

Sample Course Syllabus

GEO106: GEOGRAPHY OF THE WESTERN WORLD

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RESOURCES:

-Boyer, J.B. (2012) *The Plaid Avenger's Western World: Special Edition*. Kendall Hunt Publishing. (This is not a typical textbook--we'll talk more about the challenges/opportunities in using this text over the term)

-Thee Plaid Avenger Website: <http://www.plaidavenger.com/> (Plaidcasts, interviews, and other supplementary materials)

-Other online readings and videos on related topics will be assigned during the term--See the Course Modules for more information.

Textbook Information: *NOTE: For textbook accuracy, please always check the textbook list at the OSU Bookstore website (<http://osubeaverstore.com/>). Sample syllabi may not have the most up to date textbook information!*

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to be an introduction to the Geography of the Western World through an investigation of spatial patterns and processes. But this will be no ordinary introduction. We'll be taking a tour of a particular version of the "Western World," shown through the eyes of *The Plaid Avenger*--a comic book character developed by Dr. John Boyer, a Geography Instructor at Virginia Tech. This is the introduction to the textbook:

"In The Plaid Avenger's World, we will strip off the shallow window dressing in which you have been trained to see the world. We will lay it bare to see what is really happening around the planet. We do this in order to gain enough insight about the current state of the world to truly understand the how and why and where things are happening right now. In this world, no single government or press dictates our views; no single political party shapes our opinion; no single religion or ethnicity tints our not-so-rose-colored glasses. We will see the world in plaid: a mystical weaving of facts, figures, cultures and viewpoints from every corner of the planet, culminating in the fabric that is today..." (Boyer, 2012:1)

To read more about Boyer's approach, see a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, at: <http://chronicle.com/article/How-One-Instructor-Teaches/131656/>

After a brief overview of basic concepts (globalization, population, politics, economics, etc.) we will break "the West" down into smaller regions in order to examine how specific issues play out in greater detail.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

After completing this course, you will be conversant in several basic themes and concepts of geography and will know more about world regions identified as "the Western World." You will recognize global processes of change and how these processes are affecting the people and ecology of the Americas, Europe, Russia, Australia and Oceania...and even Japan? We will

This course is offered through Oregon State University Extended Campus. For more information, contact:
Web: ecampus.oregonstate.edu **Email:** ecampus@oregonstate.edu **Tel:** 800-667-1465

explore what it means to be “western” and through the Plaid Avenger’s particular graphic approach, we will learn to question the typical ways we categorize, label and talk about the world.

GRADING:

200 pts. - Weekly discussion boards (10 x 20 pts. each) 200 pts. - Quizzes (5 x 40 pts. each; open book) 250 pts. - Midterm exam (proctored; closed book) 350 pts. - Final exam (proctored; closed book) 1,000 pts. = Total possible points

Final grade determination: A = 930-1,000 pts. B- = 800-829 pts. D+ = 670-699 A- = 900-929 pts. C+ = 770-799 pts. D = 630-669 B+ = 870-899 pts. C = 730-769 pts. D- = 600-629 B = 830-869 pts. C- = 700-729 pts. F = < 600 pts.

DISCUSSION BOARDS:

You can find the current weekly discussion board by entering the current Course Module. Participation in the weekly discussion board is required each week. **In each weekly discussion board you need to (a) post an original contribution by 4 pm, Wednesday, and (b) respond to someone else’s posting by 4 pm, Friday.** The deadline for participating in each weekly discussion board is listed in the schedule below. No credit will be earned for contributions to the weekly discussion board after this deadline. Each weekly discussion board will be available throughout the week prior to the 4 pm, Friday, deadline.

Each week you can receive up to 20 points for participation in the weekly discussion board for that week. If you do not make one of the two weekly postings by the deadline, you automatically lose 10 points. I encourage you to participate much more than simply these two required weekly postings; **students who are working toward a high grade in the course will often make 3 or more postings weekly.**

Also, **please check the General Discussion Board**—always available in the discussion board folder—at least a few times per week; that is a place for discussion of anything course-related, which does not fit into the focused weekly discussions. The General Discussion Board is an ideal place to discuss the content of the course, including specific questions about the readings and the lecture notes.

I anticipate we will not have any problems with inappropriate postings in the discussion boards. However, if any individual shows disrespect for other class members, I will give that individual a single warning. If there is a second offense, I will immediately shut that person out of the discussion boards for the remainder of the term. That individual will lose the entire discussion participation portion of the course grade.

