Houston Community College – Northwest
Distance Education
Geography 1301 Course Syllabus

Course Information:
Course Title: Physical Geography Online
Course Prefix/Number: GEOG 1301
CRN (Section Code): 43169
Semester/Date: Spring 2015 / January 20 – May 17, 2015
Course Description: Geography is a dynamic spatial science that features a heritage of investigating the relationship between people and the natural environment through time and space. Physical geography explores the spatial distribution of climate, topography, water, soils, ecosystems, and other natural phenomena on the Earth's surface, along with the functional interactions that exist between them and their relationships with humanity. This course features the physical environment through a spatial lens, focusing upon the basic forces that govern the distribution and flow of mass and energy over the Earth's surface and applying knowledge of these processes to better comprehend major environmental issues such as climate change, water scarcity, and desertification. The theoretical focus of this class is on the Earth as a set of interconnected systems guided by mass and energy exchanges. The course meets a non-lab Natural Science Core requirement at Houston Community College.

Course Location: Online (Moodle-Eagle Online); exams will be taken online
Credit Hours: 3
Instructor Information:
Name: Bryant Evans
US Mail: Houston Community College - Northwest
Katy Campus, 1550 Foxlake Drive, Suite 359B, Houston, TX 77084
Phone: (713) 718-5828
Email: bryant.evans@hccs.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7-9:30 AM; Wednesdays at Spring Branch 8:30-9:30 AM (please contact me to schedule an appointment if you would like to meet during my office hours)
Office Location: Katy Campus, 359B
***Tutoring available**: Tuesdays 8-9 AM, Katy Campus Library
Instructor Webpage: http://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/bryant.evans

Distance Education Course - Description:
• This Internet geography course will cover the same materials as a traditional in-class course. One big difference is that it will not be necessary to attend lectures. Rather, we will communicate often with one another online. This course requires you to be disciplined and self-motivated. You will need to rely upon yourself to complete the readings and assignments, study the materials, and participate in discussions. This course also assumes that you have basic computer skills, or a basic level of computer literacy. By the end of the course, you will be comfortable navigating through our "virtual classroom" while simultaneously expanding your geographic skills and knowledge.

Instructional Materials:

Required: "Visualizing Physical Geography, 2/e " by Strahler

Note: Other readings may be assigned throughout the semester. Please make sure to have your textbook in hand by Week 2. As a DE student, you have several options in buying your text, including: (1) visit the HCC Central campus bookstore to purchase books immediately, (2) visit any HCC bookstore to order textbooks to be shipped from the HCC Central campus bookstore to that location – this process usually takes 24-hours, or (3) order online via the HCC Bookstore webpage at http://hccs.bkstore.com/. There are other affordable options available as well. One example is to purchase an e-text version of the textbook, which provides you with online access to the text for 180 days. This option is available at www.coursesmart.com.

Accessing Moodle-Eagle Online. Moodle is the name of the classroom management system where all of our online assignments for this class 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://eo2.hccs.edu/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://bbcrm.edusupportcenter.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8513

Objectives / Student Learning Outcomes – Courses at HCC have objectives which are centered on "Student Learning Outcomes" (SLOs). These reflect what students will know, be able to do, or be able to demonstrate once they have taken a course. The objectives for this course are guided by the measureable core competency and student learning outcome paradigms. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define geography, physical geography, and the earth's four interrelated spheres: the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere.
2. Describe geography in terms of flows, maps, and place.
3. Explain the earth's geographic reference grid, specifically developing an understanding of latitude and longitude.
4. Describe geographic patterns associated with the atmosphere.
5. Explain patterns of climate and weather.
6. Analyze geographic patterns linked to the hydrosphere.
7. Discuss/explain the physical processes and geographic patterns associated with the lithosphere.
8. Describe geographic patterns that are connected to the biosphere.

Core Competencies – Courses offered at HCC which are taken within "core" status meet a set of stringent guidelines which will help the student advance core skills in foundational areas. Physical Geography meets a Life and Physical Sciences core requirement at HCC. Life and Physical Sciences core area courses "focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method" and "involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on human experiences." By taking a Life and Physical Sciences core offering, you will have the opportunity to further develop the following core competencies: critical thinking skills, communication skills, empirical and quantitative skills, and teamwork skills. Throughout the semester, assignments and assessments in this class will help measure your advancement in each of these core competencies.

