This is a long document, filled with important information regarding this course. Please read it carefully and become familiar with its contents! Please contact Dr. Jerry Nelson if you have any questions!

WHAT IS THE REQUIRED TEXT?

*World Regional Geography*, 3rd edition, by L. M. Pulsipher. A highly recommended option: a Goode’s (or other thematic atlas) World Atlas, an older edition of the atlas is OK. If you are thinking of ordering these books from an online book seller, please note that there are some abbreviated textbooks on the market by the same author – these have white covers and do not contain all of the material on sub-regions contained in the required edition. Also note that there are some older editions available and some things may have changed between the second and third editions. *Use older editions or the abbreviated editions only at your own risk!*

HOW DO I CONTACT MY INSTRUCTOR?

Dr. Jerry Nelson, phone (307) 268-2233 (O), 259-7587 (H). Students may call at home prior to 9:00 p.m. Rocky Mountain Time; if I do not answer or if my phone is turned off, please leave a voice mail message! OFFICE: PS 339. OFFICE HOURS: will be posted in an email and online as soon as they are set; I am available by appointment on most any day or evening, in person by phone, or via email. PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE; I WILL GET BACK TO YOU!

The best way to contact me is via email through the WebCT class email tool. If you need to contact me outside of the class, use these email addresses: gnelson@caspercollege.edu (office) or swede-murphy@bresnan.net (home.) Please put your class in the subject line - I have several classes to keep organized via e-mail, and I don't want to mistake your message for spam! Thanks! I typically respond to emails within 24 hours, generally much sooner.

WHAT IS THE COURSE DESCRIPTION?

3 SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS. *Geography 1000, Introduction to Geography: A World Regional Approach*, introduces students to the study of the world's regions using the following unifying themes: distribution and exploitation of resources, population and food resources, the institutional framework, and the environment.
WHAT ARE THE COURSE OBJECTIVES?

The world is indeed getting “smaller.” Travel and communication have brought people closer than they ever have been before, and the increased rates of interaction will continue into the foreseeable future. A major element in liberal arts education is an understanding and awareness of other cultures and areas. The objectives of this course are to provide you with the basis for an ongoing learning process about the world and to help you arrive at an understanding of not just where people live, but also of how and why they live the way they do.

WHAT ARE THE COURSE OUTCOMES?

OUTCOMES FOR WORLD REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY (Based on the 18 standards from Geography for Life: National Geography Standards – 1994)

All eighteen standards are important and will be addressed, however this particular geography course will concentrate more on some than others.

If you successfully complete the course, you will be able to:

1. Know how to use maps and other geographic representations.

2. Know how to use mental maps to organize information about people, places and environments in a spatial context.

3. Know how to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on the earth's surface.

4. Understand the physical and human characteristics of places.

5. Understand that people create regions to interpret earth's complexity.

6. Understand how culture and experience influence people’s perceptions of places and regions.

7. The physical processes that shape the pattern's of the Earth's surface.

8. Understand the characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems on the Earth's surface.

9. Describe the characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations.

10. Describe the characteristics, distribution and complexity of the Earth's cultural mosaic.

11. Understand the patterns and networks of economic interdependence on the Earth's surface.
12. Describe the processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

13. Understand how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of the Earth's surface.

14. Understand how human actions modify the physical environment

15. Understand how physical systems affect human systems

16. Understand the changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources.

17. Understand how to apply geography to interpret the past.

18. Understand how to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

In addition, the following themes and issues will run throughout the course. Make sure you are able to make connections between these themes and issues and each region we examine.

1. Current events can be placed into a regional geographic perspective.

2. Spatial relationships and interactions occur between and within areas and groups of people.

3. There are many bases for regionalization that are useful for discussion and analysis, but like all generalizations, they have limitations.

4. Countries and regions can be classified as developed, developing, and underdeveloped.

5. There are connections between level of development and major issues of access to resources, demographics, economics, and history.

6. Your own particular situation in your local area and region can be related to the greater picture of the world at large.

