This course is designed to provide an introduction to the regional geography of the world in a single semester. To accomplish this goal, many aspects of geography will be presented—physical (landforms, climate, vegetation), political, economic, historical, and cultural. There are no formal prerequisites to the course, but it is expected that each student will bring to class a sense of excitement and curiosity about the world around us.

**Required Texts:**
- Pett-Conklin: *Place Name Geography Workbook*  
  (available in paper copy $10.00 (cash only) - Tiller Hall—see Diana Garcia)


**Course Requirements:**
1. Four (4) exams, including the final (final exam is NOT comprehensive); each exam comprises 20% (or 200 points) of the final grade
2. A series of 12 map quizzes will be given totaling 200 pts; the map quizzes taken together will comprise 20% of the final grade. (See note after quiz schedule.)
3. NO grades will be dropped. Make-up exams will be given ONLY in EXTREME cases and MUST BE ATTENDED TO AS SOON AS YOU ARE ABLE!!
4. PLEASE READ THIS SYLLABUS!!!!!!!

**University of St. Thomas: Policy on Academic Honesty:**
Every offense against academic honesty seriously undermines the teaching-learning process for which the University exists, and such offenses will be dealt with expeditiously according to the following criteria.

**Definition:** Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

1. Cheating on an examination or test, for example by copying from another’s paper or by using unauthorized materials before or during the test; or by divulging the contents of an exam to students who still must take the exam;
2. Plagiarism, which represents as one’s own work the work of another, whether published or not, without acknowledging the precise source;
3. Knowing participation in the academic dishonesty of another student even though one’s own work is not directly affected;
4. Any conduct which reasonable persons in similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest in an academic setting.

**Penalty:** The penalty for an incident of academic dishonesty is, at the discretion of the professor, either a mark of zero for the work in question or the grade of “F” for the course.
Disabilities: Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-6953 or 3162.

GRADING SCHEME

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Tentative Course Schedule

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<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 13-Tu--Geography: An Overview</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>15-Th--More Intro to Geography</td>
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<td>20-Tu--Europe: Intro</td>
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<td>22-Th--Europe: Regions</td>
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<td>#1b-E. Europe</td>
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<td>05-Th--Russia</td>
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<td>12-Th--EXAM 1</td>
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<td>17-Tu--Canada</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>#3-Anglo America</td>
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<td>26-Th-- Middle America</td>
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17-Tu—EXAM 2  Chapters 3-5
19-Th—No Africa & SW Asia  Chapter 7
24-Tu—No Africa & SW Asia  #6-North Africa & SW Asia
26-Th—No Africa & SW Asia
31-Tu—SubSaharan Africa  #7-SubSaharan Africa

Apr  02-Th—EASTER OBSERVANCE
07-Tu—Sub Saharan Africa
09-Th—EXAM 3
14-Tu—South Asia  Chapter 8  #8-South Asia
16-Th—South Asia  Chapter 9
21-Tu—China  #9-North Asia
23-Th—China
28-Tu—Japan  #10a-SE Asia
30-Th—Catch Up Day  #10b-Australia & Islands

Final Exam:  2332A:  Tuesday, May 05, 6-8PM, 2015
Chapters 8-10 (with greatest emphasis on 8 & 9)

Quizzes Matched With Pages in The Place Name Geography Workbook:

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1b. Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Tu 01/27</td>
<td>14-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Russia &amp; Transcaucasus</td>
<td>Th 02/05</td>
<td>16-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Anglo America</td>
<td>Tu 02/17</td>
<td>18-23</td>
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<td>4. Middle America</td>
<td>Tu 02/24</td>
<td>24-26</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. South America</td>
<td>Tu 03/03</td>
<td>26-28</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. No. Africa &amp; SW Asia</td>
<td>Tu 03/24</td>
<td>29-31</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>Tu 03/31</td>
<td>32-34</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. South Asia</td>
<td>Tu 04/14</td>
<td>34-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. China &amp; North Asia</td>
<td>Tu 04/21</td>
<td>36-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a Southeast Asia</td>
<td>Tu 04/28</td>
<td>38-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10b Australia, New Zealand</td>
<td>Th 04/30</td>
<td>40-42</td>
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</tbody>
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South Pacific (Island Groups & well-known islands only).