QUIZZES AND EXAMS:

A quiz will cover the assigned readings and other media for each two-week module. Quizzes are open book. Each quiz will have 4 multiple-choice questions, and you will have **15 minutes to complete it**. Be prepared before you start a quiz; you will not have time to look up all the answers! The 48-hour window (4 pm, Wednesday, until 4 pm, Friday) in which each quiz must be completed is listed in the course schedule. For example, Quiz 1 will be available in the 2nd week of the term from 4 pm on Wednesday until 4 pm on Friday. The quizzes will only be available during the respective 48-hour blocks in the 2nd (Quiz 1), 4th (Quiz 2), 6th (Quiz 3), 8th (Quiz 4) and 10th weeks (Quiz 5)--all dates are given in the course schedule below

*(All quizzes and exams are taken online through Blackboard. **You can only take a quiz or exam once, and once you begin** a quiz or exam, **you must finish (submit) it during that Blackboard session**. You cannot save it and come back to it later. Each quiz and exam has a **posted time limit**: 15 min. for each quiz; 1 hour for the midterm; 1 hour and 30 min. for the final. If you exceed the time limit, you will receive a substantial grade reduction.)

The midterm and final exams are proctored, and are **not** open book! You may **not** use notes, books, Web sites or any other resources while taking the midterm and final. You will have a 2-day window during the 5th week of the term in which to take the midterm, and a 2-day window during Exam Week in which to take the final. **See the schedule below for exam dates.**

VERY IMPORTANT! You must **find an approved proctor** with whom to take the midterm and final exams. During the first week of the course, go to: <http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/services/proctoring/default.htm> to find out how to do this, or you may use ProctorU. (<http://www.proctoru.com/>) Try to arrange a proctor at least two weeks in advance of both the midterm and the final. **Please note that you will work directly through Ecampus or ProctorU to arrange exam proctoring--not the instructor.** All questions regarding proctoring should be directed to Extended Campus Student Services at 800-667-1465 or 541-737-9204 or Ecampustesting@oregonstate.edu. If you do not arrange a proctor in advance, you cannot take the exam.

If you have a choice of browsers, OSU Ecampus recommends the use of Firefox for taking quizzes and exams on Blackboard. See the Blackboard detailed syllabus for more information about the midterm and final.

NOTE REGARDING EMAIL: Any e-mail I send to you will go to your ONID address. If that is not the e-mail address you usually use, please make sure that your ONID e-mail is forwarded to your primary e-mail address.

SOFTWARE NOTES:

- 1 - Students will need to submit research and writing exercises as **Word** or **PDF** documents.
- 2 - Students will need access to **PowerPoint** or Keynote or be able to use **PowerPoint Viewer** to complete a discussion board assignment.

Other Important Notes:

-Check **Announcements** on the Blackboard course site frequently; reminders about assignments and deadlines will appear there.

-Please note that deadlines are precise; **late work is not accepted**. **All quizzes and exams must be taken on schedule** for successful completion of the course. Please do not assume that if you fall behind, you will receive an incomplete ("I" grade). I expect students to complete all work within the 10-week term, and to do the final exam on schedule.

-I realize that prompt feedback is very important in this setting. Please note that I do not read e-mail or monitor phone messages on weekends or after 4 pm on Fridays; at all other times during the term I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours. Perhaps most importantly, I am both new to Oregon State and to this online teaching system. Please be patient and I will try to fix any inconsistencies, lack of clarity, or glitches in the system a.s.a.p.

-The date and time of final exam are set. I cannot make changes for individuals. Please plan accordingly.

Oregon State University has the following learning outcomes in the Western Culture Baccalaureate Core* category:

1. Identify significant events, developments, and/or ideas in the Western cultural experience and context.
2. Interpret the influence of philosophical, historical, and/or artistic phenomena in relation to contemporary Western culture.
3. Analyze aspects of Western culture in relation to broader cultural, scientific, or social processes

*It also satisfies requirements in the Regional category for the B.A. and B.S. degree tracks in Geography.

Notice Regarding Disabilities:

See <http://ds.oregonstate.edu/home/> for information about Disability Access Services at OSU. The following statement has been provided by OSU Disability Access Services: "Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098."

Student Evaluation of Teaching

We encourage you to engage in the course evaluation process each term – online, of course. The evaluation form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions through ONID. You will login to "Student Online Services" to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.

Link to Statement of Expectations for Student Conduct: <http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm>.

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 political and environmental issues 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.

-This will be my second term teaching at OSU and I'm still getting accustomed to the system, and to using Blackboard. Your patience and compassion is appreciated, and I intend to offer the same to you.

-I truly enjoy teaching but I still have a great deal to learn--much of that from my students. I'm always happy to talk about the class, or just school or life in general. If you're on campus, please drop by my office hours or make an appointment. If not, email, phone or skype work well too.