This course supports the assessments for SSC1. The course covers 4 competencies and represents 1 competency unit.

**Introduction**

**Overview**
Welcome to the General Education Social Science domain at Western Governors University!

This course introduces you to social scientific perspectives on how humans organize themselves in society and how they seek to resolve and understand the problems that they encounter in society. The social sciences provide people not only with knowledge about the development and nature of human society, but also with the means to ask critical questions about the institutions, cultures, and behaviors that people encounter every day.

Watch the following video introduction to this course:

**Competencies**
This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following 4 competencies:

- **Competency 113.1.1: Social Science Theory and Methodology**
  The graduate examines the distinctive characteristics and forms of social scientific inquiry; recognizes various behavioral, cognitive, and social phenomena; and applies social science theories and methods to evaluate and explain phenomena.

- **Competency 113.1.2: Social Science and Human Development**
  The graduate examines fundamental social science concepts and theories that relate to the development of human thought, behavior, and social relationships.

- **Competency 113.2.1: Modern Institutions**
  The graduate examines the development, characteristics, functions, and interdependence of modern economic, social, and political institutions.

- **Competency 113.2.2: Culture and Physical Environment**
  The graduate recognizes and analyzes connections between human cultures and the physical environment, and applies knowledge of these connections to explain social and political change.

**Course Mentor Assistance**
As you prepare to successfully demonstrate competency in this subject, remember that course mentors stand ready to help you reach your educational goals. As subject matter experts, mentors enjoy and take pride in helping students become reflective learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. Course mentors are excited to hear from you and eager to work with you.

Successful students report that working with a course mentor is the key to their success. Course mentors are able to share tips on approaches, tools, and skills that can help you apply the content you're studying. They also provide guidance in assessment preparation strategies and troubleshoot areas of deficiency. Even if things don't work out on your first try, course mentors
act as a support system to guide you through the revision process. You should expect to work with course mentors for the duration of your coursework, so you are welcome to contact them as soon as you begin. Course mentors are fully committed to your success!

Preparation for Success

The information in this section is provided to detail the resources available for you to use as you complete this course.

Learning Resources

The learning resources listed in this section are required to complete the activities in this course. For many resources, WGU has provided automatic access through the course. However, you may need to manually enroll in or independently acquire other resources. Read the full instructions provided to ensure that you have access to all of your resources in a timely manner.

Automatically Enrolled Resources

You can access the learning resources listed in this section by clicking on the links provided throughout the course. You may be prompted to log in to the WGU student portal to access the resources.

Soomo Learning Environment

The following learning environment will be utilized as the primary learning resource for completion of this course:

- General Education Social Science

This learning environment will contain links at the activity level to the following additional learning resources:

VitalSource E-Texts

The following textbooks are available to you as e-texts within the Soomo learning environment. You will be directly linked to the specific readings required within the learning environment activities.


Note: These e-texts are available to you as part of your program tuition and fees, but you may purchase hard copies at your own expense through a retailer of your choice. If you choose to do so, please use the ISBN listed to ensure that you receive the correct edition.

Pacing Guide

The pacing guide suggests a weekly structure to pace your completion of learning activities. It is provided as a suggestion and does not represent a mandatory schedule. Follow the pacing guide carefully to complete the course in the suggested timeframe.
Theories and Methods

The activities within this subject will introduce you to some of the basic questions related to social science theories and methods.

Consider the following questions:

- What is the role of science and the scientific method in the social sciences?
- How do the social sciences differ from natural and physical science?

Note: Students who have completed all activities for SST1 will find that the following activities duplicate material from associated SST1 subjects. Use the following topics and activities to check your understanding and prepare for the SSC1 objective assessment.

Scientific Method in Social Science

To prepare for further study in this domain, you will want to familiarize yourself with ways in which the scientific method is applied in the social sciences. Keep in mind the crucial comparison between social and natural science. Consider the following questions:

- What is the scientific method?
- Does the scientific method refer to the same process of inquiry in social science as it does in natural sciences?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.1.1: Social Science Theory and Methodology
  The graduate examines the distinctive characteristics and forms of social scientific inquiry; recognizes various behavioral, cognitive, and social phenomena; and applies social science theories and methods to evaluate and explain phenomena.

