

**SPRING 2013 SYLLABUS
GEOGRAPHY 1014: WORLD REGIONS**

Standard Stats:

World Regions, GEOG 1014

CRN 13507

Live Lecture: Tuesday/Thursday 2.00 to 3.15PM in McB 100

Final Exam: May 13, 4.25 to 6.26PM

Hot-linked quick reference outline:

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2. RESOURCES

3. ASSIGNMENT OPTIONS/GRADING

3.1 Weekly quizzes

3.2 & 3.3 Midterm & Final Exam

3.4 World Leaders Visual Exams

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3.10 World Leaders Twitter Assignment

3.11 Plaid Avenger Forum Commenting

3.12 Storify News Curation

3.13 The International Interview Project

3.14 Flash Quizzes

4. COURSE OBJECTIVES

5. IMPORTANT CLASS POLICIES

1.STAFF:

Instructor: John Boyer
125 Major Williams
540-231-4071
joboyer@vt.edu

Office Hours: Monday online, 8:30-9:30PM. Or by appointment, anytime.

For Online Office Hours go to:
<http://plaidavenger.com/live/>

And you will see me LIVE answering questions that you have sent to me through AIM or Google Chat . My AIM screen name is: geog1014 or Google Chat at joboyer@vt.edu. I only answer questions sent in through AIM or Google Chat, but you can also feel free to converse with your fellow students in the chat room that you will see under the live picture of me.

Teaching Assistants:

****Please contact TA's for all questions about grades and questions.***

*****Please contact your 'last name specific' TA—not just the first one on this list!***

******And finally please read the entire syllabus carefully before emailing your TA!***

Last Names: A to J

Jen Porter
Email: SituatedJen@gmail.com
Office Hour: Tuesday 10.00-11.00AM, 112 Major Williams

Last Names: K to Z

Paul Miller
Email: paul.the.plaid.assistant@gmail.com
Office Hour: Wednesday 2:30-3.30 PM, 112 Major Williams

2.RESOURCES:

Texts: Required: The Plaid Avenger's World, 6th edition, 2012



ITS THE FREAKIN'

6th EDITION! The Nuclear Security edition to be exact! ISBN 978-1-4652-0780-7

....this travesty of a book won't be at the bookstores until a few days before classes begin, at the earliest! And its like \$95 bucks. Damn the man making us pay! Of course, its still probably a lot cheaper than all those serious rip-off chemistry and/or personal health textbooks.

And yes, you have to get a brand new copy of the new edition in order to keep up with tons of new current events and world leaders. Old editions from previous semesters will contain all sorts of out-of-date info that will be wrong for current quizzes and tests....and will serve to confuse you and screw you up.

More importantly, you **MUST** HAVE A BRAND NEW FROM THE BOOKSTORE 6th EDITION in order to get an unused passcode (in the inside front cover) which you must have to access the textbook website where all the course materials and grades are managed. Please don't bother with any attempted scams to use old passcodes, or old editions, or a 'shared' passcode....none will work, and I've already heard all the BS stories that you could possibly come up with to get out of buying a book. But I don't blame you for trying!

SUPER IMPORTANT ERROR WE JUST FOUND OUT ABOUT!

The new 6th editions of the book that were just released have the wrong (and non-functioning) web address to get to the course website. On the inside cover where your access code is located, they tell you to go to <http://webcom8/grtxle.com/worldregions> That address is invalid! And wrong! And they screwed up!

But never fear, the correct web address is here: <http://webcom6.grtxle.com/worldregions>

By the way, you should know that there are about a million copies of this book floating around town, many of which are owned by your friends and roommates. These copies may be brand new, still in the shrink wrap plastic, but they DO NOT have the access codes in them! They are unusable! And please don't attempt to scam the bookstores by trying to "return" these shrink-wrapped copies for credit...I'm pretty sure they will just have you arrested on the spot, and I can't cover bail for all of you.

Other books:

Optional: **National Geographic Atlas of World** 2nd edition & **Earth Pulse** 2nd Edition...but will be packaged at the bookstore together as a SET, 2012
ISBN 978-1118057797 (for the set)

This atlas set will be used for an optional assignment to accumulate points, however it is not required nor does it have an access code, so sharing copies is encouraged. It is also an extremely useful tool to have on your desk your entire college career, and the set is priced radically lower than you can get them for individually, even online. There are also 4 atlas sets on reserve at the library for 2 hour time blocks.

However, the bookstores usually send all copies of un-purchased books back to the distributors half-way through the semester, so please don't wait to get the books until the end of the semester when you are suddenly in dire straights and need the pointsbecause the books will likely not be there anymore, and ordering them individually online will cost twice as much.

[BTW, you can try to order them individually, and it is possible you might can get them cheaper that way, but not very likely you will. For those that want to attempt it anyway, here are the specs of each of the books:

National Geographic Atlas of the World-College, 2nd Edition: ISBN 978-0-470-88887-2
National Geographic EarthPulse, 2nd Edition: ISBN 978-0-470-94831-6]

www.plaidavenger.com is also required reading for the course. Content derived from the current event exploits of the Avenger and the Global Leaders pages will be part of the weekly quizzes, as well as into the midterm and final exams.

Other Web Resource

Often referenced and utilized international news sources of the instructor:

World Press Review www.worldpress.org/wprw.htm has a daily update on global news--from news sources around the globe, reported from the countries themselves.

The International Herald Tribune online edition <http://global.nytimes.com/?ihht>

RT NEWS (Russian): <http://rt.com/news/>

BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Al Jazeera <http://english.aljazeera.net/>

Asia Times Online www.atimes.com/

The Economist www.economist.com/

Foreign Affairs www.foreignaffairs.com/

CIA World Factbook <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

Christian Science Monitor <http://www.csmonitor.com/>

Other CRUCIAL COURSE Resources

On the Plaid Avenger's Course website, there are a variety of documents that will help you immensely in this course, and for life in general. On the website under "course documents" then "syllabus" you will see the syllabus itself, but also documents labeled DIGITAL LITERACY and another one named COURSE CONTRACT.

