

**Understand Eastern Europe and Eurasia**  
**Spring 2021**

Index Number: 18668

Credits: 3.00

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Course # 01: 450: 332:01

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1 pm – 3 pm and by appointment, at office AB 6109 West

Online course: SR (synchronous delivery)

Learning Management System (LMS): Sakai, asynchronous presentation, reading material in the section of lessons of the Sakai system

Online platform: WebEx/Zoom

Schedule:

Monday and Wednesday: 4:30 pm - 5:50 pm

**Introduction:**

This web-syllabus is designed to be used throughout the semester. Below you will find links to the readings for each of the 28 class sessions. Where possible, reading assignments have been linked to electronic versions available on the Internet. Students visiting this page for the first time should read through the entire syllabus: the course description, the course requirements, and the course outline. If you have any questions or comments about the web page or the course, please contact me.

**Course Description:**

The course will emphasize the significance of Eastern Europe and Eurasia's physical and cultural environments, and economic and political affairs in a globalizing world. This course presents the Geography of Eastern Europe and Eurasia in a comprehensive and systematic survey of Eurasia's population, natural resources, and regional geography. Geography of Eastern Europe & Eurasia offers a unique perspective into one of the most influential regions of the world. Using a topical approach, we will explore the physical, environmental, cultural, political, and economic patterns and issues of Eastern Europe & Eurasia.

In the past three decades Eastern Europe and Eurasia has seen significant change, from the fall of the Soviet Union to the formation of the European Union. Nations within the continent continue to debate what it means to be “Eurasian,” with some nations firmly rejecting the label. On top of all of these issues and trends, Eurasia has depleted much of its natural resources, and as a densely populated place, issues of resource availability and the impacts of climate change are significant. By the end of this course you will know much more than your basic “geography” of Eastern Europe and Eurasia, you will begin to see both the uniqueness in Eurasia’s approach to geographic phenomena and where many of Eurasia’s practices fall into more global geographic patterns.

### **Course Objectives:**

The objective of this course is the development of an understanding of the fundamental physical, environmental, cultural, social and human geographic patterns in Eastern Europe and Eurasia and provides an academic and practical foundation to evaluate the historical, current, and future issues and events in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The relationships between physical environment and human systems are the basic tenants of geography. The physical and human landscapes of Eastern Europe and Eurasia will be evaluated in relation to current events, politics and challenges, while considering the historical perspective.

### **Required books and readings:**

- 1) A Geography of Russia and Its Neighbors, Second Edition, by Mikhail S. Blinnikov PhD, ISBN-13: 9781462544615
- 2) Global Studies: Russia, the Eurasian Republics, and Central/Eastern Europe by Minton F. Goldman, 6th edition, ISBN: 0697317048
- 3) Journal of Eurasian Geography and Economics

### **Course outline:**

The course is constructed to incorporate writing and research in the examination of the origin and evolution of the physical and human landscape of Eurasia. Assignments will emphasize all scales geography from global economic dimensions to grains of sand, using original research and design, and intensive writing. The course will provide essential background material and concepts will be considered systematically. While the course will be divided into sections, students should anticipate the

interconnectedness of the discipline of Geography. The class will follow these general sections:

**Unit 1:** Enhancing geography skills and introduction to the different types of geography:

- 1) Physical Geography (natural resources, tectonics, landforms, climate, soil, vegetation,)
- 2) Human-Environmental Interactions (deforestation, pollution, impact of conservation, environmental problems, natural hazards)
- 3) Cultural Geography (language, religion, and population geography (birth and death rates, age cohorts, disease, mobility)
- 4) Economic/Political Geography (empire building and colonialism, Eurasian Union, conflict, refugees and migration)
- 5) Development (urbanization, city structures, rural urban migration, housing, globalization, economic development, transportation)
- 6) Social Geography (role of women, education, popular culture, tourism).

**Unit 2:** The Central Eastern Europe - This unit focuses on the physical and human geography of the (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. The unit explores how location has shaped the history of the four countries and led to regional labels. An analysis of human activities such as migration patterns, standards of living, and environmental issues involving conservation and the use of natural resources is also included.

**Unit 3:** Baltic States, northeastern region of Europe - This unit focuses on the physical and human geography of the countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The unit explores the relationship between landforms and population and weather patterns.

**Unit 4:** Southeastern region of Europe - The focus of this unit is the physical and human characteristics of Romania and Bulgaria and how these characteristics relate to the European Union and the geographic closeness of the European countries.

**Unit 5:** Russia and Belarus - This unit focuses on the physical and human geography of Russia and Belarus. The location of major landforms, their impact on economic activities, ethnic diversity, and environmental issues will be studied through the lens of Russian and Northern Eurasia.

**Unit 6:** Black Sea Basin countries - This unit focuses on the physical and human geography of the Ukraine and Moldova. Euro integration and their impact on economic

activities and security is included. Donbas, Donetsk and Crimea conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

**Unit 7:** South Caucasus - This unit focuses on the physical and human geography of Georgia and Armenia. The location of natural resources, their impact on economic activities, ethnic conflict, and environmental issues are examined in depth.

**Unit 8:** Caspian Basin Countries - The focus of this unit is the physical and human characteristics of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan. The location of natural resources, their impact on economic activities, ethnic conflict, and environmental issues are examined in depth.

**Unit 9:** Central Asia - The focus of this unit is the physical and human characteristics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and how these characteristics relate to the Association of Eurasia Economic Union. The relationship of the physical and human characteristics of Central Asian countries to their economic activities and types of economies will also be addressed.

**Unit 10:** East Russia- This unit focuses on the physical and human geography of Siberia and Far East. It explores the relationship between landforms and population and analyzes the impact of natural processes on human activities and environmental issues are examined in depth.