Scientific Method Reading

Engage in the “Theories and Methods” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 1.1 Scientific Method in Social Science

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- How do the textbook authors define the scientific method?
- What are some of the major challenges encountered in any form of scientific observation?
- What is the role of objectivity in scientific work?
Do social scientists form hypotheses?
What are some of the most significant research methods in the social sciences (case study, participant observation, etc.)? And how are they used differently among the various social science disciplines?

Approaches to Social Science
One remarkable aspect of the social sciences is the wide range of perspectives and approaches found within them. History, for example, is considered by many to be a social science. Yet, its basic approach to social analysis and explanation differs in important ways from that of sociology, economics, geography, or other social science disciplines. In addition to the various disciplinary approaches to social scientific work, there are also different ways of applying social science knowledge to real world problems. Competence in general social science requires understanding that social science is diverse in its approaches, yet, bound together by some basic questions.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.1.1: Social Science Theory and Methodology
  The graduate examines the distinctive characteristics and forms of social scientific inquiry; recognizes various behavioral, cognitive, and social phenomena; and applies social science theories and methods to evaluate and explain phenomena.

Social Science Reading
Engage in the “Theories and Methods” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 1.2 Approaches to Social Science

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas as you read these selections:

- What are the distinctive features of cultural anthropology?
- What kinds of questions do economists ask about the nature of society?
- What kinds of questions do psychologists ask about human development?
- How do the textbook authors define sociology? How does sociology differ from psychology? In what ways does sociology overlap with other social science approaches?
- What kinds of research do political scientists conduct?
- How does the study of history differ from other social sciences?
- What are some explanatory limitations for historical research?
- In what ways can social science explain social inequality?
- What is social stratification?
- Why have social scientists concerned themselves with social classes?
- What are some reasons for the existence of poverty and homelessness in a world of plenty?
- In what ways does social science influence social and public policy?
Human Development

The activities within this subject will introduce you to fundamental questions related to the nature of human development.

Social science is distinguished in part by its novel approaches to the question of what constitutes human nature. Social scientists (mainly psychologists) have focused on how individuals develop from infants into mature human beings. Development is a constant process across the lifespan, comprising the biological and social influences that transform infants into adults—the ability to think abstractly, identity, morality, and relationships with family and friends.

*Note: Students who have completed all activities for SST1 will find that the following activities duplicate material from associated SST1 subjects. Use the following topics and activities to check your understanding and prepare for the SSC1 objective assessment.*

### Nature Versus Nurture

One of the fundamental questions in the study of human development is whether basic characteristics are given to people by nature or developed through their social and interpersonal experiences, or nurture. Consider the following questions:

- Are personalities determined by biology?
- Do personalities reflect the environment?
- Or is the answer somewhere in between the two?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.1.2: Social Science and Human Development
  The graduate examines fundamental social science concepts and theories that relate to the development of human thought, behavior, and social relationships.

### Nature Versus Nurture Reading

Engage in the “Human Development” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 2.1 Nature Versus Nurture

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What are the central claims of the theory of evolution?
- How has the theory of natural selection shaped the social science views of human behavior?
- Why is the study of genetics significant to social science?
- What specific roles does biology play in the development of personality?
- How does learned behavior shape personality?
- What do social scientists mean by socialization?
- What kinds of interplay exist between heredity and environment?
Theories of Human Development

Major theorists of human development include Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, and Lawrence Kohlberg. Each theorist focuses on a different fundamental psychological process. Take note of the basic questions that they ask about the nature of development. Consider the following questions:

- What are the causes of human progression from one stage of development to the next?
- How do people develop morality?
- What does it really mean to be human?

By examining theories of development, you should gain extra insight into the behavior and traits that you encounter on a daily basis.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.1.2: Social Science and Human Development
  The graduate examines fundamental social science concepts and theories that relate to the development of human thought, behavior, and social relationships.

Human Development Reading

Engage in the “Human Development” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 2.2 Theories of Human Development

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- How does Sigmund Freud explain the development of personality?
- What are the key elements of Erik Erikson's developmental theory?
- On what issues do Freud and Erikson agree? In what ways do they disagree?
- What are the key elements of Jean Piaget's developmental theory?
- How does Lawrence Kohlberg explain moral development?

