CUL 2323 World Cultures

Introduction

In this course, students will analyze the importance of culture around the world. Students will be introduced to cultures in different regions, including but not limited to Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, and their historical, contextual, and cultural differences. Basic concepts related to culture will be introduced and their relevance illustrated through case studies on how culture has impacted the world. Among the questions explored are how culture shapes political systems, economic development, internal security, group conflict, and religious influence in each region. By the end of the class the student should have an appreciation of the multi-dimensional character of different global cultures and how they shape overall political, social and economic development.

Click this link for a printable version of the syllabus

Course objectives

As a result of completing this course, the student will be able to
- Comprehend the details and priorities of the political, cultural, and security issues in key regions of the world.
- Analyze the role of the international community and the United States when it comes to regional security issues.
- Analyze and articulate the events and changing paradigms that have occurred since the end of the Cold War in key regions.

Grading Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaged Participation (discussion)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Weekly. There are no discussion questions for the weeks with the midterm PowerPoint presentation and the final essay exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm PowerPoint Presentation (5 -7) slides</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9:00 P.M. Central Standard Time of the Sunday ending Week 5.</td>
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Angelo State University employs a letter grade system. Grades in this course are determined on a percentage scale:

- A = 90 – 100 %
- B = 80 – 89 %
- C = 70 – 79 %
- D = 60 – 69%
- F = 59 % and below.

**Midterm PowerPoint**

Type: Individual Presentation Length: 5 - 7 slides (not including cover slide), each with accompanying notes. Due: 9:00 P.M. Central Standard Time of the Sunday ending Week 5. Please have a cover page for this assignment. Resources: Any material to include, but not limited to, course readings and discussions. Adhere to bibliographic and citation guidelines. *SOURCES MUST BE CITED ON THE SLIDES. THERE MUST BE AN INTRODUCTION SLIDE, A CONCLUSION SLIDE, AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY SLIDE.*

**Final exam**

The assignment is to answer three out of five questions (approximately 300 words for EACH answer) analyzing world cultures.

**Course structure**

**Lesson One:** Introduction to the Context and Broad-Based Issues in World Cultures
In order to gain an understanding of world cultures, one must first grasp what is meant by the word "culture." In 1871, the English anthropologist Sir Edward B. Tylor defined culture as "That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." The general aspects of culture can include historical context, language, religion, ethnicity, nationalism, and modernization, among other factors.

**Lesson Two:** Culture, Politics, and Security: Fundamental Concepts
Culture informs a society's view of the world. It also allows for more informed policy in the realm of national and international security. This lesson introduces students to some of the literature relating culture to security issues and examines several case studies of contemporary security issues in the world.

**Lesson Three:** Culture, Politics, and Security in Europe
Culture matters. Nowhere is that more readily apparent than Europe. The diversity of culture to include various languages, religions, ethnicities, and national alliances in Europe is truly staggering. Compounding this cultural diversity is the emergence of the European Union. In order to understand world cultures, one must first understand the conceptual framework of politics and security issues in the region and how culture impacts it throughout Europe.

**Lesson Four: Culture, Politics, and Security in the Middle East**
The Middle East is a region that is often in the news. It is also a region that has unique culture, politics, and especially security issues. The United States has been heavily involved in the Middle East for decades, which the two wars in Iraq testify to. Religion, ethnicity, nationalism, geography, and modernization are all significant influences throughout the region. For example, Arab nationalism (sometimes referred to as Pan-Arabism) became popular in the region during the 1950s and 1960s. Although linked with socialism at the time, it was also a reaction against European colonialism. Historically, Arab nationalism was generally secular in nature (socialist and anti-imperialist). Over time, opposition to the state of Israel became a unifying theme. Eventually the movement shifted to support for the Palestinian cause. The events of the Arab Spring are significant for the region. Beginning on 17 December 2010, protests in Tunisia led to the toppling of the Tunisian president, spread to Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria.

**Lesson Five: Culture, Politics, and Security in Africa**
Africa is a large and diverse continent. It has over fifty countries and over 900 million people. As a result, culture, politics, and contemporary security issues in Africa are also quite diverse. The objective of this lesson is to introduce students to Africa, the defining security issues in Africa, and how these issues affect the United States. As such, we must begin with the African continent.

**Lesson Six: Culture, Politics, and Security in Latin America**
Latin America is an important region of the world. It encompasses vast territory, by most estimates almost 7.5 million square miles. This territory represents more than ten percent of the land mass of the entire world. In addition to vast territory, Latin America also includes a massive population. The twenty nations of the region combine for a total population of more than 600 million people. This total is nearly twice the population of the United States. Specifically regarding the United States, Latin America is critical due to its location. The proximity of the region presents both opportunities and challenges for the United States.

**Lesson Seven: Culture, Politics, and Security in Asia**
Culture plays an important role throughout Asia. The region encompasses many diverse societies that are all unique. The many of the countries in the region have also seen dramatic economic growth as a result of globalization. Asia also has significant contemporary security issues with implications for both U.S. and international security. Specific examples include a growing and militarizing China, North Korean nuclear proliferation, and a remilitarizing and increasingly nationalist Japan.

**Lesson Eight: Assessment:**
In CUL 2323 World Cultures, you have learned about current and major issues dealing with culture, politics, and security around the world. You have engaged in critical analysis of current issues and examined the broader conceptual context and analytical
frameworks that frequently explain interactions within regions and the international arena.

Finally, you have looked at key nation-states within those regions and the security challenges that they are facing in the context of international geopolitics and regional cooperation.

Your mission during this week will be to tie all that you have learned about World Cultures, to your own critical analysis, and use it to craft your final exam.

Course Bibliography and Required Readings:


Bernard Lewis, "Freedom and Justice in the Modern Middle East," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 84.


Castandeda, Jorge G., "Latin America’s Left Turn," *Foreign Affairs*.


Central Intelligence Agency. The World Factbook: "European Union."


Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, “Al-Qa’ida’s (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa," *Harmony Project*.


“The Failed States Index, 2013,” Foreign Policy.


Video. “Inside Story—Is an Armed Conflict Looming in East Asia?”

Video. European Union.

Video. European Union.

Video. Swiss Minaret Ban.

Video. Swiss Minaret Ban.

Website. “Every Culture.” Everyculture.com

Whelan, Theresa. "Why AFRICOM."


Office Hours/Contacting the Instructor

See the Instructor Information section for contact information.

University Policies

Academic IntegrityAngelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the university Academic Honor Code and the ASU Student Handbook.

Accommodations for Disability

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.

Student Affairs is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by emailing studentservices@angelo.edu, or by contacting:

Office of Student Affairs
University Center, Suite 112
Student absence for religious holidays
A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.