

**PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY –
in partnership with the Gap Year Association study abroad**

GEOG 230: Environment and Society; Geography of Global Issues

COURSE SYLLABUS

CREDITS: 4 quarter-credits – Continuous Enrollment Course

Students who plan to use this course to fulfill specific curriculum areas should discuss transfer options and obtain written approval from a counselor or study abroad advisor at their own college/ university PRIOR to enrollment in this course.

PREREQUISITES: There are NO prerequisites for this course.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

This course is field-based. The course instructor will be available via e-mail.

INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD:

PSU has approved the following Instructors of Record, one of whom will be assigned to you typically two+ weeks prior to the beginning of your program:

- Britt Basel, MS - brittbasel@ecothropic.com
 - Dianna Hahn, MA – dianna.hahn@gmail.com
 - Alexander Papouchis, MS - alexpapouchis@gmail.com
 - Cam Sylvester, MA – camsylvester@gmail.com
- Office: 503-206-7336
Web: <https://gapyearassociation.org>
Address: PO Box 17427, Portland, OR 97217

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to provide hands-on learning opportunities for undergraduate students who undertake study away opportunities. This course introduces global perspectives, basic concepts and fundamental questions of geography. It focuses on how all locations on Earth are interconnected. It explores how humans use, adapt, and impact their environment through a variety of social constraints. Students will work to understand the growth and distribution of human populations, the complexities and varying systems of land use, geopolitics and colonialism, as well as the geographic impact of selected issues such as land use and urban development.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

- **Environment of Respect:** Disagreement and diversity of opinions are encouraged. You will be challenged to think critically about the impact of cultural differences, which may include gender, race, the roles environment has in business and market development, socioeconomic status, physical and cognitive ability, sexuality and other forms of diversity. You are encouraged to ask difficult questions and engage in discussion and critical reflection. Please be respectful of others, listen, and try to understand differences.
- **Experiential Learning:** In this course, learning is an experiential process in which you have the opportunity to engage in and reflect on a variety of different experiences throughout the term. The richness of this class will depend on the questions, insights, and active participation that you bring.
- **Personal Responsibility:** You are expected to engage fully in this class and take action if you need help. Please communicate any concerns about assignments, deadlines, or classroom activities.
- **Academic Integrity:** Please adhere to university policies. Please take special note of policies regarding plagiarism and course withdrawal. It is expected that each student will prepare his or her own assignments and that any assignments submitted will be the sole work of the student. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information, will not be tolerated. The University's Code of Student Conduct may be found at <https://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>.

STUDENT OUTCOMES:

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

- Identify some of the core ways that humanity is interconnected around the globe.
- Explore the host culture's social structures.
- Analyze ways in which the host culture's social systems have caused them to modify their environment.
- Understand some of the reasons why cultural population centers evolve.
- Understand more deeply the impacts of political and colonial influences on the evolution of local human activities
- Compare and contrast a host culture's geographic evolution with that of your home location (population, land use, resource management, transportation, etc.)

CONTACT HOURS, EXCURSIONS, AND METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

A total of 40 contact hours will be facilitated. These hours will come in the forms of:

- Homestays
- Volunteering on various social-service projects
- Volunteering on various environmental projects
- Visits to local markets and places of historical context and value
- Lectures by local experts on topics such as geography, colonialization, history, politics, social norms and behavior, etc.
- Optional: Students will use the Internet to access resources and evaluate information sources according to the external criteria, such as the author's credentials, the timeliness of the information, the genre of the source, etc.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

REQUIRED HOURS – must complete 40 contact hours as detailed above. The Gap Year Association will provide verification of hours.

A DAILY JOURNAL must be maintained during the travel/study period. It is to contain notes, observation of historic places, personal contacts, interviews, geographic features studied, leisure-time activities, tropical plant and animal species identified, specific cultural traits noted, field-trips to ecosystems and protected zones. Self-reflection is important and will be a significant part of your journal grade. Self-reflection will involve answering questions that force you to think critically about your experiences. When writing journals consider questions like:

- How is this experience different from my expectations?
- What challenges have I faced throughout this experience? How am I overcoming them?
- Explore differences, similarities to your home culture.
- What have been the most poignant learning experiences? How has that impacted my world-view?

REQUIRED READING – must read AT LEAST one book from the Recommended Reading list and demonstrate knowledge learned and/or perspectives expressed (with citations) in your FINAL REPORT.

FINAL REPORT of insights gained from this international service experience. Our expectation is that the papers you submit will reflect college-level writing. Your report will be 8-12 pages in length. Reports must be typed (double spaced) with a cover page that includes your name, the quarter (eg. fall 2021), the international program attended, and course number.

Submit a comprehensive analytical paper detailing how the local culture has evolved and modified their environment over time. In what ways have the local culture been impacted by population growth and economic development? What are some of the main reasons the community has evolved in the way it has? How do local communities compare in the same specific issues to your home community and culture? Students may use any of a selected number of key issues that emphasize their point including, but not limited to (land use and

resource management, urban development, transportation, political and/or colonial influences, etc.).

