



Syllabus



Syllabus: Geography 1106 Lab

(GEOG 1106 – Spring 2014)

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Course Description

Why study physical geography? For many, there is a natural curiosity about how Earth processes work and how different landscapes formed. This is what physical geographers do: investigate natural patterns and processes.

Geography lab is to support the concepts covered in the lecture portion, Geography 1301 and will give you hands-on activities to reinforce the concepts in physical geography and how it affects your everyday life. This course will deal with maps and data systems involving processes and spatial patterns in the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere. Our focus will be quantitative and analytical, producing and interpreting graphs and statistical relationships.

Catalog Description. Introduction to Physical Geography Laboratory (1-0) An introduction to features and processes of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, and lithosphere, with emphasis on spatial (distribution) patterns, and interactions between the four Earth realms and human activities.

Course Objectives

- To understand the compilation of maps and to be able to demonstrate competence in extracting and interpreting geographic information from the types of maps most commonly used in physical geography, with special emphasis on topographic maps and weather maps.
- To understand and be able to compute and explain concepts of frequency and recurrence of events in physical geography.
- To explain how scientific methods, models, and theories are used to describe and explain environmental processes and patterns.
- To provide successful experiences in identifying and acquiring data from maps and other sources, designing and executing analyze, and writing up findings.
- Practice independent thinking. Students will critically evaluate the information they receive regarding environmental issues so they can make informed and independent decisions.
- Enhance academic skills including the use of electronic resources.

Course Expectations

This course is an on-line course. Assignments and all of the communication will take place via Blackboard. Communication between the instructor and the students, as well as among students, takes place via electronic means on the Internet. On-line learning is different than sitting in a classroom. On-line learning may require a more intensive effort on the part of the learner because the learner will have to gather information on their own as directed by the instructor instead of listening to a lecture. On-line learning does give you the freedom to study when and how you want.

The principal means of communication will be the tools in Blackboard. Assignments are to be submitted via each Learning Module. You correspond with the instructor and with other students via the Email tool. Your e-mail message will only go to those people you designate. In contrast, postings using the Discussion Tool are posted so that everyone in the class can read the posting and respond. The Discussion Tool will be used for some assignments. Feel free to initiate discussions if you have questions or see something of interest to the class as a whole. I may edit and organize discussion postings as needed.

Procedures

- Weekly labs will be posted and can be accessed under the link **Learning Modules** on the course home page in Blackboard. Each lab will include an introduction to the topic and an assignment. **It is important to keep up.**
- You should access labs as they become available and note what needs to be done and plan your work accordingly. I recommend that you visit the site 2 – 3 times weekly to check for e-mail, messages, and discussion postings.
- You may submit work at any time before the due date and the earlier the better. It is not wise to wait until the last minute because 'technical difficulties' are not a valid excuse for missing a deadline.
- I will typically visit the electronic classroom daily and will try to acknowledge all e-mails within 2-4 hours during the workweek until 5pm. Questions and messages posted after 5 pm or over the weekend may not be acknowledged until the following day.
- I am available to answer any questions you may have concerning the work that is due. Please don't hesitate to ask questions either via email to me or via the Discussion board to the entire class.
- I make every attempt to present this class free of errors, but they do happen. If you see an error (due date, question, etc.) please email me and let me know so I can fix it ASAP.

Assessment and Grading Criteria

Each week there will be a laboratory exercise that begins during the class meeting and is due for submission at the end of lab or as soon as possible thereafter – the final deadline of completion of the exercise is the beginning of the following week's lab session. Each lab will be graded as follows:

12 labs will be offered during the course of the term. You need to provide 11 completed labs for your grade. Each lab is worth 20 points. Your letter grade for the course will be based on your aggregate score from your 11 labs (maximum of $11 \times 20 = 220$ points)

- A = 90– 100% (198–220 points)
- B = 80–89% (176–197 points)
- C = 70–79% (154–175 points)
- D = 60–69% (132–153 points)
- F = < 60% (131 or less points)

Each Lab will have an accompanying activity. These activities are intended to provide examples of the concepts covered in the lecture and how scientists work.

- The labs will be linked to from within each Learning Module. The Learning Module will include an introduction to the lab and links to additional materials.
- You will be provided with an Lab Answer Sheet in Rich Text Format (RTF). Download it to your computer, fill in the answers, do a "Save As...." .rtf and upload it for grading.
- The labs are to be submitted via the lab link within each Learning Module. I do NOT accept labs anywhere but the lab dropbox, no emails!
- A comment box is available in the Lab dropbox where you may post any comments you want me to read concerning your work. I, too, will use the comment box to post any comments I may have on your work as I was grading it. Please return to read the comments, especially if you do not receive a grade for an assignment within a few days of the due date.
- If/when extra credit is offered, it is only good if you turn in your work on time. Late work cannot earn extra credit.
- I prefer your work to be answered using your own words, not copied verbatim from a text, the internet, or a fellow student. Copying answers, especially if not referenced, is [plagiarism](#).
- Wikipedia is not peer-reviewed and therefore can contain errors, please do not use that website.
- Labs will be graded on a 20 point scale. The grade will be based both on content and on completeness of the response.