States and Government

The activities within this subject will introduce you to fundamental ideas related to modern political institutions.

While the study of politics has existed since ancient history, modern social science has brought into sharper focus questions about the nature of power and government. In order to understand the complexity of modern institutions, social-scientific approaches to politics have been focused on many aspects of political life, especially the emergence of the modern nation-state.

Note: Students who have completed all activities for SST1 will find that the following activities duplicate material from associated SST1 subjects. Use the following topics and activities to check your understanding and prepare for the SSC1 objective assessment.
Political Theory
Political theory focuses on the nature of states and government. Consider the following questions:

- Why does government exist?
- What kinds of government are best suited to modern life?
- What is the proper role of the state in political society?

Political theorists have answered these questions in many different ways, and their diverse answers have both shaped and reflected the different forms states and governments have taken.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.2.1: Modern Institutions
  The graduate examines the development, characteristics, functions, and interdependence of modern economic, social, and political institutions.

Political Theory Reading

Engage in the “States and Government” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 3.1 Political Theory

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- How does conflict theory explain state development?
- How does functionalist theory explain state development?
- How do the ideas of Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau differ concerning the nature of the state?
- How do totalitarian regimes maintain power?
- What is legal-rational authority?
- What are the major forms of government that have existed in modern history? What features distinguish them from each other?

The Nation-State
The rise of the nation-state, a political state that coincides with an ethnic or cultural grouping, has been one of the central features of modern history and modern politics. While the nation-state is a modern political form, it evolved from earlier forms of government, such as the city-state, which existed prominently in ancient Greece and early modern Europe. Consider the following questions:

- How has the rise of the nation-state shaped the modern United States?
- How does the existence of the nation-state influence your own daily life?

This topic addresses the following competency:
Competency 113.2.1: Modern Institutions
The graduate examines the development, characteristics, functions, and interdependence of modern economic, social, and political institutions.

Nation-State Reading

Engage in the “States and Government” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

3.2 The Nation State

As you read "The Athenian Origins of Direct Democracy," pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What is an oligarchy?
- What is a timocracy?
- Which characteristics of democracy originated in ancient Greece?
- What were the distinctive features of citizenship in the city-states?
- What were the limitations on democratic activity within a city-state?

As you read the remainder of the assigned text, pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What are the defining features of the nation-state?
- How do educational institutions help maintain the nation-state?
- What philosophical ideas helped shape the modern nation-state?
- Why was the rise of nationalism important in the development of the nation-state?

Global Society

The activities under this subject will introduce you to the central features of the modern global society.

Modern society is characterized by the globalization of states, economies, and people’s everyday experiences. Social science seeks to understand how this has happened and what the consequences of the global society will be for the future. In the following activities, you will want to focus in particular on forms of organization that have emerged in the global society.

Note: Students who have completed all activities for SST1 will find that the following activities duplicate material from associated SST1 subjects. Use the following topics and activities to check your understanding and prepare for the SSC1 objective assessment.

Modern Organizations

Many different types of organization shape modern life. As you study the organizational forms that exist in the global society, you will want to focus closely on non-state actors. Consider the following questions:

- What are non-state actors?
Why are they so important in a global setting?
Do you encounter any of these organizations?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.2.1: Modern Institutions
  The graduate examines the development, characteristics, functions, and interdependence of modern economic, social, and political institutions.

**Modern Organizations Reading**

Engage in the “Global Society” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 4.1 Modern Organizations

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What are the defining features of modern bureaucracies? Why do bureaucracies exist?
- What is a nongovernmental organization (NGO)? What functions do NGOs serve? What are some examples of NGOs?
- Are multinational corporations NGOs?
- What are some other important types of non-state actors?
- What are some examples of multinational political organizations? How have they shaped the global society?

**Living in a Global Society**

As you complete the reading for this topic, you will want to focus on how the global society has transformed everyday experiences and social interaction. Consider the following questions:

- What elements of a global economy do you encounter on a daily basis?
- How different is the type of global communication available today from that of earlier generations?
- Are there any drawbacks to living in a global society?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.2.1: Modern Institutions
  The graduate examines the development, characteristics, functions, and interdependence of modern economic, social, and political institutions.

