

World cultural regions

Academic Year: (2023 / 2024)

Review date: 29/01/2024 16:34:49

Department assigned to the subject: Humanities: History, Geography and Art Department

Coordinating teacher: GARCIA ALVAREZ, ANTONIO JACOBO

Type: Compulsory ECTS Credits : 6.0

Year : 2 Semester : 2

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: PROGRAMME

The course is conceived as an introduction to world cultural diversity, conducted through the analysis of major world regions. Contents are organized around two main axes:

-The first part introduces the concepts of ¿world regions¿ and ¿cultural areas¿ and its defining features, and presents different systems and proposals of world cultural regionalization, in order to then explain major features of some selected world cultural regions: the Arab world, Monsoon Asia, the Slavic world, the Western world, Latin-America, and Sub-Saharan Africa. These cultural regions are assumed to be realms with a population sharing similar cultural features and traits, including elements such as history, cultural landscapes (understood as the cultural outcome of relations between societies and their surrounding physical environments), language, religion, food systems, political systems and traditions, etc. Attention will be paid to wider underlying metaphysical structures, cosmovisions and mythological systems (their formation, diffusion and mixing) as key elements having configured throughout history major cultural hearths.

-The second part provides a wider critical framework (that of the so-called metageographical critique) that aims at both raising some issues regarding the historical and geopolitical shaping of world regions; and discussing more specifically how space and culture relate in contemporary times, and thus how cultural processes get shaped and transformed within the framework of the current globalizing world.

PROGRAMME:

FIRST PART. INTRODUCTION TO SELECTED WORLD CULTURAL REGIONS.

UNIT 1. World regions, culture areas and civilizations. Main systems and proposals of cultural regionalization of the world.

UNIT 2. The Arab world (North Africa and the Middle East).

UNIT 3. Monsoon Asia (East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia).

UNIT 4. The Slavic World (Russia and Eastern Europe).

UNIT 5. The Western World (Europe, North America).

UNIT 6. Latin American realm (Central and South America).

UNIT 7. Sub-Saharan Africa.

SECONDS PART: WORLD CULTURES: ISSUES AND CONTROVERSIES.

UNIT 8. Metageographies. Culture, geographic imaginations and the geopolitics of spatial structures.

UNIT 9. The contemporary shaping of world cultures: globalization, consumption and cultural goods/flows.

UNIT 10. Diasporas: cultural identity across space and the dislocation of geographic realms.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND METHODOLOGY

The course combines theoretical sessions and practical sessions. Theoretical sessions present the basic contents of the syllabus and aim at providing students with conceptual and methodological key elements. Theoretical sessions will be developed through classroom lectures by the teacher, while practical sessions will be focused on the discussion of a number of issues, drawing for that in the reading, presentation and critical analysis of selected texts (given by the instructor), as well as on learning to analyze specific issues and cultural traits as they express regionally. In that sense, a number of practical sessions will consist of students' oral presentations of their group projects with a follow-up discussion with the classmates and teacher.

All in all, students shall carry out three types of assignments when it comes to continuous assessment:

- preparation of activities of discussion, including exposition and critical analysis of texts from the reading list;
- a critical summary (short-paper) of one of the texts discussed in class;
- and a final essay on a specific issue discussed in the second part of the course (group project).

Tutorials will be carried out through the procedures established by the university.

ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

% end-of-term-examination/test:	30
% of continuous assessment (assignments, laboratory, practicals...):	70

1) GRADING CRITERIA:

1.1) Oral presentations and discussions and active participation: 20 % of the course grade.

1.2) Bibliographical essay (individual paper): 20 % of the course grade.

1.3) Tutorials and follow-up sessions of the research project + Oral presentation of main findings for the final essay on a specific issue of the second part (group project): 30% of the course grade.

2) FINAL ESSAY: Written essay (group work): 30 % of the course grade.

SYSTEM B (FOR STUDENTS NOT FOLLOWING CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT)

If the continuous assessment is not followed, the final exam will count 60% of the course grade, so if the student receives therein a grade equal to or greater than 3.3 points (out of a maximum of 4 points), the subject will be passed.

In the EXTRAORDINARY CALL, the final grade will be calculated in accordance with the stipulations of point 2 of the above-mentioned Regulations on continuous assessment processes in undergraduate studies, approved by the Governing Council of the University in its session of 31 May 2011. In any case, a final exam on the contents of the course must be taken at this extraordinary call.

BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- BRADSHAW, M. y otros Contemporary World Regional Geography, 4th Edition, McGraw-Hill College., 2011
- CLAWSON, D.L. y otros (eds.) World Regional Geography: a development approach, 11th edition., Pearson Prentice Hall., 2014
- FINLAYSON, C. World Regional Geography , UMN Center for Open Education, 2016
- FOUBERG, E.H, MOSELEY, W.G. Understanding World Regional Geography, 2nd Ed., John Wiley & Sons, 2017
- GANNON, Martin J. and RAJNANDINI Pillai Understanding Global Cultures, 5th Edition, Sage Publications, Inc., 2013

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- LEWIS, M. W. and WINGEN, K. The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography, CUP, 1997
- MURPHY, A. B, JORDAN-BYCHKOVA, T. G. The European Culture Area: A Systematic Geography, 6th Ed., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014
- NIJMAN, J. BLIJ, H., MULLER, P. Geography. Realms, regions and concepts. 17th edition, John Wiley and Sons, 2016
- PRESS-BARNATHAN, G., FINE, R: AND KACOWICZ, A. M. The Relevance of Regions in a Globalized World: Bridging the Social Sciences-Humanities Gap, Routledge, 2018
- PULSIPHER, L., PULSIPHER, A. y GOODWIN. C. World regional geography concepts, 3rd ed., W.H. Freeman, 2016