The Digital Literacy document is an extension of this syllabus, and explains the proper etiquette for interacting in online environments. We will have a quiz (for points towards your grade!) in the first week of class based on the course syllabus and the digital literacy documents. And it will be open book! How sweet is that?!?

The Course Contract is a new experiment for us. In an effort to get you all to start thinking about the course assignments you want to do, to plan your semester, and to realize that there is a significant amount of self-reliance in this class (i.e., it's up to YOU to do your work and earn your grade!) we have devised this Excel spreadsheet file to help you plan and execute your semester.

After you have read over the entire syllabus, and come to the first class session, and asked all the questions you want to ask about how this stuff all works, then download this Course Contract document and fill it out. Keep a copy handy on your computer at all times. Whenever you email me or your TA to ask about grades, you will need to attach this file so we can see your progress and planning.

And, what the hell, I will figure out a way for you to all upload these somewhere in the next week or two in order to cash them in for a few points towards your grade as well. The pot just keeps getting sweeter in this course! More details will be forthcoming on that, as soon as I figure it out.

3.ASSIGNMENT OPTIONS/GRADING: (aka..How to earn your grade)

This is a radical, experimental course when it comes to grading, and I hope you embrace and enjoy this change. If you don't, then you should bail out now, not later. Instead of having a set amount of mandatory activities that you are required to do and then assessing your grade from your performance, I am going to provide a host of opportunities for you to earn points towards your grade, thus allowing you to choose your path according to your interests and skills.

It's a 'create your fate' grade: you choose what you want to work on, and keep earning points doing different activities until you achieve the grade you desire. Are you an excellent test-taker? Then take lots of tests. Not good at taking exams? Then do alternative written or film viewing assignments to earn your points. I would suggest mixing it up and doing a little of everything to cover all your bases and ensure you get enough points to get the grade of your desires.

BUT BUYER BEWARE! You can't wait until the last minute to make this happen! The one way you can screw this up is to keep putting off things until the end of the semester, living under the delusion that you can do a whole bunch of stuff in the last weeks of class to make up for slacking all semester. **THIS WON'T WORK!** Almost all of these assignments consist of turning in things every week and/or attending scheduled events all semester long...AND THERE ARE NO 'MAKE-UPS' or 'EXTRA CREDIT' or any other additional opportunities offered at the end of the semester to earn points. So choose and plan your semester wisely!!!

Please note that the point totals shown for each activity are the maximum points **possible**; you don't simply get all the points simply for participating. In other words, you **can** earn up to 125 points for taking the Final Exam, but if you only get half the questions right (a 50% conventional grade) then you would only receive 62.5 points towards your final grade (50% of 125 points = 62.5 points earned). The inverse is true for films: they are worth 20 points each, and you can attend 10 (max of 200 points), so you could earn anywhere from 0 to 200 points for that activity based upon how many you do.

Here are the possible activities you can do to earn points towards your final grade, followed by the grading scale.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Maximum points POSSIBLE</u>
1)13 weekly quizzes x 30pts	=400 (+10 for doing all 13)
2)Midterm Exam	=125
3)Final Exam	=125
4)World Leaders Exam 50x2	=100 (+10 for dressing up)
5)Films 10x20pts	=200 (20/each up to 200 points max)
6)Geo-Film Reviews	=180 (30/each up to 180 points max)
7)Non-class events paper	=150 (25/each up to 150 point max)
8)Atlas quizzes (11)	=110
9)World Leaders Bio	=50
10)Twitter Assignment	=200
11)Forum Commenting (13wks)	=208 (16/each week)
12) Storify New Curation	=180 (15/each up to 180 points max)
13)International Interview	=50
14)Flash Quizzes	=???
Total	2000+ ???

Final Grade Breakdown:

1100 points = A
1060 points = A-
1000 points = B+
960 points = B
930 points = B-
900 points = C+
860 points = C
830 points = C-
800 points = D+
760 points = D (Minimum passing grade for P/F)
less than 759 = LOSE

My advice: DEFINITELY do the weekly quizzes, plan on taking the mid-term and final exams, plan on taking the World Leader Exams, and attend as many films as you can. That alone will pretty much get you a strong B, if you do well on exams. If you are really smart and really want to ensure an A or high B, you will completely lock in a high grade by adding on EITHER the Twitter project OR the Forum Commenting OR Storify, or a combination of other opportunities listed. Hell, if you do enough work early enough, you may have no need to take the final exams at all! But that is up to you and your work ethic!

****Statute of limitations:** Again, remember that you must contest a grade within two weeks of the assignment date! More details on this policy are available in the Important Course Policies section of this syllabus.

Here is an explanation of each possible assignment:

3.1 WEEKLY BOOK READING/PODCAST QUIZZES:

Each week, starting Sunday January 27th, an online quiz will be posted on the textbook website (the one you will get to by using your access code located in the front of the textbook). The quiz will consist of questions from selected chapters of the textbook, as well as selected questions created from the the previous weeks lecture. These quizzes are open-notes, open-book, open-website and can be taken as many times as you like. In other words, keep taking the damn thing until you get a 100% on it. Each weekly quiz will be posted on Sunday night at 11.55PM, and will be available for exactly a week until the next Sunday night at 11.55PM, when it will be replaced by the new quiz for that week. *Take it early, take it often, but just don't forget to take it! It's worth 400 points towards your freakin' grade!*

The TA's will be sending you an announcement about the quiz, an announcement which will tell you what chapters/lecture that week's quiz is on. Each weekly quiz is only active for exactly a week, at which point it is replaced by the next quiz. As added incentive, if you complete all 13 quizzes, you will automatically receive a +10 point bonus. Again, take the quizzes as many times as you want! Only your highest grade will be recorded! You should earn 400 points towards your final grade by semester's end.

3.2 MID-TERM EXAM & 3.3 FINAL EXAM

Are just that, and each is worth a possible 125 points, so combined you could earn another 250 points toward your final grade...but that's only if you get a perfect score on both tests! And these exams are killa', so don't bank on getting perfect scores! In addition, you **MUST SCORE AT LEAST 50% OR HIGHER** in order to receive any points at all! That is the threshold score you must achieve to get points...this is specifically to prevent folks from just going in and randomly selecting answers in order to get a smattering of points without even reading the questions or displaying any real understanding of the material.

