California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

GEO101H: PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

SYLLABUS

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I hope this lengthy syllabus answers most of the questions you may have now and later. If not, let me know and I’ll make it longer :-) LW

1. General Course Information

Physical Geography is a Category B1 (Lower Division Science) GE course. It is also a required core course for geography majors. This is a completely online course, except for optional in-class orientation and final review meeting.

• Optional in-class orientation is (location, time).
• An optional in-class final review meeting will be scheduled based on students' interest and schedule.

Objective of the course: Through the exploration of the physical environment of the earth, including atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere students will learn basic terms, concepts and methodologies in physical sciences. After completing the course, students should have more awareness, better understanding, and deeper appreciation towards our natural environment and its interrelationships with human activities.

The honors section The honors section follows the main structure and objectives of the regular class except that it is offered at a more challenging level and with more interaction enabled by smaller class size. The assignments for the honors class require a higher level of problem solving and critical thinking skills to complete and some of the assignments require team work (most of the collaboration can be done online).

2. Instructor Contact Information

Instructor Dr. Lin Wu (http://www.cpp.edu/~lwu/web/) Office 5-149 Phone: 909-869-3578 LWu@cpp.edu Office Hours: see http://www.cpp.edu/~lwu/web/schedule.htm
3. Required Text and Other Sources

McKnight & Hess: *Physical Geography: A Landscape Appreciation*, Prentice Hall.

Links to web sources that enhance the course are listed with the lectures, assignments, and references sections in the Blackboard.

4. Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades Distribution</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Assignments 50%</td>
<td>A: 90% +</td>
<td>• The class will not be curved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quizzes 10%</td>
<td>B: 80 – 89%</td>
<td>• I do give Ds and Fs, however, for honors classes; I hope these will not be on the final grade list.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Midterm 15%</td>
<td>C: 70 – 79% Plus and Minus may be given</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Final 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participation 10%</td>
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5. Quizzes, Midterm and Final

Exams and quizzes are intended to assess your mastering of the knowledge related to the course subjects. You are responsible for the materials assigned in the textbook readings as well as covered by discussions and assignments.

**Quizzes** will be given online and they are designed as closed book examines. You will be given a limited time to complete each quiz once you started. There will be no sufficient time for you to go through notes or books searching for answers during the quiz. You can still submit the quiz past the time mark but you may not receive scores or your scores may be reduced. Most of the quizzes are available in a two-day period, typically from **Monday 12 am to Tuesday 11:55 pm**. In case **system-wide technical problems** occur, the whole class will be given an opportunity to retake the quiz or I may drop a particular quiz score dependent on the situation. To accommodate **occasional technical or other problems for an individual student**, one lowest (or missed) quiz score will be dropped. If you encounter technical problems, you need to seek help to resolve the problem (see technical guide section for resources) as early as possible. **Frequent technical problems will not be excused** and your grades may be affected. Most of the time, you will see the raw scores of the quizzes after you finish the quiz. In some cases, I need to grade the quiz and post the scores a few days later. These scores may be adjusted later and percentages of total quiz scores will be calculate as the 10% of your total course grade.

**Practice quiz online.** It should help if you can use the quizzes and tests on the textbook’s companion website liked in Bb as practice quizzes, however, please note that the questions on the website cover all the contents in a chapter, which may be more than what we require in the class. On the other hand, not all the questions I use in the quizzes and tests come from the same test bank.

**Midterm and final** will be online tests for the honors class. Both exams include a closed book section and an open book section. The open book section is designed specifically for the honors class with challenging questions that require problem solving and critical thinking. You will take the exam online in a given date within a specified time limit to
complete the tests. Dates of the exams will be posted in Bb. Midterm and final makes 30% of the course grades (15% each).

