

Houston Community College - Northwest Katy Campus

Geography 1301 Course Syllabus

Course Information:

Course Title: Physical Geography
Course Prefix/Number: GEOG 1301
CRN (Section Code): 32624
Semester: Spring 2013
Site: Katy 384
Class Days/Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 AM – 12:30 PM
Credit Hours: 3
Class structure: Lecture / Web-Enhanced

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7-9:30 AM*
Office Location – Katy Campus, 359B ; also available Wednesdays
at Spring Branch, 8:30-9:30 (by appointment)
*Tutoring on Tuesdays 8-9 AM, Katy Campus Library
Instructor Webpage: <http://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/bryant.evans>

Instructional Materials:

Required: "Visualizing Physical Geography", 2/e (Strahler) and
either the Goode's World Atlas (21e or 22e) OR the National
Geographic College Atlas of the World (1e or 2e)

Note: Other readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

Course Description. This class will serve as an introduction to the physical elements. The major topics to be covered include weather, climate, vegetation, soils, and landforms. Additionally, this course will examine their importance to humans, their interrelationships, resulting patterns, and effects. The course meets a non-lab Natural Science Core requirement at Houston Community College.

Course Objectives. Upon completion of this course, you will be able to do the following:

- Have a better understanding of the world around you.
- Read, interpret, analyze and understand maps more readily.
- Have a greater understanding of physical processes and interrelationships between the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere.
- Discuss the basic principles of weather and climate on our planet.
- Develop a spatial perspective that links physical processes to places and that explores connections between the environment and humans.

Course Structure. This is a web-enhanced course. We will meet regularly for class on-site, but a significant portion of the class will also take place on the web via Moodle-Eagle Online. You are expected to participate in all dimensions of the class, both on-site and on the web.

Accessing Moodle-Eagle Online. Moodle is the name of the classroom management system where the web-enhanced segments of our course will take place. You will need to log in to Moodle at least a couple times each week throughout the semester to access notes, assignments, etc. The address for accessing Moodle on the web is <https://hccs1.mrooms3.net/login/index.php>. Your Eagle Online ID is the same as your HCC User ID (i.e. W0023456). The first time you log in to Moodle, you will type your user id and the default Eagle Online password of "distance". This password is independent of your online registration password, and it will be your responsibility to change your password. In case you run into technical difficulties, you can access the Eagle-Online help desk at <http://d2.parature.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8513>

Important Phone Numbers:

For questions concerning the course: Bryant Evans (713) 718-5828

For Moodle-Eagle Online technical support: (877) 422-6111

For general information about the Katy Campus: (713) 718-5757

For general information about Houston Community College: (713) 718-2000

HCC Mission Statement:

- The Houston Community College System is an open-admission, public institution of higher education offering academic preparation, and lifelong learning opportunities that prepare individuals in our diverse communities for life and work in an increasingly international and technological society. The Northwest History and Geography Department will provide an environment conducive to learning and encourages academic excellence. Furthermore, the History and Geography faculty will encourage the development of the following competencies: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Critical Thinking and Computer Literacy.

Attendance:

- You are expected to attend every class meeting during the course of the semester. You are also expected to be in class on time. This is showing basic respect to your fellow classmates and instructor. You are, however, allowed up to 3 absences for whatever reason – more than 3 absences and/or frequent lateness to class will result in points being taken from your grade.
- If the instructor is more than 15 minutes late to class, students may identify the course and instructor on a blank paper and sign it to show proof of attendance and turn it into the front desk in the administrative offices at the Katy Campus.

Drop/Withdrawal:

Students may drop/add/swap the class by doing so on or before January 13th. Approval of requests for changes will be based on availability of space in the class to which you wish to transfer. **It is the responsibility of the student to drop or withdraw from this course.** I will not drop/withdraw any student who doesn't meet with me first to request/explain the need for a withdrawal. Failure to officially drop or withdraw will likely result in the student receiving an "F" for the course.

The last day for student withdrawals is April 1st. This must be done prior to 4:30 PM on April 1st in order to receive a "W" on your transcript. The State of Texas imposes penalties on students who drop courses excessively. For example, if you repeat the same course more than twice, you have to pay extra tuition. The Texas Legislature passed a law in 2007 limiting new students to no more than six total course withdrawals throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree.

Academic Integrity:

- Violations of scholastic ethics are considered serious offenses by Houston Community College, the Department of History and Geography, and by your instructor. Students may consult the HCC Student Handbook to find out more about academic honesty. An online copy can be found at: <http://www.hccs.edu/handbook/StudentP.htm>
- **Notice:** Students who repeat the course three or more times will face significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. If you are considering course withdrawal because you are not earning passing grades, confer with me or your counselor as early as possible about your study habits, reading and writing homework, test-taking skills, attendance, course participation, and opportunities for tutoring or other assistance that might be available.

ADA Compliance:

- Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at the respective college at the beginning of each semester. Faculty are authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office. Please contact 713-718-5708 for more information.

