

GEO 130 1501
Earth's Physical Environment

Spring 2008 Semester, 11-12:15
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Course Description

A course exploring the fundamental characteristics of earth's physical environment. Emphasis is placed on identifying interrelationships between atmospheric processes involving energy, pressure, and moisture; weather and climate; and terrestrial processes of vegetative biomes, soils, and landscape formation and change. Fulfills elementary certification requirements in education, and USP cross-disciplinary requirement.

Grading Criteria

All grades are based on a hundred point scale, including the final course grade, with 100 – 90 = A, 89.9-80 = B, 79.9 -70 = C, 69.9 – 60 = D, and 59.9 or below an E or failure. Grade requirements are weighted as detailed below

Requirement/Assignment	Weight or Points
Exam 1: Global Systems & Weather	25%
Exercise 1: Extreme Weather Report	25%
Exam 2: Landscapes & Landforms	25%
Exercise 2: Park Poster & Presentation	25%

Requirement/Assignment Descriptions

Exam 1 and Exercise 1 focus on weather processes that create the earth's landscapes. Students will focus exercises 1 & 2 on Great Smoky Mountains National Park weather observations and landforms. The first exercise will report an extreme winter weather event for the park with a 7-day chart of weather observations (includes daily high and low temperature, and snow depth) and a 1-page summary of the storm. The period of observation will be determined by forecasted weather conditions and announced in class. Students will collect the necessary information from National Weather Service's website and will be shown in class how to construct a weather observation chart. Exam 1 is based on the required reading up to that point in class and is a mix of multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions.

Exam 2 and Exercise 2 focus on the multitude of earth's landscapes and landforms, such as arid, coastal, and karst landscapes. The second exercise explores landforms in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Students will chose 2 landforms in the park and write a 4-page essay on why these features are geographically important. The essay can contain maps and photographs but must be no less than 500 words and no more than 1,000 words in length and conform to college writing standards. Exam 2 is based on the required reading up to that point in class and is a mix of multiple choice questions.

All exercises and exams are worth 25% of your final grade. Students can earn extra credit by 1) giving a 5-minute in-class presentation on their essay and 2) completing 4 random exercises given throughout the semester. The extra credit could add up to 10 percentage points to your overall. If a student fails any exam or exercise, then that student will not be offered the chance to complete the extra credit exercise or earn any extra credit. If you fail any 2 exams or exercises, you will fail this course. Although attendance is not required (read below) if you miss more than 5 classes without a documented emergency, such as illness, death in the immediate family, attendance at events required by the college, or traffic accidents on the way to class, then you will not be offered the chance to complete the extra credit exercise or earn any extra credit.

Attendance Policy

This course does not require attendance. However, students will not adequately complete exercises without good attendance nor able to receive extra credit.

Make-up and Late Work Policy

Students will have an opportunity to make up a missed exam if the student has a documented emergency, such as illness, death in the immediate family, attendance at events required by the college, or traffic accidents on the way to class. Exercises may be turned in late without penalty if the student has a documented emergency. In the absence of documentation, the exercise will be lowered 10 percentage points each class period the exercise is late.

Withdraw/Incomplete Policy

Official withdraw from the class is required by the registrar to avoid a failing grade. The instructor will not withdraw you automatically simply because you quit attending class. The LCC Schedule of Classes lists the date that a student may withdraw from the class at their discretion without a W and the date that they may still withdraw at their discretion but receive a W on their transcript for the course. After that date students may withdraw with a grade of W from the course only at the instructor's discretion. **The instructor will only consider requests to withdraw if there are clearly mitigating circumstances.**

Student Rights and Responsibilities

All rules and regulations set forth in the current edition of the *KCTCS Code of Student Conduct* handbook will be followed in the course. It is the student's responsibility to obtain a copy of *KCTCS Code of Student Conduct* on the Web at: <http://www.kctcs.edu/student/studentcodeofconduct.pdf>. **Cheating, plagiarism or aiding another student in doing so** on any assignment or exam as defined in section 2.3 of the *KCTCS Code of Student Conduct* will result in (your decision on the penalty but I give them a zero on the assignment) and potentially further academic discipline.

Classroom Conduct

The use of cell phones during class is prohibited. Students who use their cell phones during class will be asked to leave and will be counted as absent, unexcused for that day. Cell phones may not be used or even visible to the student during exams. If at any point during an exam a student's cell phone becomes visible to them it will be considered cheating resulting in failure on the exam. No eating during class, but sodas and drinks are allowed if consumed quietly.

Reasonable Accommodation

If you have any special needs or considerations in terms of lecture, assignments, or testing please notify the instructor immediately. Special needs must be documented with the Disability Support Office.

Required Readings & Resources

Required: McKnight, Tom L., *Physical Geography: A Landscape Appreciation*, 8th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Required: Internet access and durable notebook for Exercises 1 & 2.

Course Outline

Topic	Chapters	Week
Introduction to Physical Geography	Ch. 1	1 – Jan 8, 10
Portraying the Earth & Intro to the Atmosphere	Ch. 2-3	2 – Jan 15,17
Insolation and Temperature & Atmospheric Pressure	Ch. 4-5	3 – Jan 22, 24
Atmospheric Moisture, Flows, & Disturbances	Ch. 6-7	4 – Jan 29, 31
Climatic Zones and Types	Ch. 8	5 – Feb 5, 7
-Exercise 1: Extreme Weather Report Due	-----	Feb 14
The Hydrosphere & Cycle and Patterns in the Biosphere	Ch. 9-10	6 – Feb 12, 14

Major Biomes and Test Review	Ch. 11	7 – Feb 19
-Exam 1: Global Systems, Weather, & Map Reading	-----	Feb 21
Introduction to Landform Study	Ch. 13	9 – Feb 26, 28
The Internal Processes	Ch. 14	10 – Mar 4, 6
-SPRING BREAK	-----	8 – Mar 11, 13
Weathering & Mass Wasting	Ch. 15	11 – Mar 18, 20
Fluvial Landscapes	Ch. 16	12 – Mar 25
Karst Landscapes	Ch. 17	13 – Apr 1, 3
Arid Landscapes	Ch. 18	14 – Apr 8, 10
Glacial & Coastal Landscapes	Ch. 19-20	15 – Apr 15, 17
Poster Presentations & Test Review		16 – Apr 22, 24
-Exercise 2: Landform Essay Due	-----	Apr 22
-Exam 2: Landscapes & Landforms		17 - TBA

General Education Competencies

- I. Communicate Effectively
 1. Read and listen with comprehension.
 2. Speak and write clearly using standard English.
 3. Interact cooperatively with others using both verbal and non-verbal means.
 4. Demonstrate information processing through basic computer skills.
- II. Think Critically
 1. Make connections in learning across the disciplines and draw logical conclusions.
 2. Demonstrate problem solving through interpreting, analyzing, summarizing, and/or integrating a variety of materials.
 3. Use mathematics to organize, analyze, and synthesize data to solve a problem.
- III. Learn Independently
 1. Use appropriate search strategies and resources to find, evaluate, and use information.
 2. Make choices based upon awareness of ethics and differing perspectives/ideas.
 3. Apply learning in academic, personal, and public situations.
 4. Think creatively to develop new ideas, processes, or products.
- IV. Examine Relationships in Diverse and Complex Environments
 1. Recognize the relationship of the individual to human heritage and culture.
 2. Demonstrate an awareness of the relationship of the individual to the biological and physical environment.
 3. Develop an awareness of self as an individual member of a multicultural global community.

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