6. Assignments

The assignments are designed to enhance your learning experience related to the course subjects and to build connections between the course subjects and every day life. To take the advantages of an online class, many of these assignments use online resources. It is your responsibility to arrange your time to work on the assignments and turn them in on time. The assignments should be completed individually unless it is specified as a group project. You should follow the direction carefully given by each of the assignment to avoid technical problems. The assignments are not easy tasks and require time to complete. No late assignment will be accepted unless prearranged. Contact me ASAP via e-mail for requesting a late submission if circumstance arises. Assignments will be graded after the submission deadline. Typically, you should receive your grade within a week after the deadline. Assignments make 50% of the course grades.

7. Class participation

Participation including online discussions, working on and turning in none-graded items (e.g. student info, GE assessment questions, class surveys, etc.)

Online discussion is an integral part of an online class. In a way, it replaces the interactive component of a face to face class. It is intended to enhance/broaden your knowledge while improving writing/communication skills. Discussion topics will be posted each week and you may start a new topic if it fits the subject. Technically, the discussions will be conducted through the Discussion Board in the Blackboard. To make the discussion effective (to achieve more with less time for everyone), it is very important that you write thoughtfully and follow the directions carefully.

- Subject related messages should be posted under the assigned topics. These topics are related to the chapters we are studying. You may suggest new topics if they fit the subject. You are encouraged to engage in the discussions in a contributive and timely manner.
- Messages related to class logistics (clarification for due dates, availability of assignments, technical problems, etc.) should be posed under the topic of Class Logistic on the discussion board. Respond to the questions if you have answers.
- Discussions related to assignments and quizzes are encouraged; however, no direct answers to the assignments and quizzes should be posted or given to classmates before the assignments are graded.

Discussion board or e-mail? Understand that if you post a message on the discussion board, the whole class will see it. Please distinguish messages intended for public or private viewing and use appropriate means to deliver them. Only messages that contribute to (or seek) clarification and enhance the course contents should be posted on the discussion boards. All the other messages should be sent as private e-mails. For example, if you are not clear about a procedure for an assignment, you can either send me an e-mail or post a message on the “Class Logistics” board. You probably will get a faster response from a classmate if you use the discussion board. If you have the same question as a posted message, you may want to send me an e-mail to inform me that you have the same problem. In that way, I will know that it is not an individual problem while the class will not have to spend time to open and read many repetitive messages. If
you see a question posted on the discussion board and you have an answer for it, use reply on the discussion board so others having the same question may learn from you. However, if you just want to thank a classmate who responded your question, you should send a private e-mail. Please use languages that are appropriate for an academic environment at all times when you post and sent messages, public or private.

Participation is 10% of the course grads and will be assigned by the end of the quarter based on the following criteria:

- **Number of discussion entries written and the quality of writing** (Minimum of three well written entries are required.)
- **Engagement and good citizenship** (thoughtful and positive responses to classmates’ postings, inviting discussions, etc.)
- **Timeliness** (Spread your postings throughout the quarter. Write and post your writing about a topic while we are learning the subject or while a related event is occurring in the real world.)
- Respond to and submit graded (quizzes and assignments) and non-graded (surveys, etc.) items in a responsible and timely manner.
- Check into the online classroom at least twice a week.
- Follow the class policy (see policy section).

8. **Taking the Online Course**

Although this is a complete online class offered through the campus Blackboard, it is not a self-paced, self-guided course. The course is conducted on the weekly bases following the same calendar as a traditional academic course. Each week, you will be given instructions assigning you tasks to be completed or to begin during the week. These tasks include readings, assignments, online discussions, quizzes, etc. It typically takes 6 – 8 hours weekly to complete the tasks and you need to “visit” the online classroom at least twice a week. Although you can choose your time and day to work on these tasks, you need to follow the given time frames carefully. Typically, you will be given at least one week to complete an assignment and a two-day period to take a quiz. All quizzes, tests, assignments and other due dates are posted in multiple places in the online classroom. You are responsible for checking into different areas of the online classroom on regular bases (at least twice a week) to make sure that you receive instructions and updated information.