The midterm for the class will be held on Thursday February 28th from 8PM to 10PM, and the final exam is Monday May 13th 4.25PM to 6.26PM....but you **DO NOT** have to come to the classroom to take it! It's **ONLINE!!** Don't worry though...it will only take most of you 30 minutes or less to complete. These are mandatory dates, with no rescheduling, no make-ups, no do-overs, and no exceptions. If you cannot attend these exam dates and are convinced that you can't pass the class without these points, please go ahead and drop the class. Take it next semester!

Both exams will be **ONLINE!!!** It is highly advised that you be on campus on a very stable, secure and reliable connection, as any disruption in service before you submit your exam will result in a failed attempt...and there is only one attempt permitted for you to take your exam in the specified time periods!

The bad news: The exams are extremely challenging.

The worse news: The exams are timed, and you have one attempt only at them.

The worser news: The exams are online, and a 'lost connection' is not an excused reason for missing. You will need a solid connection, so it is best to be on campus.

The worst news: The exams cannot be 'made-up'. No excused absences. If you can't make it, you can't take it. Period. But that's the beauty of the points accumulation system: if you can't make an exam, then plan to do other activities to earn points.

The absolute most horrific worst news: You have to be able to at least get half (50%) of the answers right in order to earn any credit towards your grade. Scammers need not attempt to take the exams.

Again, for your calendars:

MIDTERM EXAM: Thursday February 28 from 8PM to 10PM

FINAL EXAM: Monday May 13 4.25PM to 6.26PM

3.4 WORLD LEADERS VISUAL EXAMS

This is an option which will act as both a way to earn points, while simultaneously providing you with a study guide/practice for the midterm and final exams. We will have one just before the midterm exam, and the other on the last day of class. Each will be worth 50 possible points. Both will be conducted in McB 100.

So what's the deal with these exams? They will be focused on the world leaders that you need to know for this class, and are visual exams. That means that the exams will be on-screen, and entail the identification of major world leaders while also testing you on current events...basically asking you about what those folks have been up to this semester.

Added bonus? Why not! Anyone who convincingly dresses up as one of our world leaders for these exams earns another +10 points. But you got to look like them! Just putting on a suit and saying you are David Cameron won't cut it!

1st World Leader Exam: Wednesday February 27th at 7.00PM in McB 100 (before the film that night)

2nd World Leader Exam: Wednesday May 8th at 7.00PM in McB 100 (before the film that night)

3.5 INTERNATIONAL FILM VIEWING ASSIGNMENTS

On many Wednesday evenings at 8PM throughout the semester, an international film will be shown in McB 100. Look at the class calendar on the Textbook website to see the list of films and dates. You DO NOT have to attend ALL of the films--in fact, don't come to ANY if you don't like international cinema! It is possible that other film events will become available as special circumstances present themselves during the semester. I will make an announcement and post to the course calendar when additional films are added. You can earn up to 20 points for each film you attend, up to a maximum of 10 films or 200 points.

Directly after viewing the film, we will have a quiz on the film--some of the questions will be used to spark debate and analysis and the answers will be given; other questions will simply be asked and you have to provide the answer. So what we have is a unique kind of test in which some answers are given, and some are not--in both scenarios, you are expected to treat this quiz just as you would a regular examination--no sharing of answers or talking to your neighbors will be tolerated.

Film schedule, Spring 2013

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM January 30: Outsourced

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM February 6: Sin Nombre

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM February 13: GoodBye Lenin!

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM February 20: Lumumba

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM February 27: A Separation

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM March 6: City of God

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM March 20: Udon

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM April 3: Paradise Now

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM April 10: Charlie Wilson's War

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM April 17: Aftershock

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM April 24: Brotherhood of War or The People's Crisis

McB 100 Wednesday 8PM May 1: TBA

Titles subject to change depending upon special opportunities that may arise.

Film viewing guidelines

Also, because this is a part of your class grade, behavior during the film's presentation should be identical to regular classroom behavior during the lectures. This policy is strictly regulated and enforced.

For each of the films you will be given a short quiz at the end of it. You must **pick up a scantron when you enter the room**. They will be available before the movie. Once the film starts the scantrons will no longer be available. If you come late you will not have a scantron and thus will not get credit for attending the movie. Please be on time!

GENERAL RULES OF THE ROAD FOR FILM VIEWING:

- You will need a #2 pencil.
- Be respectful of the people around you, please no talking during the film.
- Laptops are NOT to be used during the movie. The bright screens are distracting to everyone around you.
- Please turn your cell phones OFF during the film.
- Whatever food/drinks you bring into the movie need to be thrown away when leaving.
- We will not hesitate to ask people to leave if they cannot follow these simple request (yes, even the cell phone one).
- Please check your movie grades throughout the semester to make sure you got credit for the ones you attended. Sometimes student numbers are bubbled in wrong and you may not get credit. Contact your TA immediately if this is the case.

Please Note: You must bring a #2 pencil and your ID number (located on your Hokie Passport) to the movie in order to get credit.

3.6 WRITTEN GEOGRAPHIC MOVIE REVIEWS

For those who have conflicting class schedules and cannot make any of the movie times but are really into watching films, there is an optional geographic film review written assignment that you may want to explore. The instructions for this geographic film review assignment are located on the course website in the 'MOVIES' section.

This is not a typical film review in terms of summarizing the lot and such...this is a distinctly spatial analysis of the film in terms of its geography, history and cultural content.

There is a detailed instruction sheet on how to do the review, along with some examples of bad and good reviews by students past. That instruction sheet is located on the tab called MOVIES on the textbook website and pan down until you see a hot-linked file named Geo Film Review.pdf under **ALTERNATIVE MOVIE REVIEW ASSIGNMENT**. For those interested in this 30 point option (for each one you do), which you can do 1 a week, up to 6 papers, but you can only turn in ONE PER WEEK. In other words, you cannot wait until the last week of class and try to 'cash in' 6 reports at once. Word? Good. Please submit all papers digitally to your TA. Last day to turn in any papers is Wednesday May 1st, 2013.