Assignments as they relate to each of the core competencies

Critical Thinking Skills - Examples may include, but are not limited to: research, reports, writings, use of Scientific Method, technology-based compilations or presentations which include analysis, analysis/solutions of problems/case studies, analysis of spatial data and patterns, justification of results, and explanation of reasoning.

Communication Skills – Examples may include, but are not limited to: Assignments which present a grammatically correct essay or speech, effectively organized with a thesis statement, introduction, body, conclusion, supportive reasoning, and appropriately documented evidence. If the assignment is an oral presentation, the assignment should also require effective verbal and nonverbal delivery. Visual design elements should be incorporated into any communication assignment. Visual elements may include graphs, tables, charts, slides, or streaming video as examples.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills – Examples may include, but are not limited to: case studies, atlas exercises, reports, creating or analyzing tables and graphs related to statistical data, projects that utilize applied mathematics.

Teamwork Skills – Examples may include, but are not limited to: collaborative work on case studies, atlas exercises, reports, projects or presentations which measure not only the end result, but quality of contribution, cooperation, and self-management in the process of working on a team-based assignment.

Important Phone Numbers/Resources:
For questions concerning the course: Bryant Evans (713) 718-5828
For questions regarding distance education student services: (713) 718-5275
For questions on Moodle-Eagle Online technical support: (713) 718-2000 option 4-option 2-option 3.
For general information about the Katy Campus: (713) 718-5757
For general information about Houston Community College: (713) 718-2000

Grading. There are 400 points possible in this course.
Your final grade will be distributed as follows:

Course Grade:

Assignment	**% of course grade**	**Points**
Online Discussions	12.5%	50
Weekly Quizzes	12.5%	50
Course Project	25%	100
Midterm Exams	25%	100
Final Exam	25%	100
Total	100%	400

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 or below (below 60%)=F

Note about final grades. HCC does not mail a final grade report to students. Grades are posted to your transcript which can be viewed, online, in the same area where you register. To access this area, you will visit www.hccs.edu and click "Register Here". Then click "Registration and More" to login and view an unofficial transcript online.

Grading Policy. There will be two midterm exams and a final exam during the course of the semester. 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. Generally speaking, make-up assignments will not be allowed. Late assignments will not be accepted. You are responsible for all information given out online. "I didn't know about the assignment because I didn't log in this week" is not an acceptable excuse. Your grade will be a reflection of your overall effort, participation and achievement in the course. More details on assignment grades can be found on our course page.

You will be given from four to seven days to complete most online assignments. Moodle is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, so my assumption is that (even if you are ill) you will have the opportunity at some point to do the assigned work. The only excuse I will accept is that the Houston Community College network or Moodle itself has been down for a significant period of time. (Network outages of an hour or two happen often enough; that is not what I mean by "significant time.") In other words, do not procrastinate until half an hour before any given week's assignments are due.

Online Discussions. It is very important for you to login to class each week and participate, not only in completing the quizzes and readings, but also in discussing course-related topics. For the most part, the online discussions will center on your responses and ideas about questions posed by either myself or your text.

Quizzes. You will be taking a quiz each week in our class. The questions on the quiz will be over the material covered in that given week and will primarily serve as a review tool for the text readings you have been doing for our class. You will be able to find the weekly quizzes under each week's content module in the center column of our Moodle course homepage.

Course Project. As part of the requirements for Geography 1301, you will have a course project. More details on the projects will be provided to you soon after the semester has begun and the project will be worth 25% of your total grade.

Exams. You will be taking your tests online this semester for our class. You will be given approximately one hour and twenty minutes to complete each of your online exams. **All of the exams will be taken on Mondays and/or Tuesdays.** If you do not take the exams during these designated periods and within the time period allotted, then you will not be able to receive credit for it - there will be no exceptions. Additionally, you will need to take the exam once you log in - in other words, you must complete it in one sitting and you will only have one opportunity to take it. There will be no make-ups for the exam, and no excuses will be accepted for not completing the exam (including technical issues - therefore, make sure that you don't take the test during a lightning storm, for example!). You are expected to uphold the strictest standards of academic integrity on the exams - any evidence to the contrary will lead to disciplinary actions, including but not limited to receiving a zero for anyone involved in breaching the exam rules and guidelines. The final will not be cumulative.