**HOW WILL THIS COURSE BE TAUGHT?**

Part of the material for this course will be posted at the class web site at Casper College; additional information is available in the textbook. You will be reading the textbook, visiting Internet sites around the world, and discussing thought-provoking questions via the class Discussion Forum. You must be a self-starting, self-disciplined student to keep up with both the Internet discussions and the reading material. I am available for discussions and questions via phone, mail, personal office visits, or E-mail. Do not wait until you fall behind to contact me! In addition to participating in the Internet discussions and reading the textbook, students are expected to keep up with media reports dealing with the particular
places or events we are covering in class. Everyone is expected to post a series of written summaries from current news items related to the topic or areas covered by this class. You will be responsible for sending me 11 summaries during the semester. Carefully read all assigned material, and, above all, ask questions when confused or unsure.

**WHAT IS THE INSTRUCTOR’S TEACHING PHILOSOPHY?**

The fact that you are now in a college class illustrates a very important fact: you want an education. The reasons you may have for getting an education are many and varied, but most probably center around wanting to improve yourself and to get ahead financially; of course, these two goals are not mutually exclusive! If you are new to the college environment, you will find it is different than your previous educational experiences. More is expected of you - the workload is greater, and more of the responsibility for your education rests in your hands. This is particularly so in an Online Class! You must be a self-starting individual, capable of working without close supervision, and able to set your own schedule. If you find yourself falling behind, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as you can! Since you choose to be in a college class and with this delivery format, make the best of it! Potential employers will not hire people because they have memorized a bunch of facts out of a textbook; if they need facts they will look them up themselves. Employers are looking for, and are willing to pay good money to, people who can solve problems, work effectively in groups and communicate effectively. Remember: college educated people earn nearly twice as much over their lifetime as do those with a high school education. In addition, a career you choose to invest yourself in is far more rewarding than a job you have to take in order to survive. Please don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with any career IF it is what you choose to do, but make sure it is your choice.

**WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO FOR THIS CLASS?**

**ASK QUESTIONS!** This course format is likely to be new for you. One bit of advice that will help you have a successful experience is to ASK Question when unsure, confused, lost, or discouraged. I am willing to work with you and help you with any problems you might have. We will not be meeting on a regular class schedule, so the only way I have of knowing something is amiss is if you contact me.

**PARTICIPATE!** I am a firm believer in participatory education - you must participate in your own education in order to be successful. A college education is not something that happens to you while you are sitting in class or on the computer, you must participate. You do not get a degree and all of the benefits of that degree by memorizing facts, passing tests, and putting in your time, you must participate.
READ! Just as in a traditional class, you will have assigned readings in a textbook, and there will be quizzes covering the readings. Read the syllabus, the discussion forum, and all other course related materials.

PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS! There is a discussion forum on the class website, you will be expected to log onto this forum several times per week and participate in the discussions going on there. These are directed discussions in that I will pose discussion starters to get you going, but it is your responsibility to participate.

WRITE! You will have several news summaries to write over the course of the semester. The topic should relate to a concept, theme, or area that we are covering during that particular unit. The source can be any legitimate media source, print, video, internet, and others.

WHY DO I HAVE TO PARTICIPATE?

You should participate in order to gain the most you can out of this college class, to learn about yourself and others, and to learn how to work and communicate in an electronic environment.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL I HAVE TO SPEND ON THIS CLASS?

Attendance in an Internet class is more flexible, but remember that this flexibility puts extra responsibility on you to set an appropriate time schedule. Some people can get by with fewer hours of study, some need more. A standard rule of thumb is for two hours outside of class for each hour in class, so expect to put in 8 to 12 hours per week on this course! The flexibility of this class format allows you to be out of town, attend funerals and weddings, and work during the day. Again, do not confuse the flexibility of this schedule with being able to sit on the sidelines - set a schedule for yourself, whatever it is, and stick to it! It has been my experience that if you do not participate regularly in class, you will not do well.

The discussions and news summary activities are extremely important. You will be asked to obtain, interpret, and write about information from the Internet and other sources. It is your responsibility to get the information, do the work, and turn it in on time.

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THIS INTERNET CLASS?