The acceptable films for this written film review option are listed at the end of each regional chapter in The Plaid Avenger's World. If you have another, newer international film in mind that is not on those lists, please clear it through me for approval BEFORE you do your review. Non-approved film papers will not be accepted.

3.7 OUT-OF-CLASS TALKS/ACTIVITIES

To encourage you to attend outside internationally-focused events outside the classroom, (of which there are many every semester) I will allow you to earn points towards your grade by writing up a short paper of pre-approved activities.

The outside events may be films, live performances, public lectures, art exhibits, or community/ethnic/religious festivals that relate to anything international in scope, and occur outside the normal class time.

The papers for these events should be at least 3 page long (12-point font, double-spaced, 1" margins). In the paper, you should describe the event and then link it to the material of the course to the best of your ability. You may hand in the reports at any time beginning with the second week of class, **BUT YOU CAN ONLY TURN IN ONE A WEEK, MAXIMUM**. Each of these event papers is worth up to 25 points. The papers will also be due within the week they are assigned, with the specific date specified in the announcement about the events.

Please keep in mind that the event must be pre-approved by me. No paper will be accepted on any event that has not been run past me first. In fact, I encourage you all send me any events that you think are applicable and that you may even want to advertise in class. I will select one or two events per week based upon your recommendations and post them on the course calendar and announce them in class.

Please submit all papers digitally to your TA. ***Last day to turn in any papers is Wednesday May 1st, 2013.***

3.8 ATLAS ASSIGNMENT

WARNING: I have been told by countless students that this is the worst, most painful, most time-consuming assignment of them all! It takes forever, and is challenging, and many think it is not worth the points! I just wanted you to know this up front before you elect to do it, and for sure if you are a slacker student who waits until the last week of class to try and do this assignment thinking its easy, you will be dissappointed and downright disgusted when you discover that you will spend 10 hours doing it, and may not even get a good grade on it! Just sayin'! You have been warned!!!!**

This assignment pertains to the optional textbooks: **National Geographic Atlas of World 2nded.** & **Earth Pulse 2nded.** Set, 2012 ISBN 978-1118057797 (for the set) This atlas quiz assignment is worth a possible 110 points. As with all things, it is not required, and in addition these books do not have an access code, so sharing copies if encouraged. It is also an extremely useful tool to have on your desk your entire college career, and the set is priced radically lower than you can get them for individually, even online. There are also 2 sets on reserve at the library for 2 hour time blocks.

The assignment consist or 11 atlas quizzes on 11 different regions of the world that are available on the Plaid Avenger textbook website. You will have until **Sunday May 5th, 11.55PM**, to take the quizzes and they **must be submitted BEFORE 11.55PM** or you will not receive credit. There are a total of 11 quizzes on 11 broad world regions and you must take **ALL 11** to receive credit. The quizzes are found under the testing tab in the 'Atlas Extra Credit Quiz' heading. The details for each quiz are as follows:

1) Unlike the weekly textbook quizzes that have unlimited attempts and unlimited time, you will only have **ONE HOUR** to take each quiz and only **TWO CHANCES** to take it!! **NO EXCEPTIONS OR EXCUSES!** Each quiz is 20 questions.

2) The questions come from 2 atlases: College Atlas of the World and EarthPulse. EarthPulse questions are designated with 'EP' before each question and page numbers given, since it is not divided up by region. On the other hand, the College Atlas of the World questions are found throughout the book depending on region and question theme, so page numbers are not given. Explore the atlases before beginning the quiz...or you will likely FAIL!

3) You will have the opportunity to earn up to 110 points towards your final grade depending on your **overall quiz average of the highest score of all 11 quizzes**. *****DO NOT ASSUME** that the raw score you see in the grade book as you take these quizzes is your final grade! **IT IS NOT!***** The scale is as follows:

100% quiz average = 110 points
95% quiz average = 100 points
90% quiz average = 95 points
85% quiz average = 90 points
80% quiz average = 85 points
75% quiz average = 80 points
70% quiz average = 75 points
65% quiz average = 70 points
60% quiz average = 65 points
55% quiz average = 60 points
<55% quiz average = 0 points. 0. Nada. Nothing.

*******To calculate your score, take the average of all your quizzes, for example: you get 200/220 possible points after taking all 11 quizzes, or a 90.9% average, equaling 90 points towards your final grade since it is in the 90% range. There is no rounding up on points. You must get at least the minimum average for a point category to receive those points. If you get 99.99% average, you get 100 points, no rounding to 110.

Repeat: LAST DAY to complete ALL Atlas Quizzes is Sunday, May 5th at 11:55PM

3.9 World Leaders Biographies

Another great research project that just happens to be an awesome educational experience worth some extra points (up to 50 points) can also be earned by helping me craft and write-up and update the World Leaders' bio on the Plaid Avenger's site at:

<http://www.plaidavenger.com/leaders/>

If anyone likes to write and wants some serious points for helping me make a kick-ass bio of each world leader to go on the site, hit me up stat. The real challenge of the exercise is not so much writing the bio itself, but continuing to bug the hell out of me until I edit and post the bio for that leader you have written. If you can pull that off, you kick ass and will be rewarded appropriately.

We can chat in more detail later, but in essence, here is what you have to do:

A) Pick a leader you are interested in at <http://www.plaidavenger.com/leaders/> that does not currently have a bio, and get approval from me personally before you do anything else. Only one student can do a bio on each person, and it is first-come first-serve.

B) Please be sure to read as many existing bios on the site so you can get a feel for the type of stuff I cover, and the style of writing. I would suggest the Vladimir Putin one or Felipe Calderon as good examples.

C) Read as many bios on the leader from other sites, and possibly start cutting-and-pasting sections that you think are important or worthy of inclusion into a document. At a minimum, read the Wikipedia page on the leader, and search the BBC and other big news sources for a bio page on the leader, and at least a handful of current event stories that involve that leader.

D) Schedule a meeting with me either live in office, or on Skype to discuss the direction of the bio, and get my comments and important background facts to cover.

E) Write a polished 1.5 to 2 page (single-spaced) bio on the leader. Brief background if applicable, their political views, opinions, major initiatives, stuff like that. Why they are important to know, etc. And interject humor if you like. It IS NOT supposed to be a summary of their boring ass life; it IS supposed to focus on why the peep is important, what they affect, how they behave, who they like, who they hate, how they shape state/regional/world events.

