GEOG 100: Introduction to Geography
Course Syllabus & Schedule

University of Maryland – College Park
College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
Department of Geographical Sciences

Dr. Michael Strong
Instructor
mlstrong@gmail.com

Office: Canvas Chat
Office Hours: Wednesday, 3:45 – 4:45 p.m.
Class: Online, Summer I

COURSE OVERVIEW

Credits: 3 Grading Method: Regular, Pass-Fail, Audit Core: SB General Education: DSHS, DVUP
An introduction to the broad field of geography as it is applicable to the general education student. The course presents the basic rationale of variations in human occupancy of the earth and stresses geographic concepts relevant to understanding world, regional, and local issues.

Course Description
In this course, we will explore geography beyond the map through three critical lenses: the physical world, the human world, and the interface between these two. In the process, we will engage a number of analytical tools geographers use to make sense of the world. Students will gain first-hand experience in collecting, analyzing, summarizing, and reporting data as they embark upon their own fieldwork using techniques learned in class. This is an online course with self-paced study. You will need to take accountability for your own learning in the course though I am available to assist. Stay ahead of the course material and you will have no problems completing everything.

Course Learning Objectives
Through engagement with the material in this course, students will…
- List and discuss different tools geographers use to describe the Earth
- Perform data collection, analysis, and presentation using geographic methods and techniques
- Differentiate between physical geography and human geography with an ability to articulate how these two sub-fields interact with one another
- Apply geographic terms and concepts appropriately and to appropriate contexts
- Describe the discipline of geography’s past, present, and future

Course Materials
- Various readings, videos, databases, etc. available on Canvas or as links in module
- Internet connection with ability to play sound and video
UNIVERSITY POLICIES

University Rule on Completion of Work
The University requires that all work must be completed in order for you to pass the course. The instructor, at his sole discretion, will consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Inability to Complete Coursework by Deadline Due to Medically Necessitated Reasons:
This course is taught entirely online. As such, students will not “miss” any class sections; however, if a student is unable to complete an assignment by the deadline because of a medically necessitated reason, the student is to make a reasonable attempt to inform the instructor, in writing, prior to the deadline. The student must provide the instructor with written documentation attesting to the illness within a reasonable time frame but not later than one week past the due date or the last day of classes (whichever occurs first). The note must come from a health care provider who must verify the dates of treatment and indicate the time frame that the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities. No diagnostic information shall be given. Providing false information to University officials is prohibited under Part 9(h) of the Code of Student Conduct (V-1.00(B) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT) and may result in disciplinary action.

Academic Integrity
Plagiarism is the use of another person’s work as if it were your own. For more technical definitions of plagiarism see http://www.bsos.umd.edu/for-students/advising/academic-integrity-honor-pledge-and-legal-aid-.aspx. If I believe that there has been plagiarism on an assignment, I will inform you of my determination and you will receive a zero for the assignment. Cases will be referred to the Student Conduct Office. Remember that on each assignment you must write and sign the honor pledge: “I have neither given nor received any unauthorized help on this assignment.”

Honor Code
The University has a nationally recognized Honor Code administered by the Student Honor Council (http://www.bsos.umd.edu/for-students/advising/academic-integrity-honor-pledge-and-legal-aid-.aspx). Unless you are specifically advised to the contrary, the Pledge statement should be handwritten and signed on the front cover of all papers, projects, or other academic assignments submitted for evaluation in this course. Students who fail to write and sign the Pledge will be asked to confer with the instructor. Please see the section “Academic Integrity” for the pledge.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you have disabilities, learning or otherwise, you should visit the Disability Support Office to fill out appropriate forms that will advise me on what accommodations are appropriate. These may include testing formats, class participation difficulties, and paper writing. I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office and who provide me with a University of Maryland DSS Accommodation form. Given the shortness of this course, this form must be presented to me no later than Wednesday, June 7, 2017.

CourseEvalUM
Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University as well as to the tenure and promotion process. I will announce when the CourseEvalUM will be open for you to complete your evaluations for summer semester courses. Please go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations.
COURSE POLICIES

Lateness Policy
Assessments are due BEFORE 11:59 p.m. on the date listed at the end of course schedule. Late assignments will not be accepted. An assignment is late the moment its due date/time passes. Exceptions to this policy will be made for extenuating circumstances only on a case-by-case basis and will require significant documentation. It will also result in a student receiving an Incomplete Grade for the course that may or may not be officially switched to a letter grade before the start of the Fall 2017 semester. Please plan accordingly and notify me the moment you believe there will be a problem.

Communication with Instructor
I check my email regularly; however, please give me 24 hours to respond to your concerns (for a weekday) or until Monday at noon (for the weekend). When you send an email, please include GEOG 100 in your subject line. Your email should include your complete question (if you have one) or a detailed explanation. Emails that read “I have a question about GIS” will require me to write you back and ask what your question is. Be specific in the beginning and your question/concerns will be addressed much faster. At times it may be more prudent to talk on the phone. If this is the case, I will ask for your contact information and a good time to talk. I will host virtual office hours via Canvas chat every Wednesday between 3:45 and 4:45 p.m.