This is a new class format for many of you, so it is likely that some small technical problems will crop up, just as in any other class. Relax, don't worry, and enjoy yourself! The technical problems can be taken care of, and none of them will affect your grade. The most important thing to remember is to participate in all class activities, do all assignments, read the text, and, just like a traditional
class, ask questions when unsure or confused. I am always open to reasonable suggestions, and I welcome yours concerning this class.

**HOW WILL I BE EVALUATED?**

Evaluation of students will be by regularly spaced Chapter Quizzes, participation in the Discussion Forum, midterm and final exams, and news summaries. All of the quizzes will be open book, open note and will be taken online. Quizzes will be multiple choice. The news summaries and other written work will be graded on both content and clarity (see "Criteria" below.) I reserve the right to curve exam scores if and when I think it necessary.

Make sure you keep copies of all written assignments in case something gets lost in transferring information to my office! WebCT will keep a record of all your emails and discussions, but it is a good idea to keep your own set of copies of written work in the event of a dispute over grades or missed deadlines.

**WHAT IS THE APPROXIMATE POINT DISTRIBUTION?**

Evaluation of students will be by regularly spaced objective quizzes, midterm and final exams, news summaries, and participation in discussions.

1 Practice Quiz, can be taken unlimited number of times, **25 points**

11 Chapter Quizzes @ 25 points, each can be taken up to 3 times, only highest score will count, **275 total**

11 Summaries @ 25 points. Make sure you read “HOW TO DO A NEWS SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.” You are required to post 1 summary and at least 1 follow-up comment on another student’s summary, **275 total**

11 Discussions @ 25 points. Make sure you read “HOW TO DO A NEWS SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.” You are required to post at least 1 original contribution to the discussion and at least 1 follow-up comment on another student’s post, **275 total**

Midterm and Final Exams @ 200 points each, **400 total**

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: **1250 points**

Grade Scale: A: 90% B: 80-89% C: 70-79% D: 60-69% F: <60%

There are a lot of points; you have the opportunity to do very well with this class!
WHAT ARE THE INSTRUCTOR’S POLICIES?

Quizzes and exams will be posted at the class website. Please note that quizzes and exams must be taken in order. For example, quiz 1 will not open for you until you have taken the practice quiz, quiz 2 will not open for you until you have taken quiz 1 at least once, and so on. Computer glitches can and do occur, so organize your schedule so you can take your quizzes and exams prior to the absolute last moment possible!

*Late summaries and discussions will not be graded or counted!*

Participation is important for any course, but especially for Internet classes. While you may not be there in person, your participation or "virtual" presence is required! You must be self-starting and self-disciplined to get the most out of this class. If you are unable to set goals and schedules for yourself, this class may not be for you. Be sure to contact your instructor if you have difficulties of any kind.

WHAT ARE THE INSTRUCTOR’S GRADING CRITERIA FOR WRITTEN WORK?

Students are often concerned with how grades are assigned, especially on essays and written reports. I evaluate each written assignment carefully, and I look for the criteria listed below. These criteria are based on a paper by Professor Barbara Tewksbury, which was published in the Journal of Geoscience Education, September 1996, p. 366-372. If you find yourself getting lower grades than you think you deserve, please look again at the criteria. Simply putting in time and doing all of the work will not guarantee a high grade. At the end of the semester, I will convert the letter grades to points, figure an average, and then assign a letter grade for the semester. If you have trouble writing essays, please visit the writing center or the English lab.

**CRITERIA FOR "A" RANGE GRADES:** Outstanding explanation with superior supporting information; unusual insights and flashes of brilliance in the discussion; creative and original analyses and thoughts, goes well beyond the minimum required for the assignment. Writing has a real sense of style, with excellent organization, very few grammatical or spelling errors. DOES NOT read like a first draft.

**CRITERIA FOR "B" RANGE GRADES:** Good solid job on explanation, with excellent support from examples, data, or figures; excellent reasoning and explanations in the discussion, goes beyond the minimum required for the assignment. Writing has good organization, interesting sentences, few grammatical or spelling errors. DOES NOT read like a first draft.
CRITERIA FOR "C" RANGE GRADES: Good solid job, does what the assignment asks, decent reasoning and explanations in the discussion, decent support from examples, data and figures. Writing has decent organization, serviceable prose, READS LIKE A FIRST DRAFT. Papers with "A" or "B" level writing but numerous errors in spelling and grammar (indicating lack of proofreading) will only receive a "C."