Contact me for more details on that front. Also, if you have a world leader not on my list that you would like added, contact me to make the case for their inclusion. Hit me up for details and to choose what leader you want, asap. You Twitter peeps have an advantage in that you should know the leader you are representing well enough by the first month of class to understand them inside and out, and a bio should be no problemo. Make it happen fast. I'm just sayin'. So holla if interested. **Last day to have a bio project pre-approved by me is March 1st, and last day to turn it in is April 1st.**

3.10 The Plaid Shadow Cabinet aka World Leaders Twitter Assignment

This is a radical experiment too, combining social networking with following international events...specifically in the case by following the actual people who shape those events: the world leaders!

Let's get this experiment underway! What we are trying to do is to get folks more interested and engaged with these major world movers and shakers via having you guys report on their daily activities and opinions (and maybe even their prejudices and negative press). Not only will your tweets show up on Twitter, but also on each leader's page at <http://www.plaidavenger.com/leaders/> which will have a constant feed of all your tweets. It may end up getting some attention if we all kick ass at it...in fact, it already has!

MOST IMPORTANT: Only our master list of the 85 most influential leaders are to be used, and you **MUST** contact me to be assigned the leader of your choice. We already have the twitter accounts in place, so **DO NOT** create an account yourself...you will not get credit if it has not been cleared by me and the account created by me.

Brief points:

- 1) **YOUR FIRST TWEET OF THE DAY** is on location of your leader: you **MUST** tweet **EVERY DAY** on the location of your leader. Most of the time they should be in their home state, so you simply tweet something like 'I am at home in Iran working on domestic affairs'.....but if they are traveling abroad, be sure to say when, where, and who they are meeting with. Do that every day.
- 2) Second tweet of the day should concern what they are working on, or meeting with. If it's just boring domestic affairs, you can keep it brief.
- 3) Twice a week you must mention and interact with another plaid world leader. This can be about meeting recently, or news between your countries, or just tweeting about how you are buddies or enemies. You can view all the leaders here: <https://twitter.com/#!/plaidavenger/world-leaders/members>
- 4) Focus more on any international shit they are doing. Meeting with a foreign leader? Working on greenhouse gas emission legislation? Buying weapons from Russia? Hit that stuff up hard.
- 5) You can make judgment calls to put in what the world leader may be thinking about, if you are confident in your knowledge. But don't overstate anything too radically.
- 6) You can tweet funny shit too, if you spot something of interest, or have insider info or their particular culture....like maybe say for David Cameron: 'Just had a jolly good spot of tea and some fish n chips' or 'Just met with the @Plaid_Queen. Her knickers were in a bunch' (if he actually did meet with the Queen, that is)
- 7) When Twittering - look on Google news for stories on your person and use that as a basis for your tweet. Direct quotes as the twitter is encouraged. If you talk about another leader please mention them (@).
For example- Plaid_Barack: At the UN conference meeting with @Plaid_Hu about how the US and China can work together.
- 8) Don't get overwhelmed by all this though....just do **AT LEAST** a few tweets a day...but as many more as you want depending on how into you get!

9) VERY IMPORTANT: Remember to LOG OUT after tweeting. We do not want you to by accident start tweeting updates as yourself to the world leader or start following others.

10) Try to reply to @replies or mentions to the best of your ability as the world leader - if you have any question send Boyer an email (joboyer@vt.edu)

11) These accounts are for information on the specific leader. The goal is NOT to follow everyone and try to get followers back. We want true dedicated follows who are interested. The only accounts these people will be following is the other plaid leaders and @plaidavenger or the actual leaders twitter. For instance @Plaid_Obama is following the actual @BarackObama. For your leader if you find the actual person twittering you can follow them, BUT THAT IS IT. The real trick here is to be interesting enough that others start to follow you WITHOUT having to reciprocate!

12) BE CIVIL! While the occasional curse word is fun, please no mean-spirited at-tacks or F-bomb dropping...even if you have a leader that might be prone to such behavior!

13) Write in proper sentences with capitals. You will lose points for not capitalizing peoples names and places or not writing complete thoughts.

If you are up for this, pick your top 3 leaders and contact your TA *as soon as possible* to 'sign-up' for the leader that is available and to get the password to their twitter account. Do not share that password with anyone else. Be sure your TA gets your info, because we will be throwing you up to 200 points for the semester based upon your performance. Extra points can be earned by helping me write-up and update your leaders' bio on the Plaid Avenger's site at: <http://www.plaidavenger.com/leaders/>

Contact me for more details on that front. Also, if you have a world leader not on my list that you would like added, contact me to make the case for their inclusion. ***This assignment MUST be started by the 2nd week of classes in order to earn credit.***

These are graded twice a semester (midterm and at the end). If you have twittered less than 30 times from the start to midterm you will receive a zero for that part, same if you've twittered less than 30 times between the midterm and the final. You also need to twitter over Spring Break or will lost points.

3.11 The Plaid Avenger Forums Commenting Assignment

[*If you have experience as a *forum moderator* and would like to take on that role for this exercise, please contact me immediately!*

This is another weekly assignment created to encourage you to engage more deeply in international news within your personal interest range, interact with other smart peeps in this class and in the world, while also earning a few points along the way.

The forums are located at <http://www.plaidavenger.com/forum> and it is all free! You don't have to pay for subscriptions to any online news sources or anything else! But you do have to include a variety of news stories, from a variety of different news sources, from a variety of different regions. Here is how it works:

Each week (11:55PM Sunday to 11:55PM the following Sunday) you will have the ability to earn up to 16 points by posting a MINIMUM of 4 comments - they can be any combination of new stories and replying to other student posts and comments. ***The LAST week to post will be the week ending Sunday May 5th, 11.55PM.*** Each region forum has the list of countries below it, so please make sure you're posting in the right place. You MUST spread out your postings to at least 2 different days...but please feel free to make multiple comments if you are in a debate/conversation with others!