**Global Society Reading**

Engage in the “Global Society” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 4.2 Living in a Global Society
Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What kinds of changes (at work and home) have individuals and groups experienced in the global society?
- Why are undereducated and unskilled laborers vulnerable in a global economy?
- How have computers transformed life in the global society?
- How has Francis Fukuyama characterized social life in the global society? How do his ideas differ from those of Lester Thurow?

**Self and Society**

The activities within this subject will focus on the complex relationship of the human self to society.

When social scientists and philosophers refer to the self, they are referring to the way people view themselves as developed, individual persons. Their picture of themselves is bound up with many social factors and is constantly evolving. Social scientists attempt to explain this process from a variety of perspectives.

*Note: Students who have completed all activities for SST1 will find that the following activities duplicate material from associated SST1 subjects. Use the following topics and activities to check your understanding and prepare for the SSC1 objective assessment.*

**Social Interaction**

One of the central insights of modern social science is that the individual's self-understanding is inseparable from interaction with other individuals and within social groups. In the following activities, you will focus on the roles of different social factors in social interaction. Consider the following questions:

- How do your interactions with other people shape your own life?
- What institutions influence your behavior?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.1.2: Social Science and Human Development
  The graduate examines fundamental social science concepts and theories that relate to the development of human thought, behavior, and social relationships.

**Social Interaction Reading**

Engage in the “Self and Society” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 6.1 Social Interaction

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- How does George Herbert Mead explain socialization?
- What is symbolic interactionism?
- What is Charles Horton Cooley's "looking glass" theory of the self?
- How does a negative self-image tend to influence behavior?
- How do defense mechanisms influence social interaction?
- How do families shape the individual's socialization?
- What effects can peer groups have on social development?
- What roles can the mass media play in socialization?
- What are some significant causes of socially deviant behavior? How does Robert Merton explain deviance?
- What is Emile Durkheim's concept of anomie?

**Race, Class, and Gender**

Many of the social categories through which people understand the world (and their own place in the world) are constructed. This means that these categories do not reflect facts that exist in nature but are the products of complex social processes. Social science provides special insight into the ways that ideas of race, social class, and gender have been constructed (and are constantly in the process of being reconstructed). Consider the following questions:

- What factors influence ideas of race, class, and gender?
- Why is it important that people ask this question?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 113.1.2: Social Science and Human Development**
  The graduate examines fundamental social science concepts and theories that relate to the development of human thought, behavior, and social relationships.

**Race, Class, and Gender Reading**

Engage in the “Self and Society” learning module by visiting the [General Education Social Science](#) learning environment and complete the following:

- 6.2 Race, Class, and Gender

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What social factors have played significant roles in the development of class identity?
- According to Karl Marx, what causes social classes to develop? How does Max Weber answer this question?
- How have economic factors shaped perceptions of racial identities?
- How have the theories of multiculturalism and pluralism influenced modern society?
- What is stereotyping? Why does it take place?
- In what ways have ideas about Native American identity changed over time?
- What is the difference between sex and gender?
- How are gender roles acquired? And can they place limits on human achievement?

**Markets and Regulation**
The activities within this subject will introduce you to the characteristics of modern market economies, as well as the reasons states play a role in regulating them.

Complex market economies began to develop in the early modern period (roughly between 1500 and 1800). While many economists believe that modern markets must be allowed to run their own course and to regulate themselves (in the nineteenth-century this idea was labeled *laissez-faire*), modern markets have relied on state support and regulation. Much economic thought is devoted to figuring out the types and degrees of state activity that are appropriate in the economic sphere.

*Note: Students who have completed all activities for SST1 will find that the following activities duplicate material from associated SST1 subjects. Use the following topics and activities to check your understanding and prepare for the SSC1 objective assessment.*

**Market Activity**

Economists examine market activity from many different perspectives. In the following activities, you will want to play close attention to the definition and organization of different types of markets. Consider the following questions: How do economic markets shape our behavior? What functions do markets serve?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 113.2.1: Modern Institutions**
  The graduate examines the development, characteristics, functions, and interdependence of modern economic, social, and political institutions.

