

2008– Fall Term – GEO131: The World's Regions

Quantitative rankings

Rating Scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

61 Students, 2 sections	Number of responses in each category					
	Question	1	2	3	4	5
1. Clear student learning objectives	1	0	0	15	41	4.67
2. Class well prepared & organized	1	2	2	23	29	4.35
3. Communicates material clearly	1	0	5	19	31	4.41
4. Displays interest in subject	0	1	2	9	44	4.71
5. Summarizes/emphasizes important points	1	0	7	15	34	4.42
6. Stimulates thinking about subject	1	1	7	28	19	4.13
7. Provides opportunities for outside contact	0	1	4	16	35	4.52
8. Expresses concern about student progress	0	0	5	18	34	4.51
9. Provides useful feedback	1	0	3	17	36	4.53
10. Clearly indicates how evaluated	1	0	1	19	36	4.56
Total of 10 questions	7	5	36	179	339	4.48
15. I have put a lot of effort into this course compared to other courses.	2	6	13	26	10	3.63

Student comments

Comment on aspects of the instructor's teaching style that helped the learning process	Comment on aspects of the instructor's teaching style that could be improved upon to help the learning process
1) passionate and knowledgeable	1) more interactive class setup kind of like when Xiao was here.
2) The powerpoints were interesting and I really liked learning place-name geography as well as going over it in class. I also liked learning about an in-depth topic for each particular region.	2) I think that content-based quizzes could help strengthen the material learned in the class. With quizzes like these, students would be forced to learn more.
3) Every class was interesting, organized and well put together.	3) Essay grading was overly-stressed, having peers be part of the grade greatly brings down grades because they do not know what they are doing.
4) <not answered>	4) <not answered>
5) <not answered>	5) <not answered>
6) Very organized and provide all that was needed to do well. I believe I gained knowledge about the World's Regions through this course.	6) <not answered>
7) I really enjoyed this course, especially when we dealt with the maps.	7) The one aspect of this course I did not like were some of the essay topics. I also thought the essays were graded a little too harshly.
8) Powerpoints and map quizzes very helpful. Enjoyed the class very much.	8) <not answered>

9) <not answered>	9) <not answered>
10) His teaching style is very organized and systematic. Includes videos and images in lectures. Good teaching style.	10) Could to things that provide more class discussion to make the topics more interesting.
11) <not answered>	11) <not answered>
12) <not answered>	12) <not answered>
13) Ryan Kirk is an excellent instructor and I find his lecture very interesting and informative. He has extensive knowledge and is able to bring ideas and concepts together to create argument. One of my favorite classes I have taken at Elon. I hope I can take another class of his.	13) <not answered>
14) I liked the map quizzes because they were focused on a specific region, but cumulative as well, so I didn't forget what I previously learned. I also liked that the essay topics correspond with the region so we didn't just learn the physical geography, but what was actually happening in those countries. I also like that lecture days had a lot of variety and weren't just the same thing every time.	14) <not answered>
15) He's a great teacher, really down to earth and relatable and understanding. Didn't try to act like a know it all.	15) Don't just try to fill class time, do the lesson and get us out. Sometimes I felt there was dead time in the class.
16) Powerpoint presentations were well-prepared, interesting and stimulating. This was a very effective tool in covering the world in a semester.	16) Too hesitant and cautious at times. More confidence would inspire more enthusiasm from students indifferent to geography entering the class.
17) <not answered>	17) <not answered>
18) Towards the end of the semester he started giving specific examples of the topics we were discussing. He also showed videos that put the information in context. Very approachable.	18) There were some changes to syllabus and lectures at beginning of semester were very boring and repetitious, but things got better towards the end of the semester and adjustments were made (but this is understandable for a first year teacher)
19) The powerpoint slides were great! In-depth and really helped the class. It's an interesting class, but prof. Kirk made it that much more interesting. Great respect for his students, genuinely cares about them. The use of blackboard was so well organized – from map-quiz materials to essay guidelines. I'm glad he was my teacher – very thankful for him → great new addition to Elon!	19) I can't think of anything that would or could improve this class!
20) <not answered>	20) For a 100-level course, this class required a lot of time to be put into it with outside work. I felt the number of essays to be a bit excessive, and the grading of the essays weighed too heavily on grammar and mechanics. I sometimes felt as though I was taking an English course and not a geography course.
21) Dr. Kirk is obviously passionate about the subject, which helped me learn from him. I really like the variety in the essay topics – it helped to focus on specific problems/issues in each region. I am very impressed that you taught this course as well as you did while writing and defending your dissertation.	21) I think the discussion format needs to be revamped or just eliminated – it is rather repetitive to say the same information multiple times. Perhaps work in more about the culture of each region – music, art, religion, etc. – would make the course interesting.
22) The powerpoints for the maps were helpful. Lecture was helpful as well.	22) Some work seemed non-applicable to what we were learning. Didn't help with the subject.
23) Going over the maps in class was very useful. A lot of the content was interesting even though it was not tested. The essay discussions were a good way to get us to think	23) While the material about specific regions was interesting, it seemed unimportant because it was never part of the evaluation process. Maybe adding a few culture questions to the map

