**Course Description**

This course links the study of human societies and the natural environment. It focuses on the world's regions, with an emphasis on human and environmental geography, including social issues, political systems, economic development, culture, and natural resources. Students will study all major regions of the world. This course fulfills a General Education requirement for Cultural Diversity (Category VII).

**Course Objectives**

Students will understand the fundamental patterns of world geography, with a special focus on the linkage between the environment and social, cultural, economic and political processes in various places around the world. Students will understand concepts of location and geographic distribution that have affected the historical evolution of realms and regions.

**Textbook**


**Grading Policy**

Your grade will be based on exams, weekly questions, and threaded discussions.

**Exams**

The course will have 2 exams, which will be timed and open book. Exams will consist of some or all of the following: multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, calculations and short answers. Exams will be given during the following weeks:

- Exam 1: Week of October 24
- Exam 2: Week of December 12

**Weekly Questions**

Weekly Questions will form a critical component of your learning in this class. You will be required to post answers to question(s) each week. Questions are to be answered in short essay format (2-4 sentences in length) unless I specifically ask otherwise.

**Threaded Discussions**

Weekly threaded discussions are the third graded component of this class, and they are critical not only for your grade, but for the success of the course. Because we are not meeting face to face in a traditional classroom, these discussions will provide your opportunity to engage with your classmates and professor in an interesting and meaningful way.
Threaded discussion evaluation will be based on the following point system:

**0 points** for no participation.

**5-10 points** for minimal participation (for example, posting only a short entry that is very similar to other entries).

**15-20 points** for average participation (posting 1 longer message only, or two short messages that contribute some original, new ideas to the discussion).

**25 points** for excellent participation (posting at least 3 well developed and original entries that contribute significantly to the discussion).

**Extra Credit** will be given for excellent threaded discussion participation that makes a notable contribution to the discussion or introduces new ideas in an original way (typically more than 3 thoughtful postings during the week).

**You are required to make your original posting (the posting that responds directly to the question being asked that week) within the FIRST THREE DAYS of the week. You may make your additional posting(s) anytime during the week.**

Make a habit of spending at least 1 hour per week actively participating in the threaded discussions, and check the discussion thread frequently.

**Grading Criteria**
Your grade will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Weekly Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>Threaded Discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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</tbody>
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**Grading Scale**
The grading scale is below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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**Note about writing:** Writing will form a critical part of your experience in this class, and one of the goals of this class is to develop your writing skills, as applied to geography. Be prepared to spend the necessary time editing and revising your assignments and to utilize
correct spelling as well as university level grammar and stylistic skills.

**Course Policies and Procedures**

**Grading and Late Assignments:** All assignments and exams will be due by the date posted. Any late assignments will be penalized 10% for each 24 hours they are late. You may contact me if you have unexpected circumstances to request an extension. Send an e-mail in advance of the deadline with a brief explanation of your situation and the specifics of the request.

**Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. If you are not absolutely clear about what plagiarism is, how to properly use other individuals' materials and how authors should be cited, please contact me for further explanation. See Part IX of the Student Handbook for further information.

**Spelling:** Spelling counts! Because each of us is online and has access to a spell check feature, there is really no excuse for misspelling! Please show your classmates and me the courtesy of proofing your work for spelling and grammar before you submit it.

**Other Issues:** Please email me early in the semester if you have any special learning needs or concerns.

**Helpful Resources**

Below is a list of resources that may assist you during the course of this class. I would encourage you to read newspapers on a regular basis to keep up with current issues of interest to this course.

**Maps**

For map resources, see the Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection web site, from the University of Texas.  
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/Map_collection.html

**Newspapers**

The Billings Gazette: http://www.billingsgazette.com/  
The International Herald Tribune: http://www.iht.com

**Internet**

British Broadcasting Corporation World Service: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/  
National Public Radio: http://www.npr.org/

**Yellowstone Public Radio**

Montana State University-Billings is the home of Yellowstone Public Radio (YPR), (91.7FM in Billings). YPR is a National Public Radio affiliate with numerous news and public affairs programs. One program of particular interest for this class is “Living on Earth”, 5:00-6:00pm Sundays.

**International News for Public Television**

BBC World News is broadcast on PBS, 10:00-10:30pm (M-F). It provides in-depth coverage of world news and is an excellent resource for public affairs.

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**Instructor/TA Bio**

**Dr. Smith-Estelle:** Welcome to Geography 102! I am a University Lecturer at MSU-B and teach GEOG 120 (Environment and Culture) as well as this course. In 2003, I completed my PhD from Harvard University, where my work focused on HIV/AIDS among rural women in Nepal. In addition to public health, my background is in human rights, international environmental policy and developing country studies, and I've spent most of the last ten years living and working in Kenya, Tanzania and Nepal, doing environmental consulting, as well as non-formal education and health work, all with a focus on women's issues. I've also worked in Laos, Thailand and India, and have spent some time in Tibet. I look forward to getting to know each of you through this course and hearing more about your interests!