

**NonWestern Culture: Interim Rules
Adopted by the CAS Council 11/20/95**

George Mason students currently must fulfill 6 hours of course work devoted to “NonWestern culture.” The issue of a definition of “nonwestern,” always problematic, becomes even more complicated as cultures diffuse and mix in the global system of the 1990s. Although a very general written description exists, it does not provide a very precise idea of what should be included and what should be excluded from the category. Different departments seem to have different working criteria for courses they submit for nonwestern credit. The following implicit decision rules reflect the consensus of a meeting of faculty and administrators interested in the nonwestern question held on 11/20/95. We would like to propose that they be accepted on an interim basis, pending a more thorough examination of this issue.

- A. Courses about countries, societies, or regions in Africa, Asia, Central and South America (before colonization), and the Pacific Islands (excluding Australia and New Zealand after colonization) fulfill the nonwestern Culture requirement.
- B. If these courses deal with the arts, culture, economic system, history, human geography, literature (written or oral), music, philosophy, politics, society, science and technology, religion of these countries, societies or regions, the requests will be accepted by the curriculum committee.

In addition:

1. Comparative courses may count, provided the primary focus of the course is oriented towards a “nonwestern” country, region or society.
2. Courses whose geographic focus is Australia, New Zealand or North America may be used for nonwestern credit only if the primary focus of the course is on indigenous peoples.
3. Courses about the former Soviet Union or its predecessors may count for nonwestern credit.
4. All courses pertaining to Latin America may count for nonwestern credit.
5. Courses whose primary focus is the Middle East will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

All courses currently on the nonwestern list should still be included, whether or not they precisely fill the criteria above.

No department will be required to submit a course for nonwestern credit it did not believe should be described as nonwestern.