into the focused weekly discussions. The General Discussion area is an ideal place to discuss the content of the course, including specific questions about the readings and the lecture notes, but also to show the group interesting or relevant sites/readings/videos, or to share tangential thoughts relevant to the course.

**Quizzes:**
A quiz will cover the assigned readings/videos for each two-week module. Quizzes are taken through Canvas and are open book/open note, but due by midnight of the night before our weekly class sessions. Each quiz will have 5 questions selected randomly from a test bank. You will have 15 minutes to complete it. You may only attempt each quiz once and quizzes cannot be opened early or reopened after they close.

**Research Paper:**
You are responsible for building a research bibliography based on a topic or issue of your choice (as long as it is relevant to the course). This project will have several components; the most important are a midterm summary and a final research interpretation.

The research summary will be due Tuesday of week 6, and is a summary of your research on your topic.

The final bibliography: will be due during week 10. It is a paper with an unconventional structure that includes an introduction, annotated section, interpretation and conclusion.

**Lecture Learning Activities and Exercises:**
Randomly throughout the term we will have activities in class designed to promote active-learning and peer interaction. These will vary in structure and purpose, but will be designed to maximize the reduced classroom time we have by de-centering the classroom and learning from one-another. Therefore, it is essential to not only
attend class, but also prepare by reading/watching videos, etc. for that specific class period. Perfect attendance and participation in all in-class activities will provide 2% extra-credit points.

**Academic Honesty:**
To learn about OSU's policies and procedures regarding academic dishonesty, go to [http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses-0](http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses-0). If you have any questions about academic dishonesty, please ask.

The issue of plagiarism can arise in the context of weekly discussions and in parts of the research assignments. When you post in a weekly discussion, you are effectively turning that written work in to me as well as presenting it publicly to the class. Even though discussions are a more informal means of communication than a research paper, you still cannot use someone else's words as your own, and you cannot present someone else's illustrations as your own—if you someone else’s work, you simply have to give them credit. In a discussion or in a research assignment, if you copy information word for word—yes, even a single clause or sentence—from a source, then you must use quotation marks and you must clearly indicate the source of the quote.

When instances of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty (such as cheating, tampering, fabrication or assisting with dishonest acts) arise, I will take action through the OSU Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards. Academic dishonesty will result in a penalty ranging from a zero on the assignment/assessment to an F in the course. Additionally, as stated on the Office of Student Conduct's Academic Dishonesty Report Form, “A first violation of academic dishonesty includes creation of a five-year confidential student conduct record maintained in the Student Conduct & Community Standards office.”

**Regarding Disabilities:**
Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at [http://ds.oregonstate.edu](http://ds.oregonstate.edu). DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

**Learning Outcomes:**
After completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Describe the vocabulary, concepts and themes of human population history/ geography.
2. Evaluate the significance of historical and contemporary population trends globally and regionally, and will be able to explain the nature of population dynamics currently and make predictions about the future from fact-based studies of the past and present.

3. Retrieve, interpret, and analyze demographic data and assemble different graphics that represent this data in a geographic context.

4. Integrate graphical and/or spatial approaches to understanding population trends and their effects into a research project.

5. Analyze how changes in human population affects contemporary global social, environmental, economic and political issues, such as migration, urbanization, consumption, and sustainability, and explain their relevance to scenarios predicting the future.

6. Demonstrate critical thinking skills to evaluate competing claims regarding the future of human population and society—the consequences demographic changes may have on aspects of human life, and the aspects of human society that may influence changes in population.

Baccalaureate Core:
Successful completion of this course fulfills OSU’s Baccalaureate Core course requirement for study in the Contemporary Global Issues area of the Synthesis category. OSU’s rationale for Contemporary Global Issues courses states:

"Our world has become increasingly interdependent. Social, economic, political, environmental, and other issues and problems originating in one part of the world often have far-reaching ramifications in other parts of the world. These issues and problems not only transcend geographical boundaries but also cross academic disciplines. Therefore, if students are to acquire understanding of and to discover effective responses to such issues and problems, they must acquire both global and multidisciplinary perspectives."

This course directly addresses this rationale, integrating contemporary global issues through assigned readings, class discussion, lectures, and two research and writing exercises. The study of population geography is inherently global in scope, and emphasizes the interrelationships of the global community in the resolution of the challenging population issues of the 21st century. We will explore the roots of contemporary population issues at national, regional and global scales, using historical and spatial analysis. Our approach to population geography is multidisciplinary, drawing on fields as diverse as ecology, sociology, political science,
epidemiology, agriculture, and climatology, as well as fundamental questions of human values and environmental ethics. Geography is inherently multi-disciplinary in that it examines issues, patterns and processes from many fields using the spatial dimension as an analytical device.

**Learning Outcomes for Synthesis/ Contemporary Global Issues:**
Students in Contemporary Global Issues courses shall:

- Analyze the origins, historical contexts, and implications of contemporary global issues.
- Explain the complex nature and interdependence of contemporary global issues using a multi-disciplinary approach.
- Articulate in writing a critical perspective on contemporary global issues using evidence as support. *

**How this course will meet these objectives:**
1. Human population and consumption are central to contemporary global issues. Students will use a range of methods to understand the origins, context and implications of global population change, including: readings, discussions, in-class activities and debates, and quizzes. In this diversity of methods, students will learn to understand the historical dimensions of population change and resource use, the drivers, variables and consequences. They will also understand the place-based aspects of global population and consumption trends, which is essential to comprehending questions of future conditions and possibilities.
2. Students will be challenged to interpret the historical changes in population and consumption and articulate not only how these patterns formed, but scrutinize, through research, activities, writing assignments and assessments, how these trends evolved in specific settings, and predict how they may change in the future. Complexity is inherent in population, consumption and the impact on the environment more generally. This complexity will be acknowledged and assessed through attempts to make connections between seemingly disparate topics, issues and events: plastic pollution, changes in ocean biodiversity, and coastal food insecurity, as an example.
3. Students in this course will complete a multi-stage research project—essentially a research paper with a non-typical structure, built over the entire term—which incorporates identifying a critical perspective on population and consumption trends in a specific spatial and temporal setting. Stages include; a topic sentence; writing three researchable questions and citing three possible sources; writing an introductory paragraph; completing a comprehensive summary; annotating three sources; conducting a peer-review for three other students; and finally, turning in a final paper that includes an introduction and conclusion/interpretation. Past papers have ranged from 1500-1800 words.
Part of this interpretation is critically contextualizing the unique topic within the larger, global picture of the impact of human population and consumption on the planet’s natural-ecological systems. This assignment will be completed during class sessions throughout the term.

About the Instructor:
I finished my Master’s and Ph.D. in Geography at the University of Oregon and taught both there and at Lane Community College before being hired at Oregon State.

I spent several years conducting research on human-environment issues, including resource conflict, natural disasters environmental and social change and in Southeast Asia, Thailand specifically. While there, I trained and competed in Muay Thai, or “Thai Kickboxing” and have also served as a trainer and coach in the Mixed Martial Arts. I am a big fan of travel and study abroad and hope to lead field-research trips to Asia in the near future.

I teach subjects ranging from introductory human and cultural geography to upper-division regional and thematic courses. I encourage a sensitivity to rigorous, theoretically-oriented and systematic research approaches in my classes and I have been privileged to work with some brilliant students at Oregon State University over the past 3 years. I am committed to excellence in teaching and am an advocate for place-based and experiential education, service- and active-learning, and research-informed teaching.

10/25/16