



Houston Community College – West Loop Campus

Geography 1301 Course Syllabus

Course Information:

Course Title: Physical Geography
Course Prefix/Number: GEOG 1301
CRN (Section Code): 20872
Semester: Spring 2017
Site: West Loop Campus
Class Days/Times: Monday/Wednesday 5:00pm to 6:30pm
Credit Hours: 3
Class structure: Lecture / Web-Enhanced

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Department Contact: Department of Anthropology and Geography
Dr. Ann Bragdon - Chair, Office Phone (713) 718-5625

Instructional Materials:

Required: "Visualizing Physical Geography", 2/e (Strahler)
Optional: National Geographic College Atlas of the World (2e)
Note: Other readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

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. This course introduces students to the processes that drive Earth's physical systems. Students will explore the relationships among these physical systems, with emphasis on weather and climate, water, ecosystems, geologic processes and landform development, and human interactions with the physical environment. The course meets a non-lab Natural Science Core requirement at Houston Community College.

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 measurable

core competency and student learning outcome paradigms. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of scientific investigation as they apply to Earth's physical systems and processes.
2. Describe and explain the processes of Earth's physical systems: weather and climate, water, ecosystems, geologic processes and landform development.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the interactions among the Earth's physical systems.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the modifications humans make to the environment through interactions with Earth's physical systems.
5. Define geography, physical geography, and the earth's four interrelated spheres: the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere.
6. Describe and understand geography in terms of flows, maps, and place.

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.

Accessing Canvas-Eagle Online. Canvas 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 Canvas at least a couple times each week throughout the semester to access notes, assignments, etc. The address for accessing Canvas on the web is <https://hccs.instructure.com> . Your Eagle Online ID is the same as your HCC User ID (i.e. W0023456). The first time you log in to Canvas, 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://www.hccs.edu/online/technical-support/>

Important Phone Numbers:

For contacting Geography and Anthropology Department: Ms. Tomi Middleton (713) 718-5625

For Canvas-Eagle Online technical support: (713) 718-5275 option 3.

For general information about the Southwest Loop Campus: (713) 718-7930

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 Geography and Anthropology Department will provide an environment conducive to learning and encourages academic excellence. Furthermore, the Geography and Anthropology 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 current campus.

Drop/Withdrawal:

Students may drop/add/swap the class by doing so on or before Jan 15th. 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 3rd**. This must be done prior to 4:30 PM that day in order to receive a "W" on your transcript. The State of Texas penalizes 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.

Early Alert Notification:

HCC utilizes an Early Alert system managed by the HCC 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 faculty member. If a professor is concerned about the student's performance in class, that student may be referred to Early Alert for counseling intervention.

"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 earning passing grades.

Academic Integrity:

- Violations of scholastic ethics are considered serious offenses by Houston Community College, the Department of Geography and Anthropology, 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 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 phone rings in class **or** if you are seen texting. In fact, there will be no 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
Class Activities/Exercises	20%	80
Term Paper	20%	80
Exams	25%	50 (x3)
Final Exam	25%	50
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

Writing Assignments. Your primary writing assignment will be your term paper, which will be due sometime in November and be submitted via Canvas-Eagle Online. The length of the term paper will be about 5 to 10 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 Canvas-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 Canvas-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.

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

Week 1: Jan 18	Syllabus Overview Chapter 1	Exercise: Latitude/Longitude Exercise: Time
Week 2: Jan 23-25	Chapter 2 Chapter 3	Exercise: Seasons
Week 3: Jan 30-Feb 1	Chapter 4 Chapter 5	
Week 4: Feb 6-8	MID TERM EXAM Chapter 6	Term Paper Assignment
Week 5: Feb 13-15	Chapter 7	Exercise: Climate Classification
Week 6: Feb 20-22	Chapter 8	Exercise: Landform Locations
Week 7: Feb 27-Mar 1	Chapter 9 EXAM	
Week 8: Mar 6-8	Chapter 10 Chapter 11	Term Paper Progression

SPRING BREAK Mar 12-16

Week 9: Mar 20-22	Chapter 12,13, and 14	
Week 10: Mar 27-29	Chapter 15, 16, and 17 EXAM	
Week 11: April 3-5	North America/South America	Term Paper Progression
Week 12: Apr 10-12	Europe	TERM PAPER DUE
Week 13: Apr 17-19	Asia/Africa	
Week 14: April 24-26	Austrailia/Oceania/Antartica	
Week 15: May 1-3	Final Exam Study	
Week 16:	FINAL EXAM Monday May 8th at 5:30pm	