Access to Materials
All required course materials are available on Canvas. The modules can be accessed starting on the first day of the course. You can complete the modules in any order but I recommend you move consecutively. There is no final exam given the extensive amount of material to cover in such a short time. In essence, if you want to work excessively hard on this course and this course alone, it is entirely possible (though not recommended) to complete the entire course in approximately one week.

All module quizzes are conducted online and you may make as many attempts as possible until you are satisfied with your grade. Please note that you may not receive the same questions each time you take the assessment. I have written an extensive question bank from which the computer will randomly select questions. The assessments are also timed and must be completed once started.

If you have trouble accessing materials, please alert me as soon as possible. If you experience difficulty taking the assessment online (e.g. the system kicks you out or your computer crashes), you must contact me within 24 hours of experiencing the issue or not more than 24 hours after the assessment is due. There will be a brief practice quiz available for you to familiarize yourself with how the system works. Of course, if you have issues that arise related to the online system or otherwise, please be proactive in informing me. I trust that since everyone is an adult that you are being honest about your problems. Life happens to us all, but please don’t give me a reason to believe you are taking advantage of my trust.
ASSESSMENT

Course Grades
The grading scale used in this course is shown in the table below. I do not curve course assignments individually, but I will give consideration to the use of a curve at the end of the class once all materials have been graded. Individual students will never receive a grade lower than what they mathematically earned, but I reserve the right to increase a grade if a student shows significant improvement in the course or demonstrates a sound commitment to the learning process. If you believe a grade earned on an assessment is unfair, I encourage you to grade the assessment yourself and send me a written explanation (including a copy of your self-graded work) describing what you believe the grade should be and why. I will consider your argument and respond within one week’s time.

Please note: You have one week from the time a grade posts in which to contest a grade. If one week passes before you contest the grade, regardless of the reason in your delay, your grade is final. You may appeal all grading decisions through the appropriate channels.

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Assessments
Assessments will cover all assigned readings and videos. All module quizzes are open notes, book, videos, etc. but you may not communicate with another person to complete your work. You must work independently.

- Module Quizzes: Question types will vary (e.g. multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, multiple answers) but none will require you to produce more than a few words. I will give you real examples of my questions on the practice quiz contained in the introductory section of the course. (10 pts x 6 = 60 points)

- Activities: These will require you to collect data and produce a write-up similar to a lab report. While there will be some guidelines provided to help you collect your thoughts, the majority of this work will require you to make decisions on number of sources, length of written work, inclusion of tables/figures, and specific content/focus of your response. (20 pts x 5 = 100 points)

- Final Paper: You will select any topic of interest to you and write 2-3 pages on how the topic is geographical and relates to the study of geography. This is an informal essay in which you describe your thoughts; however, it must adhere to the standards of college-level writing. Citations are expected if you use external resources but not required. I’m interested in your thoughts. (40 points)

Pacing Yourself
This is a 7-week course. It will pass by quickly. I have set up the assessments to occur regularly to keep you structured so you do not fall behind. It may be helpful to view each module as a one-week experience and set a deadline of every Sunday to complete that week’s module. However, you are entirely responsible for learning the material on your own. Please remember to set aside time to work through the modules. I recommend you complete each module’s materials in the order they are listed. If you find yourself overwhelmed, please tell me earlier rather than later so I can help you figure out how to stay ahead of the deadlines.
COURSE SCHEDULE

MODULE 1: GEOGRAPHY ON THE WORLD STAGE
- Matthews/Herbert: Chapter 1
- Assessment:
  - Quiz: Module 1
  - Activity: Globalization Analysis

MODULE 2: THE PHYSICAL DIMENSION
- Matthews/Herbert: Chapter 2
- Assessment:
  - Quiz: Module 2
  - Activity: Weather Patterns and Single Day Profile

MODULE 3: THE HUMAN DIMENSION
- Matthews/Herbert: Chapter 3
- Assessment:
  - Quiz: Module 3
  - Activity: Subsistence Farming

MODULE 4: GEOGRAPHY AS A WHOLE
- Matthews/Herbert: Chapter 4
- Assessment:
  - Quiz: Module 4
  - Activity: Neighborhood Walkability

MODULE 5: HOW GEOGRAPHERS WORK
- Matthews/Herbert: Chapter 5
- Assessment:
  - Quiz: Module 5
  - Activity: Aerial Photography

MODULE 6: GEOGRAPHY’S PRESENT AND FUTURE
- Matthews/Herbert: Chapter 6
- Assessment:
  - Quiz: Module 6
  - Final Paper

All assessments (quizzes, activities, and final paper) are due BEFORE 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, July 9, 2017 without exception.

I will NOT accept late assessments unless medically necessitated (see paragraph above).