CRITERIA FOR "D" RANGE GRADES: OK explanations and discussions but too general or some inaccuracies or flaws in reasoning or science; coverage is accurate but cursory and does not meet the minimum required for a complete answer. Writing is disorganized, awkward sentence structure; poor grammar and spelling; READS LIKE A FIRST DRAFT.

CRITERIA FOR "F" GRADE: Doesn't effectively address the question, fails to support assertions with data or examples, unclear explanations, inadequate understanding demonstrated.; major flaws in reasoning or explanations. Writing is very disorganized, awkward sentence structure makes it difficult to read; poor grammar and spelling.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE TEACHER AND THE STUDENTS IN THIS CLASS?

As in any student-teacher relationship, there are certain responsibilities and expectations of both participants in the educational process. Students have certain rights and responsibilities as formally outlined in the Casper College Student Conduct and Judicial Code. I would like to emphasize the following items as being particularly important, not only in my class but in any others you may take.

1. It is your responsibility to notify me prior to any necessary absence in case of missed deadlines. It is my responsibility to give you advanced notice of all exams and other assignment due dates.

2. It is your responsibility to be prepared for discussions, with a willingness to participate, and completed all assignments. It is my responsibility to be prepared to teach, willing to encourage your participation, and to return all work in a timely manner – generally no more than 1 week after the due date.

3. It is your responsibility to be ready and willing to ask any and all questions pertaining to the class material or the way it is being taught. It is my responsibility to take all of your questions seriously and to answer these questions to the best of my ability, keeping in mind that some questions cannot be easily answered, if at all, and that the process of learning requires answering some questions with additional questions.
4. It is your responsibility to participate in your own education by becoming a responsible, independent learner. It is my responsibility to be an example of an educated person and an advocate for education.

5. It is your responsibility to prepare yourself to answer any and all questions pertinent to the course material, both in class discussions and on exams. It is my responsibility to insure that all questions are fair, pertinent, and set high standards.

6. It is your responsibility to treat your fellow students and me with dignity - allow those around you to exercise their personalities, to on occasion be humorous, disappointed, dull, frustrated, angry, happy et cetera. Please keep in mind that much of our communication is non verbal, so you will not be able to see a person’s body language or facial expressions as you read their online postings – take this into consideration when interpreting what they are writing! It is my responsibility to treat each and every student as an individual and with dignity, without any prejudice or preconception.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A STUDENT?

Please read and become familiar with the Casper College Student Conduct and Judicial Code for information concerning your rights and responsibilities as a Casper College Student. If you find yourself in a dispute with your instructor in this (or any other) class, it is your responsibility to first try to resolve the problem with the instructor. If that does not resolve the problem, then the next step is to see the appropriate division chair. If you, the division chair, and the faculty member involved can solve the problem informally, that often works out for the best. If you cannot come to an agreement, you should then see someone at the vice presidents level (vice president for academics or the dean of students). It does not help to take a problem directly to the top of the chain of command because it will just be referred back down to the division chair and the faculty member involved.

WHAT ARE SOME ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT COLLEGE POLICIES?

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

It is the policy of Casper College to provide appropriate accommodations to any student with a documented disability. If you have a need for accommodation in this course, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

DROP/AUDIT POLICY

I will allow drops up to the last week of classes IF you have been an active participant up to the point where you ask to be dropped. Please request this via
an email using the mail tool in WebCT, and make the request PRIOR TO the last week of classes.

**PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarized work will receive an "F" grade and will be reported to the Dean of students for disciplinary action. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas or words as if they were your own, and without giving proper credit. This is easy to do accidentally, but it is also easy to check with the Internet's search capabilities. You can certainly use other's ideas and words to make your points; the caution here is to be sure to acknowledge any borrowed ideas or quotations, electronic or otherwise! If you have questions about difficult cases, ask the instructor. Plagiarism is considered by most educators to be the worst possible offense - be very careful in this regard!