Geography 1301 Course Policies:

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.

Drop/Withdrawal:

• If for any reason you can't finish the course, **it is your responsibility as the student to initiate dropping or withdrawing from a course**. If you do not contact me or your DE counselor, you will not be dropped from the course (even if you stop attending) and you will continue to receive grades each week. If it becomes necessary for you to withdraw, it is advisable to initiate the process by contacting your DE Counselor or me. You may also withdraw from class on your own after carefully reviewing your options prior to the deadline through the HCC Student Center. The last day for student withdrawals is **March 24th.**

If you do not initiate a withdrawal and stop attending class, it will likely result in you receiving an "F" for the course. This must be done prior to **4:30 PM on March 24th** 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. For more information, you are encouraged to review the HCC 6 Drop Policy.

Early Alert Notification:

• The Distance Education (DE) Department utilizes an Early Alert system managed by the DE counselors to provide outreach and intervention to students who may be at risk of withdrawal or failure. Referrals to this system are typically made by a DE faculty member. If a DE professor is concerned about a student's performance in class, that student may be referred to Early Alert for counseling intervention.

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

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.

"Course Repeat" Policy. Students who take a course for a third time (or more) will face significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. Please ask your instructor / counselor about opportunities for tutoring / other assistance prior to considering course withdrawal or if you are not receiving passing grades.

DE Student Handbook/"Netiquette":

• The Distance Education Student Handbook contains policies and procedures unique to the DE student. Students should have reviewed the handbook as part of the mandatory orientation. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents. The handbook contains valuable information, answers, and resources, such as DE contacts, policies and procedures (how to drop, attendance requirements, etc.), student services (ADA, financial aid, degree planning, etc.), course information, testing procedures, technical support, and academic calendars. Refer to the DE Student Handbook by visiting this link: http://de.hccs.edu/de/de-student-handbook

Two keys to a successful online environment include respect among all participants and open, fluid communication between the members of our community. Everyone is entitled to an opinion. However, remember that opinions are not always based on fact, and it is important to keep this distinction clear. Additionally, it is essential that you respect the opinions and ideas of your fellow classmates to help maintain a healthy online community.

$EGLS_3$-- 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.

Contacting the Instructor. There will be several ways you can reach me throughout the semester. The best and most important way to keep in contact with me is via the Quickmail function in Moodle, which funnels to your HCC student email address. In fact, **it is a requirement for this class to make sure you have access to and regularly check your HCC student email**. If you have any questions about accessing your HCC student email, navigate to the following link for more information: http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/student-e-maileagle-id/ Alternatively, you may contact me by telephone via my office number at 713.718.5828. I am at the Katy Campus two days a week, so the best time to reach me is during my office hours – otherwise, leave me a message and I will try to contact you within a few days. You can also contact me via my other email address: bryant.evans@hccs.edu If you have any individual questions or concerns, please email me between Monday and Friday. If you email me after 5 PM on Friday, do not expect a response until Monday morning.

Workload. This course will follow the standard Carnegie Unit of college credit. For a three-unit course, this translates into an average of about 9-10 hours a week for class readings, studying and other assignments.

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

WEEK	CONTENT
Week 1	Course Introduction
Week 2	Planet Earth and Energy Balance (Ch 1 & 2)
Week 3	Air Temperature (Chapter 3)
Week 4	Winds and Circulation (Chapter 5)
Week 5	Atmosphere and Precipitation (Chapter 4)
MIDTERM I	February 23-24 (Monday and Tuesday) Online
Week 6	Weather Systems (Chapter 6)
Week 7	Global Climates (Chapter 7)
Week 8	Earth Materials and Plate Tectonics (Chapter 8)
Spring Break	March 16-22
Week 9	Volcanic/Tectonic Landforms (Chapters 9)
MIDTERM II	March 30-31 (Monday and Tuesday) Online
Week 10	Global Soils (Chapter 15)
Week 11	Global Biogeography (Chapter 17)
Week 12	Ground and Surface Water (Chapter 11)
Week 13	Water Case Study
Week 14	Glacial Landforms/Ice Age (Chapter 14)
Week 15	Human-Environment Interactions
Week 16 (Final)	May 11-12 (Monday and Tuesday) Online