Grading breakdown will be as follows:

- Description of host-culture – 10%
- Clear explanations and understanding of how humans have influenced the environment they inhabit – 20%
- Clear articulation of which factors have influenced the cultural landscape and why – 20%
- Comparison of host-culture and home culture – 20%
- Clarity and Organization of Ideas – 10%
- Grammar and Punctuation – 10%
- Ability to Demonstrate Knowledge from the Required Readings – 10%

DUE DATES, SUBMITTING JOURNAL AND FINAL REPORT:

Calendar/Schedule:

All course requirements must be submitted by:

- Fall Semester: January 20th
- Spring Semester: June 20th

Submitting Journals & Final Reports:

Please email your final report to the instructor, and post any necessary journals or supportive documents to:

Gap Year Association
PSU Grading Instructor
PO Box 17427
Portland, OR 97217

*** Purchase tracking for anything you post as some materials have gotten lost in the past.

COURSE EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Daily Journal (30%): Evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, clearly presented observations, creative thought and appropriateness.

Final Report (70%): Evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, insight, format, content appropriateness, organization skills, and analysis of topic.

Required Readings: This is a requirement for successful completion of this class and 10% of your paper grade depends on your referencing key lessons learned or examples. (Citations are required)

Required Hours: The Gap Year Association will provide verification of these hours.

Grading: This course is graded with letter grades; A - F. See more details about PSU's grading system [here](#).

READING LIST:

Students must read and cite at minimum ONE book from this reading list. The following books have been approved for this course and are listed by program region. Any other books not a part of this list must first be approved by the Field Instructors.

All Regions:

World Hunger: Twelve Myths: Frances Moore Lappe, Joseph Collins, Peter Rosset and, Luis Esparza This is an examination of the policies and politics that have kept hungry people from feeding themselves around the world.

Food Rules. Author: Michael Pollan

64 simple rules that answer: What should I eat? Pollen draws from a variety of traditions, suggesting how different cultures through the ages have arrived at the same enduring wisdom about food.

A Path Appears: Transforming Lives; Creating Opportunity - Nicholas D. Kristof, Sheryl WuDunn. Stories about people who are making the world a better place and a guide to the ways that we can do the same.

The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It: Paul Collier
Paul Collier reveals that fifty failed states, home to the poorest one billion people on Earth, pose the central challenge of the developing world in the twenty-first century.

Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle against World Poverty: Muhammad Yunus
Banker to the Poor is Muhammad Yunus's memoir of how he changed his life to help the world's poor by creating the micro lending economy and founding the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas: David Bornstein
Profiles of social entrepreneurs and how one person can make an astonishing difference in the world.

The White Man's Burden: William Easterly
Easterly explores why international efforts to provide aid and economic development have not been successful.

The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time: Jeffery Sachs
Using international statistics to show what really are the economic realities of the world, Sachs helps us understand what needs to be done to end poverty in our lifetimes

The Beast: Oscar Martinez, Daniela Maria Ugaz, John Washington, and Francisco Goldman
The Beast was researched and experienced by a Central American journalist who documented the perilous journeys of migrants as they attempt to enter the United States.

Cuba: Religion, Social Capital and Development: Adrian H. Hearn
This ethnography by Hearn explores how the Cuban state and religious groups collaborate on community development projects within the island nation.

Capitalism, God and a Good Cigar: Cuba Enters the Twenty-first Century: Lydia Chavez
A collection of 14 essays, this anthology describes what the changes implemented in Cuba since the 1990's really look like for everyday Cubans. It also provides the reader with a greater understanding of Cuba's ongoing transformation.

Beyond Good Intentions: A Journey into the Realities of International Aid: Tori Hogan
The autobiography of a young American aid worker in Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, searching for the truth about what does and does not work in international aid.

Dead Aid: Why Aid is not Working and How there is a better way for Africa: Dambisa Moyo
Debunking the current model of international aid, Dambisa Moyo offers a new idea for financing the development of the world's poorest countries.

An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradiction: Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen
Two of India's leading economists argue that the country's main problems lie in the lack of attention paid to the essential needs of the people, especially of the poor, and often of women.

Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity: Katherine Boo
The true story of families striving toward a better life in Annawadi, a makeshift settlement in the shadow of luxury hotels near the Mumbai airport.

Savages: Joe Kane
Savages is a firsthand account of a small band of Amazonian warriors and their battle to preserve their way of life.

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind by Yuval Noah Harari

Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent: Eduardo Galeano
Rather than chronology, geography, or political successions, Eduardo Galeano has organized the various facets of Latin American history according to the patterns of five centuries of exploitation.

Gaviotas: A Village to Reinvent the World by Alan Weisman

A look at a real life “utopia” created in the 1960 in Colombia and how it is now one of the oldest example of sustainable living community.

Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent: Eduardo Galeano
Rather than chronology, geography, or political successions, Eduardo Galeano has organized the various facets of Latin American history according to the patterns of five centuries of exploitation.

Kava in the Blood: A Personal & Political Memoir from the Heart of Fiji: Peter Thomson

The true story of hurricanes, haunted houses, kava consumption and coups.

The Baobab and the Mango Tree: Africa, the Asian Tigers and the Developing World: Scott Thompson and Nicholas Thompson

A look at how some developing nations managed to develop much faster than their global neighbors