You do have to 'sign up' on the Plaid Avenger site in order to do this assignment...but it is free, and the only reason we have you sign up is so that we can then track your comments and give you a grade! When signing up - create any username you want, but you MUST enter your Virginia Tech email address when asked for email, or you will not get credit for your comments.

For posting news stories:

Have the title of your post be the news story title. In your description please include a link to the story, a quick summary (3-4 sentences) of why it is cool or what it is about, and any questions you have for others or why you found the story interesting.

For replying to other peeps stories:

4+ sentence reply to another persons' news story on what interested you about the story, or why it's important, etc. - AKA an intelligent reply. You of course can disagree with other folks' comments, start a lively debate, and/or offer other stories to support or counter their comments.

You know, it's called intelligent civil discourse. Get on it! You can earn up to 208 points doing this, but quite frankly I sincerely hope that many of you continue to do it long after you get out of this class. Keep the learning alive, baby! Grow the network of smart Plaid peeps! Encourage other folks from other classes and other parts of the world to join in the fun!

Points will be assigned twice during the semester: about half-way through the semester you will get a grade so you can gauge how well you are doing, and final grades for the assignment will be posted by May 5th. The comments will not be graded until then, if you would like feedback on how you are doing please email your TA as listed in the syllabus and on the textbook website: <https://webcom6.grtxle.com/>

You must pick stories that are NOT based in the United States (see exceptions below), as this course and this assignment is pushing to introduce you to international affairs and get out of the domestic-only news mindset.

That said, there is one thing we will not be flexible on. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated.** While copying quotes from the story to supplement your point is fine, simply copying a chunk of an article to score points is not. Don't change a couple of words or sentence order either. We shouldn't have to say this, but you'd be surprised what people have done in the past. This isn't meant to be a hard assignment, many of you already talk about and debate news stories verbally, just put that into type!

These comments are graded twice a semester (midterm and at the end). Please contact your TA if you would like them to look over your comments sooner.

LAST CRUCIAL IMPORTANT POINT: NO US SOURCES OF NEWS MAY BE USED! (with some exceptions below) All cut-and-pasted news links must come from pre-approved international news sources. Hit me or your TA up if you find a well-balanced news source from another country that you would really like to use, but to get you started, here is a brief list of go-to places that are solid:

World Press Review www.worldpress.org/wprw.htm has a daily update on global news—from news sources around the globe, reported from the countries themselves.

The International Herald Tribune online edition <http://global.nytimes.com/?ihht>

RT NEWS (Russian): <http://rt.com/news/>

BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Al Jazeera <http://english.aljazeera.net/>

Asia Times Online www.atimes.com/

The Economist www.economist.com/

Foreign Affairs www.foreignaffairs.com/

CIA World Factbook <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

Christian Science Monitor <http://www.csmonitor.com/>

In addition, the awesome **World Press Review** site not only has a daily update on global news—from news sources around the globe, reported from the countries themselves—but they also list a links a hell-ton of news sources from around the planet, listed by country, at:

<http://www.worldpress.org/gateway.htm>

and they even list the political bias of each news source as well, so you can get even smarter about the views expressed in each story! ALL of the news sources provided at this gateway are applicable to use as well. Get diversified in your news! Get global! Check out what other papers in other places are spinning!

Examples of thoughtful story posts and replies:

Thoughtful comments on Monday, and Friday to receive 16 points.

Post:

The interior minister of Mexico died in a helicopter crash. He was a major political figure in the fight against drugs. He predecessor died in an airplane crash three years ago.

While it does look like the crash was due to weather it is a bit suspicious. This may be a major blow to Mexico's war against drugs.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/12/world/americas/top-mexican-official-among-8-dead-in-helicopter-crash.html>

Reply:

The cartels could have hardly arranged a more fortuitous turn of events, Mexico's number 2 man in the war against drugs out of the way. If I were in charge of the department of the interior for Mexico I would make very sure that the people in charge of my helicopter and airplane maintenance were extremely trustworthy, it would seem that perhaps the cartels have a mechanic on their pay rolls. However, considering the fact that he switched copters at the last moment it is entirely possible that the cartels were not involved and instead the crash was the result of poor but not malicious maintenance.

Comments will be graded on frequency **AND** quality. Points: You can earn 16 points/week if make the appropriate number of posts and replies for that week, therefore if you started immediately you can earn a possible 208 points possible for the semester.

3.12 STORIFY NEWS CURATION

First off: YOU MUST SIGN UP FOR THIS BY REQUESTING A SPOT FROM YOUR TA BY THE SECOND WEEK OF CLASS, BY SUNDAY FEBRUARY 3rd!

As the world population grows exponentially, so too does demand for and consumption of resources...even news and information. Even though we live in an era of unprecedented technological innovation, there's more junk, noise and crap on the internet than ever, and with more people online all spouting their personal opinions more than ever, the problem gets worse every day. Over the course of the semester, the Plaid News Project will attempt make sense of some of the noise on the web by creating a collection of news sources from around the world that are vetted by students for credibility and reliability.

The Assignment:

Each week, (11:55PM Sunday to 11:55PM the following Sunday) you will be responsible for curating a story, in your Plaid Region account on Storify. The accounts are based on geographical regions, and will be shared by 10-15 students at a time. You will pick a topic/news story based in your region and find link/articles from around the world about it. Best place to start researching is Google News (news.google.com) since they give you multiple links about the same story. The story itself needs to have an overall description, and at least 5 links with short descriptions. Please make sure to pick stories from different news agencies like BBC, Al-Jazeera, Asia Times Online, Hindu Times, CNN, etc.

The regions are: Americas, European Eurasia, South Central Asia, East Asia-Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa and International Organizations. Please email your TA and let them know which one you are interested in doing.

How to:

Go to www.storify.com and log in under your assigned account.

Click on "create story"

Enter a headline and a description for your topic

To add links to news stories click on the link icon (grey square icon with links on the right side)

Paste the url to the story there and hit enter

Now below it has created the link with a box around it.

Drag that box with the link to your story on the left.

Move your mouse to your story area, right under the box with the link and "click to add text will pop up in yellow." Click to add your description of the story there.

Continue this for 5 news stories.