My teaching of the class will be delivered in a combination of the following forms: 1) **instructions and chapter highlights** posted in the online classroom to guide you through reading and to help you focusing on the most important subjects. 2) periodical **Announcements** to explain and reflect on progress, assignments, current events related to the course subjects, or other class related matters; 3) **messages posted on the Discussion Board** to respond your postings or questions; 4) **assignments and tests** to enhance and assess your learning; 5) **grades and comments** to give you feedback about your learning process; and 6) **E-mail, voice message and office hour meetings** if necessary to assist you with your individual needs.
Although an online class provides flexibility and opportunity for many, it is not for everyone. In addition to access required software and hardware, studies suggest that the keys to be a successful online student are:

**Commitment:** An online class is not easy. You need to have the commitment and patience to overcome technical and other problems that often accompanying an online class. **Time management:** An online class gives you the flexibility of managing your time but may not save you time. You need to locate at least 6 to 8 hours each week for this course within the period that you can work efficiently. You need to check into the online classroom at least twice a week, sometimes, more often. **Study Skills:** You need to develop efficient study skills to master the required course material. I have designed many different learning activities to help you studying the material. You need to develop your learning skills to make these activities productive to you. **Technical skills:** You will need certain degree of technical proficiency to be successful in an online course. The technical guide section of the syllabus provides you with resources that will help you to solve technical problems. It is your responsibility to seek help and to solve problems in a timely manner.

Open communication is very important in an online class. Let me know when you have questions, concerns, or suggestions. Send me a message if you find something not working properly (broken links, unreleased information that suppose to be available to you, wrong answers for the quiz, typo errors, etc.) I also like to know if the work loads are reasonable and the works that I designed are helpful or not. Your E-mails will be responded within 48 hours (most of them within 24 hours) during the weekdays. Please indicate GEO101H in the subject area of your e-mail message and make sure that your full name is in the message. Appointments are not needed if you plan to visit me during my office hours; however, it is highly recommended that you let me know ahead of time. Occasionally, I have to change office hours or locations in a short notice.

9. Course Policy and Other Disciplinary Matters

The following policy is for my regular classes and they may not need to be stated for an honors class, however, since they do apply for any classes, I’ll just leave them here.

- **No make-up examinations and quizzes will be given unless special arrangements were made before the examination date** on individual basis. Exceptions will only be given for unforeseeable circumstances with proving documents.
- **Additional in-class exams or oral exams may be required of individual students if inconsistencies in grades occurred.**
- **See assignment section for late assignment policy.** All the required course work should be completed individually unless it is indicated otherwise. **Copied (from web, book, your roommates, etc.) or “co-authored” assignments will not be accepted. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.** Copied/shared assignments will result in no grades for all students involved. If difficulties with the class arise, students should contact me ASAP to work out solutions within the course structure.
- **No extra work for extra credit will be offered.**
- **Appropriate languages should be used all times when you post messages or interact online with the class. Posting improper massages and offensive languages will receive no or negative class participation points and may subject to university disciplinary actions.**
• Refer to current Catalog (http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/catalog/) for the university disciplines regarding cheating, plagiarism and other serious academic offenses.

10. Technical Guide and Source

Help Desk

The help desk is located at Building 1-100 (Phone 909 869-6776). If you have Bb access or other technical problems, you may start with http://www.cpp.edu/~ehelp/ and contact them if you cannot find solutions from the site.

Blackboard (Bb)

The main campus Blackboard page is https://blackboard.cpp.edu/. From there, you can log on to your Bb for all your Bb classes using your Bronco Login and Password. If you are not an experienced Bb user, you may want to go through the Blackboard Student Orientation https://ehelp.wiki.cpp.edu/Blackboard_9.1_Student_eOrientation. The Bb settings for this course will be explored in the orientation section of the online course and you can always make an appointment during my office hours or set up an online meeting if you need help.