<p>in advance about our essays.</p>	<p>quizzes would help. I actually liked looking at all the different maps at the beginning of the year. If that could be pulled into the latter parts of the course more that would be great.</p>
<p>24) Professor Kirk is a great teacher, always clear about everything he wants, and really wants to help you do well in his class. He always asks the class for feedback about his teaching style and assignments, and the class was challenging but he still realized that we have a lot of other work as well in other classes.</p>	<p>24) There were a few things that could be improved to make the class run more smoothly, but since this is his first year those will work out over time.</p>
<p>25) I could tell that the instructor genuinely cares about the well being of his students, which makes me want to get out of bed for class.</p>	<p>25) I think having quizzes on the material covered in the powerpoints would make students pay attention more in class. As it is most of us only paid attention when it came time to copy down the countries onto our maps for the map quizzes.</p>
<p>26) He communicated to the students the course objectives clearly.</p>	<p>26) <not answered></p>
<p>27) Very enthusiastic and seems to really care for his students and about the topic. I liked the gradual/cumulative map quizzes because it made me not just memorize and forget. I thought the essay topics were relevant to the area we studied.</p>	<p>27) The discussions could be reorganized to create more discussion within groups. I wish we could have learned more about the cultures of all the countries we studied.</p>
<p>28) All topics of study were very interesting. I liked the focus on human geography, but would have liked to tough upon other types of geography as well. The format and schedule were very consistent, and the instructor was helpful and attentive.</p>	<p>28) CONFIDENCE MUST INCREASE! It makes it more difficult for students to stay vested in the material when the instructor is clearly and admittedly under-confident about our course material.</p>
<p>29) I really enjoyed the powerpoint slides and movies. The professor sought out interesting topics and discussed them in class. I feel more knowledgeable about the world and want to continue to stay updated on world events. He was a very nice and enjoyable teacher. He constantly asked for feedback. This has been one of my most favorite Elon courses. He was very accommodating.</p>	<p>29) The professor would ask open ended questions and no one would answer. Maybe he can try to get students more involved in the discussion. Otherwise he was great!</p>
<p>30) Open to suggestions and comments, extremely enthusiastic and made learning about geography more fun than I've had in the subject than 7th grade. I liked also that he taught more than just maps.</p>	<p>30) Sometimes too unsure of the details about a country.</p>
<p>31) The professor was very interested/passionate about the class. This helped me to be interested and engaged. If he didn't know answers to questions he would look them up and respond to them in the next class.</p>	<p>31) I did not like the region essays at all. The 700 word limit was too restrictive. I feel it should have been a guideline, not enforced. More map quizzes, they are fun... fun and quiz in the same sentence? Bogus</p>
<p>32) He allowed for open discussion with little fear of being wrong. He was open to help when I was in need.</p>	<p>32) I think he will grow with experience</p>
<p>33) <not answered></p>	<p>33) Clearer focus! Use a textbook for supp. Reading and course direction. Cover useful and timely topics instead of your own interests which are not meaningful. Less work – one or two research papers with adequate analysis and depth would have been more appropriate. Stop showing favoritism to specific students, be fair!!</p>
<p>34) It seems as if my answers on the front are too good to be true, but out of my 3 years and 20+ teachers he has been the most organized and accessible teacher. His syllabus is very clear and is flexible if we do not learn everything in class – can work the schedule around getting</p>	<p>34) Nothing I can think of.</p>

things done. Although it's his first year he has exceeded my expectations as a professor and has been the most challenging/resources class I've had this semester (and is only 100 level class!)	
35) Kirk's class was awesome, probably my favorite of the term. His method of teaching is conducive to our learning, not only short-term but long-term. Group discussions, movie clips, and a diverse array of topics make this class unique and, in my opinion, never boring. Kirk displays a keen interest in the subject that is apparent, and it stimulates learning. Class was well organized, and feedback was more than I have received from most professors. Overall a very good class.	35) More structured syllabus.
36) Good essay topics. Like that map quizzes are cumulative, promotes memorization. Like feedback given on essays.	36) First year teaching, not all that prepared or well versed in subject matter.
37) nada	37) que nada
38) The comments and responses given by the professor on essays are very helpful.	38) Professor could perhaps be more in control of students, more prepared about assignments.
39) <not answered>	39) For each region, a type of "current events" section could be included so that we can learn more about each region.
40) <not answered>	40) <not answered>
41) Outstanding and interesting class! Really enjoyed it	41) <not answered>
42) Powerpoints were helpful	42) improve group discussion, perhaps with more teacher guidance.
43) Ryan is a great guy and a good teacher. I enjoyed his class and did not dread coming to it.	43) He could be more knowledgeable about the subject
44) I loved it. The improvement on the in-class discussions made a big difference.	44) <not answered>
45) Good mix of lectures, powerpoints, group work, etc	45) He's awesome!
46) <not answered>	46) <not answered>
47) <not answered>	47) <not answered>
48) <not answered>	48) <not answered>
49) Use of visual aids and internet blackboard program.	49) A little more organized, more emphasis on countries
50) The professor is very open and understanding with students. He does not give off the superior professor vibe which makes students feel very comfortable.	50) Less in class adding of info to slides, more class discussion
51) As a first time professor he has done an amazing job. I have thoroughly enjoyed all the essays and the helpful feedback he gives is extremely helpful. He is very good at explaining exactly what is expected of us but he lets us use our imagination also.	52) Don't be scared! More confidence!
52) <not answered>	52) <not answered>
53) Very interactive/engaged teaching style. Very helpful powerpoints	53) The class discussion format still isn't perfect
54) Enthusiastic!	54) Less lectures. Break map quizzes up with small and more detailed quizzes.
55) Ryan is very fair and accommodating in his grading of	55) <not answered>

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GEO131: The World's Regions -- End-of-Semester student evaluations.

All comments are reproduced verbatim; nothing is left out.

assignments.	
56) Provided helpful feedback and had a clear direction for the course.	56) Could employ a more hands on style of learning.
57) I liked that he went over locations in class and talked about the areas we were learning about. I also really like the set up for the final exam.	57) I think that more emphasis should be placed on the map quizzes instead of having 50% of our grade be based off of essays. It is a geography class, so I don't think it should focus so much on our grammar – we're not all freshmen. We've heard the grammar lectures before. Also, returning essays before the next one so due so we know what to improve on would be useful.