When are you are done and ready to publish. Click "Publish" in blue at the top. Click the "skip" button to not share the story on social media.

It should look something like this: http://storify.com/Plaid_eAsiaPac/tensions-between-china-and-japan-between-the-diaoy

Copy the url for your story and email it to your TA for credit.

What's the deal with writing commentary?

The goal of the Plaid News Project is to get people to think critically about the news they consume. When you're writing the description for your story, answering these questions may get you off to a good start.

- How/why did you pick your source? What made it seem credible or not credible to you?

- How did you find your source? Did you stumble on it from Google or Google News? Did you click on it from a trackback or blog link? Was it viral on Twitter or Facebook?

It may also be helpful to include a "bad" source-- for example, a state run media source-- to show how unreliable reporting can warp or change the trajectory of a news story. And please, as this is a college course, do your best to use proper capitalization, punctuation and spelling. Not every story has to be serious-- you can be funny!-- but remember that you are representing Virginia Tech and the World Regions course with the work you do. Purposefully inflammatory language and profanity will not be tolerated.

Here are a few other things to help you get started...

- Pick a continent you want to learn about and read about sub-regions in your book. Do you love, hate or belong to Team West? NATO? Are you in an economic free trade zone or in some sort of cooperative trade agreement such as the EU, NAFTA, BRIC, ASEAN, etc.? This will help you identify world leaders, political parties, and regional issues about which you can make stacks or identify cultural opinions and beliefs that interest you.
- Identify how your region gets news. Does your region rely mainly on highly-censored state news sources for information? Does your region have "free" public media, well-respected regional news networks or something similar? Are there any well-known bloggers or tweeters who are active in your region? In the case of some regions, like Israel/Palestine or Afghanistan, sometimes a well-informed blogger may have news or up-to-the-minute information about happenings on the ground. (A good example of this-- the guy who live-tweeted Bin Laden's capture and didn't know it, for example, or any of the active Gazans who tweet about Israeli mortar fire, checkpoints, etc. on a daily basis.)
- Finding news may not always be easy... If you're working on a region doesn't have positive (or any) diplomatic relations with the US, things can get tricky as western media sources may not report on them often. A good example of this would be the virtual media blackout on leaders like Khaled Mashal of Hamas, an organization seen by the US government as a terrorist group-- he may only show up one or two times a week in English-speaking media sources, but having knowledge of another language (French, German, Arabic) or accurate translation software can help you track news about him down.

One more thing-- take a look at the info below to better understand the background behind the project!

- Watch the [Know Your News](#) video from Professor Boyer to understand the concept of triangulating the news.
- Take a look at this report on [The News Literacy Project](#), covered by PBS Newshour, one of the inspirations for the Plaid News Project.
- The [News Literacy Project website](#) is also a great starting point for discovering good, solid news sources for your respective region.
- And yes, even though everyone knows how to Google, do take the time to look at these helpful and necessary [Google Search Tips](#) before setting out on the wild, uncharted internet!
- Here is an example of what a successful Storify page looks like for our assignment: http://storify.com/Plaid_eAsiaPac/tensions-between-china-and-japan-between-the-diaoy

Possible 15 points per story, 2 stories per week, max 180 points. **Last day to turn in a story is Sunday May 5th.** If you are doing the forum assignment as well, make sure your stories for each assignment are different.

3.13 The INTERNATIONAL INTERVIEW PROJECT

First off: YOU MUST CLEAR YOUR CANDIDATE WITH BOYER FIRST!

Second off: THERE ARE 4 DOCUMENTS DESCRIBING THIS ASSIGNMENT IN GREAT DETAIL ON THE COURSE WEBSITE; READ THEM ALL BEFORE PROCEEDING!

In my striving to get students to understand different cultures, concepts, ideas, current events and issues from around the world, I have recently developed what I think is a very novel concept to give today's digitally-connected students a fascinating and more approachable way to (more casually) learn about the world outside the confines of the classroom....that is, through an audio-only internet show that they can hear first-hand about life outside the US from people who actually are from places outside the US! How simple! Our students can learn about the world from other students/faculty!

That is where you come in. I would like to cordially invite you to become a "interviewer" that finds a fellow student (or faculty!) that is from another country, and sits down with them for just 15 to 20 minutes to casually discuss anything and everything that they would like to talk about concerning their home country.

There is no strict format, no specific questions, and no probing questions about sensitive topics. This is simply a conversation between two people about whatever comes up...could be about sports, food, history, religion, current events, relationships, gender roles, the environment, their job, their family, their dreams, the climate of their country, the government of their country, common misconceptions of their country, problems in their country, what's great about their country, etc. Truly, anything they want to talk about would be awesome.

But here is where it turns to work! You have to record the session in VT's awesome sound booths in the Innovation Space in 1140 Torgerson Hall, and get me the digital file, along with a picture of your interviewee...because all your work will be going online! Please go look and listen to as many of these files as you want to get a feel for how I have done it in the past, because this is what you will be striving for! Dig this:

<http://www.plaidavenger.com/international-interviews/all/>

(go here and then click on the little box in the upper right corner to "show all interviews" to see all the ones I've already done)

This interview will be available on the web for all to hear, so your privacy will be respected by only using your first name, if you wish.

So join the Plaid Avenger Team by becoming a Plaid Interviewer yourself, while expanding your global insight into other cultures directly by talking to real people from around the globe! And please feel free to pass this information along to anyone you know who would like to participate! Does not have to be a student! If you have friends or family in town, please extend the invitation to all! Thanks so much for helping make this grassroots educational experiment happen!

Communication majors and international students are highly encouraged to participate! Those being interviewed can also earn points in this exercise if you are in this class! Heck, you can be an interviewer and an interviewee and get more points: 50 for being interviewed and 10 for being the interviewee for 60 total.