Classroom Behavior:

- Overall respect of fellow students and instructor is expected.
- Possession of drugs, alcohol, or firearms on college property is illegal.
- Eating, drinking, smoking and soliciting are not allowed in classrooms.
- Pets, telephones, pagers and other electronic devices that distract students are not allowed in classrooms (for example, **there is to be no text messaging taking place during class**). Points will be deducted from your grade if your cell phone rings in class or if you are seen texting. In fact, there will be zero tolerance for texting in class – if you are caught texting in class, you will be told to leave.
- Students creating disturbances that interfere with the conduct of the class or the learning of others will be asked to leave.

Your final grade will be distributed as follows:

Assignment	% of course grade	Points
Class Participation/Attendance	10%	40
Web Assignments/Quizzes	20%	80
Term Paper	20%	80
Mid Term Exams*	25%	100
Final Exam	25%	100
TOTAL	100%	400

Grades

360-400 points (90-100%) = A

320-359 points (80-89%) = B

280-319 points (70-79%) = C

240-279 points (60-69%) = D

239 points or below (below 60%) = F

Grading Policy. There will be two midterm exams in our class. Your lowest midterm score will be dropped. A midterm score can't be a replacement for your final exam grade. Extra credit is not available in this course. Make-up assignments will not be allowed and late papers will not be accepted. Your grade will be a reflection of your overall effort, participation and achievement in the course.

Writing Assignments. Your primary writing assignment will be your term paper, which will be due sometime in April. The length of the term paper will be approximately 5 pages and the content will be based on a geographic theme to be discussed at a later date.

Other assignments. Your "web assignments/quizzes" grade will primarily consist of weekly assignments related to the course material. You must complete the assignments in Moodle-Eagle Online within the time frame that it is due. You will not be allowed to submit assignments or quizzes in late.

Additional important notes:

- **Course Outline notes:** You will be able to access a general outline of the weekly notes by logging onto our Moodle-Eagle Online Course Page. You will need to have PDF reader (which is free to download) in order to access and print out the notes. These are only meant to be a supplement to (and not a replacement) for in-class notes. The weekly notes will only be posted for limited time periods - please do not ask for the notes to be posted before they appear online or after they've been "retired".
- **Laptops in class:** Laptops can be a great resource, but they can also be a big distraction (for you and for me)! I allow for you to bring your laptops to class, but only for the purpose of note-taking. Surfing the web or instant messaging during class will not be tolerated – if you are caught doing this, you will no longer be allowed to use your laptop within our class.
- **Exam policy:** No exams will be handed out once the first student has completed his/her exam. If you show up this late, the consequence will be a "zero" on the exam.
- **EGLS₃-- Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System:** At Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time, you will be asked to answer a

short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your professors and division chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the survey as part of the Houston Community College Student System online near the end of the term.

- **Pandora's Box Film Festival:** The Pandora's Box Film Festival is scheduled to take place this semester on the Katy Campus. If you attend one of the films, get the voucher for attending and write a two paragraph synopsis of/ response to the film. You may replace your lowest class assignment grade of the semester. You may attend as many films as you'd like, but you may only replace one class assignment grade.

Course Outline - Please note that the content for specific dates given are "best estimates;" they may be adjusted from time to time.

Week 1:

January 15 - Introduction; Location, Mapping and Scale (Chapter 1)
January 17 - Time and Space (Chapter 1)

Week 2:

January 22 - Energy Balance (Chapter 2)
January 24 - Web Assignments

Week 3:

January 29 - Air Temperature (Chapter 3)
January 31 - Web Assignments

Week 4:

February 5 - Atmospheric Pressure and Winds (Chapter 5)
February 7 - Web Assignments

Week 5:

February 12 - Atmospheric Moisture and Precipitation (Chapter 4)
February 14 - Ground and Surface Water (Chapter 11) / Midterm Review

Week 6:

February 19 - **Midterm I**
February 21 - Water Case Study

Week 7:

February 26 - Weather and Climate (Chapters 6/7)
February 28 - Weather and Climate (Chapters 6/7) – continued

Week 8:

March 5 - Lithosphere (Chapters 8/9)
March 7 - Web Assignments

SPRING BREAK - March 11-17

Week 9:

March 19 - Biosphere (Chapters 15/17)
March 21 - Web Assignments

Week 10:

March 26 - Place Overview / Midterm Review
March 28 - **Midterm II**

Week 11:

April 2 - Physical Geography of Africa
April 4 - Africa Atlas Exercise

Week 12:

April 9 - Physical Geography of Europe and Russia
April 11 - Web Assignments

Week 13:

April 16 - Physical Geography of Asia
April 18 - Web Assignments

Week 14:

April 23 - Physical Geography of Oceania and South America
April 25 - Web Assignments

Week 15:

April 30 - Physical Geography of Middle and North America
May 2 - Middle and North America – continued; Final Exam Review

Week 16:

May 7 - **Final Exam**