Important Notes:

****Missed Quizzes:  YOU WILL BE PERMITTED TO MAKE-UP ONLY TWO (2) QUIZZES. MAKE-UP QUIZZES MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE THE MAJOR EXAM ON THAT REGION--NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!  Call Diana Garcia:  713-525-3530 to set up an appointment for make-ups.

****Extra Credit: attend any public lecture or program of an international interest (up to six): provide information regarding the lecture (who, what, where), plus a one-two paragraph synopsis--earn one/half point on the final grade for each event--up to a total of three points. ALL WORK MUST BE TYPED!! (Note:  Check UST Website and Sunday--Houston Chronicle for listings.) Extra Credit notes will be
handed in all together on the day of the final-with the final.

Finally, PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE BEFORE YOU COME INTO MY CLASSROOM; I PROMISE TO EMBARRASS YOU, IF YOUR PHONE RINGS IN CLASS... AND—IF YOU LEAVE FOR ANY REASON DURING CLASS—DON’T COME BACK!!!!

Critical Thinking Skills and the World Regional Geography Course

(Adapted in part from: http://www.studyguidezone.com/criticalthinkingskills.htm)

One of the most important skills students should gain from a university education is the ability to think critically. You need to develop critical thinking skills in order to truly establish ownership of the knowledge base you are building in your studies and to prepare yourself for lifelong learning. But, what does it mean to “think critically”? Critical thinking involves the ability to articulate in your own words what you are studying; to be open to all possibilities of what you may discover; and to be able to assess, review, understand, and draw your own conclusions based on what you have learned. The development of the higher levels of this skill requires much more effort on the student’s part than when simply memorizing and regurgitating (and forgetting)—but the rewards will be enjoyed for a lifetime.

As you gather information about the subject, do not limit your resources only to textbooks. Today, there are many ways to access information—the internet can be a great resource, if you understand the limitations of some sites. When you read, study, and review the information you gather, ask questions. Do not simply accept what you are reading as the truth, just because it is in print. Who (what academic discipline, what political persuasion, from what think-tank) wrote the piece? Could they have any biases that would lead them to their conclusion on the topic? Could they have omitted important information relevant to the topic to fulfill an agenda? Pose questions that will help you to analyze the information critically.

Bloom’s Taxonomy and Critical Thinking

Benjamin Bloom (1956) developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior in learning. This taxonomy contained three overlapping domains: the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. Within the cognitive (thinking) domain, Bloom identified six levels or steps: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In the section below, I have described these levels of knowledge acquisition or facility, and for each I have provided the associated question cues from Bloom’s taxonomy. Beginning with knowledge acquisition, note that each step builds on the previous ones. As you read along, I will relate these steps to the required work assigned in the World Regional Geography course. Nothing you do will be for naught!

The first step involves demonstrating that you have learned basic knowledge about the subject by being able to list and identify main components of the topic; sometimes it is necessary to memorize until you know this basic information. Even in freshman-level courses, college professors generally assume that students will accomplish this step as a given, and they will require a show of higher level thinking to reveal that the student has mastered the study material. The map quizzes in this course require you to master this basic aspect of geography study.
Examples: dates, events, places, vocabulary, key ideas, parts of diagram, 5 W’s: Who, What, When, Where, Why

**Step two** is to understand the topic. Can you summarize it in your own words? Can you explain it to someone who has no prior knowledge about the topic? This makes the information your own. The definitions on exams and aspects of site and situation in this course focus on this level of thinking.

**Comprehension**

associate  compare  distinguish  extend  interpret  predict  contrast  describe  discuss  estimate  group  summarize  cite  convert  explain  paraphrase  restate  trace

Examples: find meaning, transfer, interpret facts, infer cause & consequence, examples

The **third step** is applying the knowledge you demonstrated in steps one and two. Can you take that information and apply it to a different set of circumstances? Now, you are operationalizing or applying knowledge—thus giving the information greater utility and making you more “facile” with the information in the so-called real world. **The site and situation portion of your exams will require you to use this and the fourth step in the critical thinking process. (More on this later.)**

**Application**

apply  classify  change  illustrate  solve  demonstrate  calculate  complete  solve  modify  show  experiment  relate  discover  act  administer  articulate  chart  collect  compute  construct  determine  develop  establish  prepare  produce  report  teach  transfer  use

Examples: use information in new situations, solve problems

**Step four** takes thinking to another level because you need to be able to analyze the information. Analysis will allow you to begin to add to or even change the information based on what you have learned. Some aspects of the site and situation questions will require thinking at this level.