Your labs will be graded as follows:

- 18-20: The lab is complete and correct. It shows insight and careful reflection on the topic. It is well written with complete sentences that respond to the questions. It was completed on time.
- 16-18: The lab is essentially complete. The learner shows understanding of the topic although there are minor errors they are not conceptual in nature.
- 14-16: The lab is missing one or two answers or there are complete or there are errors in the work that reflect a misconception or lack of understanding.
- 12-14: The lab is lacking more than one answer. Work is poorly done or displayed and does not demonstrate understanding of topics.
- <12: Does not effectively address the assignment, major portions are missing.

Course Outline

Please Note: The following schedule may be subject to change.

Learning Module	Lab Topics	Due
Learning Module 1 Introduction to Class	Lab 1: Introduction to Blackboard, Unit Conversions	Thursday, January 30
Learning Module 2 Reading and Interpreting Data	Lab 2: Temperature Change Lab 3: Isarithmic Maps: Analysis and Profiles	Lab 2: Thursday, February 6 Lab 3: Thursday, February 13
Learning Module 3 Global Weather Controls	Lab 4: Seasons Lab 5: Solar Energy Lab 6: Temperature and Pressure	Lab 4: Thursday, February 20 Lab 5: Thursday, February 27 Lab 6: Thursday, March 6
Learning Module 4 Weather	Lab 7: Clouds Lab 8: Reading Weather Maps	Lab 7: Thursday, March 20 Lab 8: Thursday, March 27
Learning Module 5 Water in Our Environment	Lab 9: Water Balance Lab 10: Streams	Lab 9: Thursday, April 3 Lab 10: Thursday, April 10
Learning Module 6	Lab 11: Biomes	Lab 11: Thursday, April 17

Course Policies for Students

- **Informed Consent:** Some individuals may choose to disclose personal information during class. Therefore, it is important that all classmates agree not to discuss or write about what others have discussed in class.
- **Disability Statement:** Services for students with disabilities are provided through the Disability Services Office. Some examples of the assistance provided are: audio materials for the blind or dyslexic, note takers, readers, campus guides, audio recorders, a quiet testing area, and undergraduate academic tutors.
- **Military Statement:** If you are a military student with the potential of being called into military service and/or training during the course of the semester you are encouraged to contact the instructor regarding these matters.
- **Professionalism:** Students are learning professional skills and are expected to engage in classroom discussions, complete reading assignments and turn in assignments in a timely fashion as befitting professional behavior.
- **Scholarly Writing:** Use clear college level writing with correct spelling and grammar for all assignments. If you need help in writing, check with the Writing Center.
- **Integrated Use of Technology:** Because this is an online course, I am making the assumption that you are comfortable utilizing a computer, and navigating various software programs like Microsoft Word, Powerpoint. If you have any questions about computer requirements see the *Student Resources* course in Blackboard.
- **Need Help?**
 1. Post a question to the CyberCafe discussion board. There is no such thing as a dumb question.
 2. Post a question as a Blackboard email to your instructor.
 3. If the Blackboard system goes down or you have other technical questions, contact the UTEP Help Desk
- **Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures:** Each student shall observe standards of honesty and integrity in academic work completed at UTEP. Students may be penalized for violations of the Academic Integrity policy. Please refer to the Academic Integrity section in the current UTEP Catalog.
- **Caveats:** The schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.
- **Code of Civility:**

In order to promote a positive, professional atmosphere among students, faculty and staff, the following Code of Civility has been developed:

 - **Respect:** Treat all students, faculty, staff and property with respect and in a courteous and professional manner. This includes all communications, whether verbal or written. Let your actions reflect pride in yourself, your university, and your profession.
 - **Kindness:** A kind word and gentle voice go a long way. Refrain from using profanity, insulting slang remarks, or making disparaging comments. Consider another person's feelings. Be nice.
 - **Truth:** Exhibit honesty and integrity in your dealings with fellow students, faculty and staff members. Don't lie, don't cheat, and don't steal.
- **Responsibility:** Take responsibility for your actions. This includes gracefully accepting the consequences of your behavior.
- **Cooperation:** Exhibit a cooperative manner when dealing with students, faculty and staff so we may all work towards our common goals and mission.
- **Acceptance:** Accept differences in others, as they accept differences in you. This includes diversity in opinions, beliefs and ideas and everything else that makes us unique individuals.
- **Professionalism:** Always conduct yourself in a manner that will bring pride to your profession, to UTEP, and, most importantly, to yourself.