All candidates for the International Interview Project must be cleared by me before you do the interview, and I have forms that everyone has to sign as well prior to the interview taking place. In addition, we will have a lot of helpful hints written up for you on how to do the interview, and a whole instruction sheet on how to operate the equipment and save the files in the audio booth. These materials are on the class website under Course Information. **YOU MUST READ THROUGH ALL 4 INSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS ON THIS ASSIGNMENT LOCATED ON THE COURSE WEBSITE BEFORE PROCEEDING ANY FURTHER!**

Last day to turn in an International Interview is Sunday, April 28th, 11:55PM

3.14 “FLASH” PODCAST QUIZZES:

At random times throughout the semester, we will suddenly post a quiz and then social-network the hell out of announcing it to you, as well as emailing you an announcement. From the point it is posted until it is de-activated, you will but one single attempt at the quiz...hopefully after you have actually viewed the material....because you must score a **MINIMUM** of 50% correct on the quiz in order to receive any points at all. That's right: if you score less than half of the answers correct, you get no points! So randomly guessing on the quiz without having reviewed the material will likely yield you nothing, except a waste of time. The quiz will consist of questions created from the Plaid Avenger's blog and the Professor's rants and online office hours, all of which will be referenced and pointed to for you in the quiz itself. It's random, it's timely, and it's on the fly. And who even knows how many points it will be worth? How exciting! Points: ????

4. Course Objectives:

The overall objective of the course is to broaden and strengthen the individual's interest in the world at large; to consider how/where/why physical and cultural forces shape and define the earth we live on. Geography 1014 is a world regional survey designed to acquaint undergraduate students with a variety of geographic, historic, environmental, demographic, religious and economic characteristics of various areas of the world. The world is a big place, filled with trillions of facts and figures, billions of people, hundreds of thousands of places, and lifetimes of experience: we can only cover so much.

Readings, lectures, slides, and films will be employed to promote interest and highlight geographic themes, but are not intended as exhaustive regional surveys.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

Skill or ability

- To evaluate the causes of major historical events and their impact on the contemporary world.
- To critically analyze the media coverage of a foreign country or event from a variety of different news sources and ideological perspectives.
- To understand and interpret global current events and international issues from an interdisciplinary perspective.
- To describe current major regional/global issues and make predictions of how these issues will impact the future.

Knowledge

- To describe the historical, economic, cultural, social and physical characteristics of the major world regions the various state that comprise these regions; both in terms of their uniqueness and their similarities, as well as how they interact with each other in the modern world.
- To understand fundamental issues in international relations including world interdependence and of the global nature of contemporary issues.
- To comprehend and analyze relations between nations, international government and non-governmental organizations, and major global actors in historic and contemporary debate.

Beliefs and attitudes

- To possess a broad individual interest in the world at large.
- To maintain a sense of on-going engagement toward current national and international affairs.
- To empathize with diverse perspectives on global issues and events; that is, to be able and willing to see things from a different perspective while maintaining one's own.
- To develop an appreciation for the great variety of cultural forms and ways of thinking throughout the world, and to formulate a world view that uses this appreciation to become responsible global citizens
- To possess confidence to converse with others on global topics and pressing issues of our day.

5. Important Class Policies

(aka..other stuff you NEED to know!)

Email Response From Your TA

If you email your TA, please allow up to two business days (that's Monday to Friday) for a response. If your TA does not respond within two business days, then you may feel free to email again. Although your TA will make all attempts to respond to emails quickly, circumstances may prohibit a quick response.

Missed Exams/Events & Excuses

Exams can only be made up if you experience a documented personal emergency. You can not reschedule or make-up exams you plan to miss for any other reason. With this many students, we simply cannot accommodate make up exams for any other reason. So if you plan to attend your sibling's wedding, attend an event your student organization is holding, take a trip to Hawaii, hike the Appalachian Trail or anything else on the day of the exam, have fun, but simply plan to earn more points through some of the other assignments available to you.

It is likely that at some point in the semester you will fall ill or have a personal emergency that may leave you unable to attend an exam or complete a quiz. In order to make up the exam, you must (1) contact your TA or the departmental secretary (540-231-6886) **prior** to the exam, and (2) provide credible of your personal emergency. For medical emergencies, we accept excuses from Schiffert Health Center, Cooke Counseling Center, hospitals, or your personal physician. For all non-medical personal issues (for example, death in the family), the dean of students can supply you with an excuse.

Important Contacts:

- Schiffert Health Center: 540-231-6444
- Cooke Counseling Center: 540-231-6557
- Office of the Dean of Students: 540-231-3787

Please Note: Weekly quizzes can only be made up if your excuse covers the entire week of the quiz. **MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE ESSAY FORMAT. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

My advice: Unless showing up for the exam will result in a painful death, I would not miss it. But remember, all points are optional, so if you have to miss an exam just plan to make up the points in other ways.

Posting Grades and Missing/"Incorrect" Grades—Statute of Limitations

We will try to have grades posted within one week of the assessment. Please do not emails us before that time, or your email will be ignored. If we haven't posted the grades, then we haven't received them from test scoring services. **If your grade is missing or incorrect, you must contact your TA within two weeks of the exam, movie, etc. After two weeks, no changes will be made.** For example, if you attend

a movie on September 5th, we will post grades by September 12th, and you must contact us by September 19th if you have an issue with your grade. Although we try our best to make sure all grades are posted properly, it is the student's responsibility to ensure their grades are posted correctly. This policy is meant to prevent a huge influx of emails at the end of the semester.

Technical Issues on Weekly Quizzes

We do not accept technical issues as an excuse for missed weekly quizzes. In a course that relies heavily on online quizzes, **technical issues should be expected**. If your computer is experiencing problems, there are many computers available to you around campus, such as in Newman Library, Torgersen Hall, or the Math Emporium that you are free to use. Our advice is to take the quizzes early, and take them often (if you care to), because if your computer or your connection dies 10 minutes before the quiz is due, we cannot help you.

CONCERNING ONLINE TESTS & MOVIE QUIZZES:

The University Honor system is in operation throughout this course. This applies especially to the individual component of your grade performed 'outside' of prescribed class time, i.e. the movie viewing. ALL WORK DONE OUTSIDE OF CLASS IS TO BE CONDUCTED INDEPENDENTLY!!! All online exams are closed-book, closed notes, done-by-yourself, independent work! And any 'sharing' of movie quiz information or skipping the film and showing up at the conclusion only to scam a quiz grade will be considered a serious violation of the University Honors system, and will be dealt with judiciously. The death penalty is encouraged.