**Analysis**
The fifth step involves not only breaking down the information, but also being able to synthesize it with what you already know. Can you combine it with prior knowledge to create something new? The essay question will test this critical thinking step in most college courses.

**Examples:** recognize and explain patterns and meaning, see parts and whole

**Synthesis**

- combine
- compose
- generalize
- modify
- invent
- plan
- create
- formulate
- integrate
- rearrange
- design
- speculate
- adapt
- anticipate
- collaborate
- compile
- devise
- express
- reinforce
- structure
- substitute
- intervene
- negotiate
- reorganize

**Examples:** discuss "what if" situations, create new ideas, predict and draw conclusions

Finally, the sixth and final step asks you to evaluate, explain, and assess the information to come up with your own conclusions. Research papers normally require this level of thinking.

**Evaluation**

- assess
- compare
- decide
- discriminate
- measure
- rank
- convince
- conclude
- explain
- grade
- judge
- summarize
- appraise
- criticize
- defend
- persuade
- justify
- reframe

**Examples:** make recommendations, assess value and make choices, critique ideas

Critical thinking is a skill that will allow you to take studying to a whole new level. Instead of accepting information at face value, critical thinking allows you to discover, question, formulate new ideas, and reach your own conclusions. Eventually, you will not need the teacher or learning mentor—you will become a lifelong learner on your own—that is the ultimate goal of a college education!!

**Critical Thinking and Site and Situation:**

Site and situation, both related to location, are two of the most important concepts in the study of geography. Each exam in this course will ask you to develop the site and situation characteristics for 10 places (cities, countries, or regions); this portion of the exam will comprise half of the total points of the
exam. Needless-to-say, it will be important for you to completely understand what these concepts mean, and what type of information you will need to develop the answers correctly. Note, you CANNOT memorize a random collection of disparate facts to get to these answers—**go back and review critical thinking steps three and four**—these answers will require you to analyze and apply an assemblage of facts that specifically fit a locational description of the place.

The following discussion is based in part on descriptions of site and situation in Gerald R. Pitzl’s *Encyclopedia of Human Geography*.

**Site is a description of the physical features of a place.** It has been characterized as representing the vertical location factor—that is, site is limited to the physical terrain that supports the viable livability of a place. One would take into account, for example, location on a river or coast or on a flat plain; or the availability of resources, such as petroleum, iron ore, or arable land — this would characterize the local physical characteristics of the place. Site can also be viewed in the context of the global location of a place: location on a tectonic plate boundary or at a particular latitude tells something about the physical character of natural hazards (earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis) and climate (tropical or polar, to name two). While we might think of site as exact, absolute, or mathematical—these descriptors are a bit misleading because the site characteristics of a place can change with, for example, sea level changes, climate changes, river flow changes, erosion, or even fill-in by human action. Tokyo, Japan, for example, is located on a large, flat coastal plain—which is why it has become Japan’s largest city. The citizens of Tokyo, however, have overbuilt this land to the point that the city administration has been filling-in low lying Tokyo Bay to create more flat land for settlement. Soon the bay will no longer exist as a natural harbor for the city, and ships will likely follow a narrow “artificial” waterway to important dock facilities located far from the coast.

**Situation is a description of the external physical and cultural relationships of a place to the local, and, in some cases, global world around it.** Situation has been characterized as the horizontal location factor because situation is focused on the physical and cultural context of a place—what factors surround a place that affect its livability either positively or negatively, or what characteristics, cultural or physical, separate a place from the others around it. Situation has also been termed relative location. Concepts associated with situation include: isolated, remote, insular, accessible, proximate, connected, centered, surrounded by, local, global, exclave, enclave, linkages, far/distant, and near/close. Like site, situation can change with new technology, and economic or political changes within the place or in relationship to other places.