### **Learning goals:**

This course will focus on Eastern Europe and Eurasia, but also references the Central Asia countries. Students will learn about the region using perspectives and methodology from historical, economic, political, sociological and anthropological texts. This course satisfies the following learning goals part of the Geography program's Global Culture, Economics and Society track:

- (1) Demonstrate the ability to synthesize and examine critically a range of contemporary cultural, economic and societal issues, particularly those connected with globalization and geopolitics.
- (2) To understand and evaluate connections and disconnections between places and peoples within the context of development and unequal power relationships.

### **Learning Methodology:**

This class will NOT be about geography trivia. My goal for this course is to instill an ability to write and think geographically, rather than the requirement to memorize information. While this course is by its nature fact based, the assignments are designed to develop the following important skills: (1) written and verbal communication; (2)

research and critical thinking; (3) problem evaluation and analysis; and (4) application of knowledge. Each assignment will provide the opportunity for a student to demonstrate creativity in applied geography.

The class will incorporate lectures, guests, reading, various media and exercises.

By end of this semester, students should be able to:

- locate and describe the characteristics of the landscape studied,
- appreciate the complexity of the interactions within the landscape studied,
- evaluate the suitability and potential of a region for human activity,
- apply the skills & knowledge learnt to similar landscapes,
- analyses/interpret/evaluate a variety of given documents,
- locate and describe the characteristics of the natural hazard studied,
- recognize and describe the characteristics of the major physical regions of Eastern Europe and Eurasia,
- understand the concept of development,
- analyses, interpret and explain a variety of data,
- discuss the relative merits of a variety of indicators,
- evaluate learned contents in new situations,
- identify, interpret and evaluate at least two causes of underdevelopment and two possible solutions,
- describe & explain the level of development found in the case study and apply this knowledge to new situations,
- locate, describe & explain the characteristics of the maritime climate within Eastern Europe and Eurasia,
- apply skills learned in the detailed study to other climate zones,
- describe, explain & evaluate the impact of EU regional policy on Eurasia region.

### **Exams:**

Midterm exam is scheduled on 03/09/2021 and a cumulative final exam at 4 –7PM on 05/07/ 2021. The exams will be based on the lectures, text, readings, and problem sets. The lecture and readings will not always cover the same material: you are responsible for the material in both. Mid-term and final grades will based on multiple choose questions by Sakai test and quizzes system.

### **Grading policy:**

Course grades will be based on class participation (10 point), homework (25 point), midterms (25 point), and final (40 point). All course grades will be curved. Students will get extra points (engage in discussions, bonus assessments, etc.). Homework assessments will consist of essays of country presentations and different types of geography. We will have be-weekly deadlines for assignment.

**Grading scale:** The course grading scale is the following:

Grade From To

A 90 - 100

B+ 85 < 90

B 80 < 85

C+ 75 < 80

C 70 < 75

D 60 < 70

F 0 < 60

**Attendance:**

Students are expected to attend all classes. If you expect to miss one or two classes because of illness or a family emergency, please use the university absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Reporting an absence through this system does not excuse missed exams and problem sets.

**Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to maintain the highest level of academic integrity. You should be familiar with the university [policy on academic integrity](#). Violations will be reported and enforced according to this policy.

Use of external website resources such as Chegg.com or others to obtain solutions to homework assignments, quizzes, or exams is cheating and a violation of the University Academic Integrity Policy. Cheating in the course may result in grade penalties, disciplinary sanctions or educational sanctions. Posting homework assignments, or exams, to external sites without the instructor's permission may be a violation of copyright and may constitute the facilitation of dishonesty, which may result in the same penalties as plain cheating.

**Honor pledge:**

All students will need to sign the Rutgers Honor Pledge on every major exam, assignment, or other assessment as follows: On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment, paper, quiz, etc.).

### **Resources for Student Success:**

The faculty and staff at Rutgers are committed to your success. Students who are successful tend to seek out resources that enable them to excel academically, maintain their health and wellness prepare for future careers, navigate college life and finances, and connect with the RU community. Resources that can help you succeed and connect with the Rutgers community can be found at [success.rutgers.edu](https://success.rutgers.edu), and nearly all services and resources that are typically provided in-person are now available remotely.

### **Student wellness Services:**

Bias Incident Reporting and Support (DICE) <https://diversity.rutgers.edu>

The Division of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement works to advance, promote and advocate for inclusiveness, diversity, and equity at Rutgers University. If you believe you are the victim of or a witness to an alleged bias incident, you may report the incident, in person or by phone, to the Dean of Students Office, Residence Life staff, or another member of the Student Affairs

staff <https://diversity.rutgers.edu/resources/bias-and-crisis-support>. Individuals may also report an alleged bias incident online

<http://studentaffairs.rutgers.edu/for-students/bias/bias-incident-reporting/>

#### **Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)**

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ

08901/ <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

#### **Crisis Intervention:**

<http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/crisis-intervention/>

#### **Report a Concern:**

<http://health.rutgers.edu/do-something-to-help/>

**Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)** (848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / [www.vpva.rutgers.edu/](http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/)

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

### **Disability Services:**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. The documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. (848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

**Reporting of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, and/or talking:** Reports of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, and/or stalking may be made using any of the following options:

- 1) **Report to a Title IX Coordinator directly** (a list of each campus's Title IX Coordinator is provided below). Such a report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) via telephone or email or by mail to the address listed for the Title IX Coordinator.
- 2) Report online, using the reporting [form](#) posted here. Individuals may also report crimes of sexual violence to the [Rutgers University Police Department](#).