**Market Activity Reading**

Engage in the “Markets and Regulation” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 7.1 Market Activity

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What is a *free market economy*?
- How can a market economy pose challenges to ideas of civic responsibility?
- What is a *monopoly*? How is it different from an oligopoly?
- What are the primary, secondary, and tertiary labor markets?
- How have social changes (such as industrialization and the emergence of labor unions) shaped labor markets?
- What do economists mean by "*full employment*"?
- What is the difference between *microeconomics* and *macroeconomics*?
- What is a price system?
- How do economists differentiate between a product market and a factor market?

As you read "Labor Markets (Notes for Chapter 2)," be sure to define any vocabulary, clarify any
confusing topics, and answer all of the listed questions in your notebook with help from the message board. Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What are the different types of labor markets? What kinds of activities define these markets?
- How is equilibrium achieved in different types of labor markets?
- How do free markets react to labor shortages?

**State Regulation**

State regulation of markets takes place on many different levels, ranging from regulation of banks and industry to efforts to control international trade through protectionist policies. Consider the following questions:

- What kinds of roles should the state serve in economic life?
- In what ways are your own daily transactions regulated by some form of government?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.2.1: Modern Institutions
  The graduate examines the development, characteristics, functions, and interdependence of modern economic, social, and political institutions.

**State Regulation Reading**

Engage in the “Markets and Regulation” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 7.2 State Regulation

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- Why do market economies require forms of regulation?
- What is *inflation*?
- What are the functions of fiscal and monetary policy? What is the difference between fiscal and monetary policy?
- What is the purpose of the Federal Reserve Bank?
- In international trade, what kinds of protectionist policies do nations adopt? Why do they do so?

**Fundamental Concepts in Geography**

The activities under this subject will introduce you to the basic tools of geographical analysis and the characteristics of the global environment.

The study of geography requires competence in the use of maps to represent space and geographical features, as well as an understanding of the basic features of climates and the physical environment.
Characteristics and Types of Maps
Representation of the earth's features on flat surfaces suffers from the mathematical problem of putting a round object in a square frame of reference. Cartographers have developed different flat-projection maps of the Earth. Each of these types of projection has strengths and weaknesses. Consider the following questions:

- Why are maps so important to human societies?
- What have maps allowed people to do?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.2.2: Culture and Physical Environment
  The graduate recognizes and analyzes connections between human cultures and the physical environment, and applies knowledge of these connections to explain social and political change.

Maps Reading

Engage in the “Fundamental Concepts of Geography” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 8.1 Characteristics and Types of Maps

As you read Introduction to Geography’s chapter 1 (“Introduction to Geography”) and appendix 1 "Mapping Projections," pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What are the characteristics and possible uses of Mercator map projections?
- What are the characteristics and possible uses of cartograms?
- What are the characteristics and possible uses of conformal map projections?
- What are the characteristics and possible uses of equal-area maps?
- What are the differences in the type of information provided by large-scale versus small-scale maps?

As you read "Reading Topographic Maps and Making Calculations," these selections, be sure to define any vocabulary, clarify any confusing topics, and answer all of the listed questions in your notebook with help from the message board. Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What information does a topographical map provide?
- What symbols does a topographical map use to display features such as mountains, rivers, marshland, depressions, etc.?

Climates, Biomes, and Ecosystems
Climate, biomes, and ecosystems describe the makeup of the physical environment. They cover topics from temperature and weather patterns to the interaction among plant and animal species in a given geographic area. Climate regions also have had significant influence on the
types of human societies that developed before the advent of modern technology. Consider the following question:

- How does climate impact the region that you live in?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.2.2: Culture and Physical Environment
  The graduate recognizes and analyzes connections between human cultures and the physical environment, and applies knowledge of these connections to explain social and political change.

Climates, Biomes, and Ecosystem Reading

Engage in the “Fundamental Concepts of Geography” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 8.2 Climates, Biomes, and Ecosystems

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What are the characteristics of climate? How does the Koppen climate scale differentiate between climate regions? What are the temperature and precipitation characteristics of climate regions (tundra, humid tropical, desert, Mediterranean, etc.)?
- How does climate influence human settlement? What climate regions are most conducive to hunter-gatherer societies? Why is sedentary agriculture more attractive in temperate climates? How does climate change affect the suitability of climate regions for human habitation?
- What are the characteristics of an ecosystem? How does the definition of an ecosystem combine weather and climate with plant and animal life? What are the characteristics of specific ecosystems, including tundra, rainforest, deciduous forest, savannah, etc.
- What is the relationship among producers, consumers, and decomposers in an ecosystem?