Site and situation are intimately related concepts. And while you should successfully comprehend each, trying to separate them on a test question is not necessary, though I would recommend that you begin with site and move to situation when describing the location of any place. Frequently an aspect of site for a place will also be significant for its situation. For example, location of any place on a river is a site characteristic of location, but the navigability, extent, and connectivity of that river to the hinterland will be important situational factors for the place. Site is a more basic and fundamental locational concept. Situation is much more complex as a locational concept because it takes into account cultural-human factors including language, religion, economics, and politics. With situation you are comparing and contrasting these cultural characteristics and connections with other places—local, and sometimes global.

When you study for this portion of the exam, you’ll need a base of knowledge including knowing where places and physical features are located (place name geography); comprehension of geographic concepts; and some knowledge of basic history related to the places we study. With this information you will **develop or create** the site and situation locational characteristics that describe a place.
Example: Houston, TX

Located on Buffalo Bayou in southeastern Texas on the Gulf of Mexico coastal plain; luckily the city is not directly on the coast because it sits in “Hurricane Alley” off the Gulf (thus, the city avoids a direct hit from a storm), but it is close enough to be connected to the Gulf (and worldwide shipping lanes) via a ship channel that widened Buffalo Bayou to navigability. Proximity to off and onshore oil deposits has made Houston the Oil Capital of the world. Proximity to Latin America—especially Mexico—assists Houston’s economy by attracting consumers from outside the region to support retail and high tech (medical) industries, and by providing a source of cheap labor for the service industries; and has allowed Hispanics to represent about 1/3rd of Houston's population. Location on a flat—almost limitless plain means that Houston is one of the most sprawling urban areas in the world. Location in the subtropics means hot, hot, hot summers and very mild winters (Houston is the most air conditioned city in the world)—but very lush, green landscaping—unlike much of the rest of Texas.

Look at the language I have used; note that every phrase and fact in this answer describes or is tied to Houston’s location—as they must be. For example, I left out the fact that Houston (or Clear Lake) is the home of NASA—because that fact has nothing to do with Houston’s location. With site and situation, you are building a knowledge base and honing your spatial skills simultaneously. You are also applying information that you have gleaned from the text and/or lecture to create an answer to a question—this means that you are much more likely to REMEMBER that information—it becomes active information, and you have an intellectual framework to hang it on.

Yes, this is difficult—and involves building a knowledge base (or retrieving from one already built), as well as active, creative thinking on your part. This cognitive style, however, is what society expects from college-educated people. Through the site and situation exercise, this course will give you the opportunity to develop and hone your critical thinking skills especially related to knowledge acquisition, true comprehension, and application of information. An added plus, you might be better at playing trivial pursuit! WOW!! You will get your money’s worth from this class!!

As yet another example, I am attaching this very interesting description of the site and situation of New Orleans, LA.

City of Nature: Hostile Site and Opulent Situation
New Orleans' blessing; New Orleans' curse.
By Ari Kelman Posted Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2005, at 6:59 PM ET

In retrospect, the idea was so stupid and yet so American: Move the homeless, the elderly, the impoverished, the unlucky, all those poor souls who couldn't get out of New Orleans in time to avoid Hurricane Katrina; move them into the city's cavernous domed football stadium. Anyone who has seen a disaster movie could have predicted what would happen next: Katrina slammed into the Superdome, ripped off the roof, and knocked out the power, cutting off the drinking water and the air conditioning. Those trapped inside had to be moved again—to Houston's Astrodome, of course.

If it's not too callous to say so while the tragedy on the Gulf Coast is still unfolding, the stadium mishap is an apt metaphor for New Orleans' environmental history. The sodden city has long placed itself in harm's way, relying on uncertain artifice to protect it from unpredictable environs.