The minimum Bb functions you need to know for this class are:

1. Setting your browser and software needed to view posted files (see notes below)
2. Log-in and setting your browser properly
3. Navigating in Bb
4. Getting Bb online help (many options)
5. Accessing and navigating Course Contents
6. Viewing Course Calendar
7. Accessing and posting discussion messages through Discussion Board
8. Sending and receiving E-Mail (Bb e-mail goes directly to Cal Poly E-mail accounts).
9. Submitting assignments
10. Using collaborating tools (e.g. wiki) for group work
11. Taking online quiz and exams
12. Checking your progress through My Grades

Browser and Software

Use the “Browser Compatibility” page at http://www.cpp.edu/~iit/learning/blackboard/ to check if your browser supports Blackboard. In addition, you may need the following software to view the course contents: Acrobat Reader and Flash Player (free downloads at http://www.adobe.com/downloads/), Windows Media Player, PowerPoint, and Word. If you would like to use the CD that comes with the book, you need to have the media system set properly in your computer. (Use of the CD is not required of the course, but it could help the learning.)

File Format and File Name
Most of the work submitted will be using the online interface and no file attachment is needed. In some cases when you need to submit an attachment file, the file should be in one of the following formats:

1. For text: doc, pdf, rtf, or txt.
2. For images: jpg (preferred), gif, tif, or bmp.
3. All the file names should be composed of letters, numbers, and underscore only. **Spaces, characters, and long names causing problems in file transfer.**

**Blackboard E-Mail**

When you sent an e-mail through Bb, it goes directly to the recipient's Cal Poly E-mail account. It is important that you check your Cal Poly E-mail routinely or set mail forward function in your Cal Poly E-mail to forward your e-mail automatically to your regular e-mail account (check [http://www.cpp.edu/~ehelp/](http://www.cpp.edu/~ehelp/) if you do not know how to set e-mail forwarding). If you use Bb E-mail, a Bb heading is automatically placed in the subject area. If you use regular e-mail, please state GEO101 in the subject tile, otherwise, I may never get it.

**11. Schedule and Topics**

*(Schedules and topics may change. Detailed schedules are posted in Bb.)*

**Week 0** Topic: In class orientation and introduction to the course  
Objectives: Receive basic information about the course; understand the course objectives, expectations, and logistics.

**Week 1** Topic: Maps, GPS, RS, and GIS  
Objectives: Understand the field of geography and the subjects included in physical geography. Learn how to read maps and explore the applications of Geographic Information Systems. Explore how these tools can help you in your daily activities and the field of your study.

**Week 2** Topic: Earth-Sun Relationship  
Objectives: Understand rotation and revolution of the earth and the resulting daily and seasonal phenomena. Review geographic grid system and standard time system. Examine how human activities are affected by these systems.

**Week 3** Topic: Radiation and Temperature  
Objectives: Understand the characteristics atmosphere and solar radiation. Learn how temperature varies with time, latitude, altitude, and inland/coastal location. Explore application of the knowledge to improve energy conservation, quality of life, and productivity in various industries.

**Week 4** Topic: Moisture and Wind  
Objectives: Understand the processes in which water changes its state in the atmosphere and the resulting phenomena. Understand the relationship between wind and pressure systems and their spatial distribution. Look into how the precipitation and wind/pressure distribution affect people in different parts of the world.
Week 5 Topic: Weather and Climate
Objectives: Understand the structure, formation, distribution, and movement of different weather systems. Explore climate patterns the impact of weather and climate on everyday life.

Week 6 Review and Midterm Exam

Week 7 Hydrosphere and Biosphere
Objectives: Learn the basic elements and flow pattern of various cycles in the hydrosphere and biosphere. Learn to identify these cycles in everyday life, and understand how human activities affect these cycles and vice versa.

Week 8 Rocks, Moving Plates and Earthquakes
Objectives: Understand the structure of the lithosphere (rock layer) of the earth and the phenomena caused by the internal forces and processes. Look into issues related to earthquakes and other natural disasters.

Week 9 Topic: Mass Movement and Fluvial (stream related) Landforms
Objectives: Understand how water shaping the surface of the earth. To be able to identify fluvial landforms and to explain their formation. Explore the impact of stream processes and mass movement on human activities.

Week 10 Topic: Wave, Wind, and Glacial Landforms
Objectives: To be able to identify landforms generated by ocean waves, wind, and glaciers and to understand the processes that generated these landforms. Deepen the appreciation of the diversity and beauty of our natural environment.

Final Week Final Exam