Human Society and the Natural World

The activities within this subject will introduce you to the relationship between the natural world and the development of human societies.

The characteristics of the physical environment influence the development of societies. The study of social geography focuses on how physical features (such as mountains, rivers, and deserts), natural resources (such as easy access to fossil fuels or precious metals), and cultural characteristics (such as the diffusion of popular culture) contribute to the creation and day-to-day existence of societies.

Natural Resources

Natural resources can be grouped into two broad categories:
natural resources can affect the development of a nation. Consider the following questions:

- Why is gas so expensive?
- What's the point of recycling?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.2.2: Culture and Physical Environment
  The graduate recognizes and analyzes connections between human cultures and the physical environment, and applies knowledge of these connections to explain social and political change.

Natural Resources Reading

Engage in the “Human Society and the Natural World” learning module by visiting the General Education Social Science learning environment and complete the following:

- 9.1 Natural Resources

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- What are the characteristics of renewable natural resources? What are some examples of renewable resources? Are there circumstances in which renewable resources can be stressed beyond the point of replacement?
- What are the characteristics of nonrenewable resources? What are some examples of nonrenewable resources? How do activities such as recycling and reusing old products help to extend the life of nonrenewable resources? Are there resources that have no current substitute?
- How can natural resources affect regional economic or social development? How do regions with desirable natural resources (such as coal deposits in Pennsylvania) specialize in their extraction and production? Does this have consequences for nonrenewable resources?
- How can natural resources affect the development of nations and the international economy? How has the discovery of oil in countries in the developing world transformed their economies? How do nations with few or no natural resources compete in a global economy?
- How has the development of a global economy transformed the consumption of natural resources? Why do resources such as oil and fresh water face depletion due to increased global demand? Are resources with little or no substitutability particularly vulnerable to global consumption?

Geography and Civilization

Physical geography can have a profound influence on the composition and success of human
societies. Factors including weather patterns, temperature, access to natural resources (such as fresh water), etc. have shaped how human habitation has spread across the planet. While advancing technology has helped humans overcome some environmental constraints, the consumption of natural resources has begun to place significant limitations on societies. Consider the following questions:

- What are some of these limitations?
- How have humans adapted to them?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 113.2.2: Culture and Physical Environment
  The graduate recognizes and analyzes connections between human cultures and the physical environment, and applies knowledge of these connections to explain social and political change.

**Geography and Civilization Reading**

Engage in the “Human Society and the Natural World” learning module by visiting the [General Education Social Science](#) learning environment and complete the following:

- 9.2 Geography and Civilization

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas:

- How does social geography differ from physical geography? What are examples of social diffusion? Are there particular characteristics shared by pastoral nomadic cultures?
- Why is access to water important for the development of sedentary agriculture? How did access to fresh water and natural resources (such as bronze) shape the location and development of ancient societies?
- What are some of the demographic challenges of the developing world? How does access to fresh water, sea ports, and natural resources (including petroleum and mineral products) constrain the development of emerging nations in Africa, Asia, and South America? How do international disputes over resource rights influence the establishment of national boundaries?
- How does the consumption of fossil fuels affect the global environment? What are some examples of air pollution, water pollution, and land pollution? Why are conditions, such as acid precipitate, the consequences of prolonged industrial pollution?
- What determines the growth of a national population? How do factors such as population density and agricultural production affect birth and death rates? How do geographers describe high and low population growth rates? Why do some developed nations advocate a zero (or replacement) rate of population growth? How are population controls implemented (technology, cultural values, etc.)?

**Final Steps**
Congratulations on completing the activities in this course! This course has prepared you to complete the assessments associated with this course. If you have not already been directed to complete the assessments, schedule and complete your assessments now.

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- Course Feedback

Accessibility Policy

Western Governors University recognizes and fulfills its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and similar state laws. Western Governors University is committed to provide reasonable accommodation(s) to qualified disabled learners in University programs and activities as is required by applicable law(s). The Office of Student Accessibility Services serves as the principal point of contact for students seeking accommodations and can be contacted at ADASupport@wgu.edu. Further information
on WGU’s Accessibility policy and process can be viewed in the student handbook at the following link:

- [Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities](#)