(Here comes the site description.) New Orleans is utterly dependent for its survival on engineered landscapes and the willful suspension of disbelief that technology has allowed its citizens to sustain. As most people know by now, much of New Orleans lies well below sea level and also beneath the Mississippi River, which flows high above the city it helped create. If you visit New Orleans you can't
actually see the river unless you're willing to climb its steep banks, mini-mountains that jut above the Mississippi's endlessly flat delta. From the relatively high ground of the French Quarter, you might catch a glimpse of a huge container ship, seemingly levitating above the roofline of most houses. New Orleans is, in other words, a shallow bowl surrounded by a ridge of levees, which are supposed to keep out water from the Mississippi and from Lake Pontchartrain at the city's rear—and this week didn't. When the levees fail, as they have many times before, a flood occupies the recessed terrain in the city's center. Like the people trapped in the football stadium, water has no natural way to leave New Orleans. It must constantly be pumped over the lip of the bowl formed by the levees.

New Orleans' dysfunctional relationship with its environment may make it the nation's most improbable metropolis. It is flood prone. It is cursed with a fertile disease environment. It is located along a well-worn pathway that tropical storms travel from the Atlantic to the nation's interior. From this perspective, New Orleans has earned all the scorn being heaped upon it—the city is a misguided urban project, a fool's errand, a disaster waiting to happen.

(And, here is the situation description of location.) But such insults miss why most American cities are built in the first place: to do business. In 1718, when the French first settled New Orleans, the city's earliest European inhabitants saw riches inscribed by the hand of God into the landscape of the vast Mississippi valley. The Mississippi river system takes the shape of a huge funnel, covering nearly two-thirds of the United States from the Alleghenies to the Rockies. The funnel's spout lies at the river's outlet at the Gulf of Mexico, less than 100 miles downstream from New Orleans. In an era before railways, good highways, and long before air travel, much of the interior of the nation's commerce flowed along the Mississippi, fronting New Orleans. The river system's inexorable downstream current swept cotton, grain, sugar, and an array of other commodities to New Orleans' door. Because of the region's geography and topography, many 19th-century observers believed that God—working through nature, His favorite medium—would see to it that anyone shrewd enough to build and live in New Orleans would be made rich.

So, people built. Some lived. A lucky few even got rich. Many others, usually poor residents, died. They were carried away in floods. They were battered by catastrophic storms. They were snuffed out by yellow fever epidemics, like the great scourge of 1853 that killed nearly 10,000 people in the city. Over time, New Orleans developed a divided relationship with the environment: Nature, as embodied by the Mississippi, promised a bright future. But it also brought water, wind, and pathogens, elements of a fickle environment that in the past as now turned cruelly chaotic.

Geographers refer to this as the difference between a city's "situation"—the advantages its location offers relative to other cities—and its "site"—the actual real estate it occupies. New Orleans has a near-perfect situation and an almost unimaginably bad site. It's because of the former that people have worked endlessly to overcome the hazards of the latter.

From the first, New Orleans turned to technology to impose order on its environs. Since engineers began to figure out how to drain the city adequately in the mid-19th century, they have struggled mightily to do so. Over time they built a network of enormous pumps (several of which have failed in the face of Katrina) and hundreds of miles of canals—a quantity to make a Venetian feel at home. Their feats, however incomplete, have allowed the city to expand off the relatively high ground near the Mississippi and to spread out into what used to be a huge cypress swamp along the shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

New Orleans' early settlers also built artificial levees. At first they were little more than crude efforts to augment the natural riverbanks. But for more than two centuries, engineers steadily ramped up their
project, and today the levees have grown so high that they loom over the city below. New Orleans has literally walled itself off from the Mississippi. This is all part of the effort to realize the promise of the city's situation while keeping at bay the forces that buffet its site. Of course, in its present condition, the city faces two truths: First, even today the levees are not impregnable. And second, the higher the defenses are built, the more difficult it becomes to remove water from New Orleans once it finds a way inside.

Most of the time, New Orleans can forget the perils of its environment. With the levees standing between the city and the Mississippi, it is possible to ignore the river peering down into town. And unless you happen upon one of the huge pumping stations that dot the city and manage to figure out what's inside the anonymous structure, there's no reason to consider the city's peculiar hydrology. But now, with water flowing 20 feet deep in some places, New Orleans is forced to remember that it is trapped in a cage of its own construction. Most of the city's residents will be saved, but its site cannot be airlifted to Texas.