

GEO 101: PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

MWF₁ 11:30am-12:30pm Rader Hall 104

Spring 2009

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Dr. Christine McMichael

Email: c.mcmichael@moreheadstate.edu

Office Hours: M-TH 2-3pm (or, anytime my door is open!)

Office location: 100-C Lloyd Cassity Building

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CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Physical elements of the earth and their distribution: weather, climate, landforms, earth materials, water resources, and natural vegetation are analyzed and interpreted as elements of human habitation.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course begins by exploring the question 'What is Physical Geography'? Following this overview, we will examine the different 'geospatial' tools that Geographers use to investigate the occurrence and distribution of Earth phenomena including maps, the Global Positioning System (GPS), Remote Sensing, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The remaining course time will be spent examining the following topics: weather and climate, the water cycle, soil, earth's composition, volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis. As we progress through the semester, we will also spend time investigating important linkages between the natural environment and human activities (e.g., severe weather, global change, pollution).

STUDENT OUTCOMES

In this course students will develop:

* important **content knowledge** in physical geography

* a better understanding of **human-environment relationships**

* their **analytical skills** and the skills necessary to use **technology** for coursework and in lifelong learning

This course is closely aligned with Kentucky's New Teacher Standards and is designed to reflect the Professional Education Unit's conceptual framework, "The Teacher as Architect."

EVALUATION and GRADING

You will be evaluated using the following WEIGHTED grading scheme (see the next page for an example of how to calculate your weighted percentage).

No extra credit will be offered in this course as I want you to spend your time focusing on *required* course information and assignments.

Exams	60%		A: 90-100%
Quizzes/Labs	<u>40%</u>		B: 80-89%
TOTAL	100%		C: 70-79%
			D: 60-69%
			E: ≤ 59%

Class lectures and labs will be based primarily on information found in your textbook, but will include information from other sources where appropriate. Exams and quizzes will cover material from lectures and labs.

Please note! *This is a science course and requires that you learn a wide range of facts and concepts in earth science. Superior performance in this course will require commitment on your part. I will always be available to assist you as a group and as individuals, and I welcome your questions and thoughts.*

How to calculate your WEIGHTED PERCENTAGE in 3 easy steps – an example:

Item	Earned Points	Possible Points
Quiz #1	8	10
Quiz #2	10	10
Lab #1	23	25
Exam #1	86	100

Step 1: Calculate your weighted EARNED points. $[(8 + 10 + 23) * 0.40] + [(86) * 0.60] = 68$

Step 2: Calculate your weighted POSSIBLE points. $[(10 + 10 + 25) * 0.40] + [(100) * 0.60] = 78$

Step 3: Calculate your weighted percentage grade. $[68 / 78] = 87\%$

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK and RELATED COURSE RESOURCES

Textbook: *Physical Geography*, 9th Edition, T. McKnight and D. Hess, Prentice Hall (CD-ROM included)

Textbook – Student companion web site: This site contains a variety of tools to help you learn the material covered in class (e.g., practice quizzes, chapter summaries and study guides, and related web links). This site can be accessed at <http://www.prenhall.com/mcknight/details.html>.

Course website: The MSU Blackboard system is used extensively in this course to post various class materials (e.g., lecture notes, handouts, and web sites) and to report student grades for all exams, quizzes, and labs. If you do not know how to use this online system, please let me know and I will be happy to help you get started! Information about using Blackboard can be found at: <http://moreheadstate.blackboard.com>.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Your responsibilities: In order to be successful in this course you should read the assigned materials *before class*, attend *every* class meeting, *take careful notes*, complete all assignments *on time* – and *participate* in class!

Attendance: YOU WILL LOSE 1% FROM YOUR FINAL GRADE FOR EACH UNEXCUSED ABSENCE AFTER THE 3RD ONE.

Other: Please turn the ringer off on cell phones, pagers, etc. prior to the beginning of class. Please arrive on time; please inform me prior to class if you need to leave early. Please do not text, IM, surf the internet, etc. during class. Laptops may only be used during class for taking lecture/lab notes.

MAKE-UPS and LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Exams: **make-ups will only be given if prior arrangements are made** for one of these *documented* reasons: health-related problem; authorized university functions for which the student's attendance is required; death in the family; special academic programs. Make-up exams may differ in format and length from the missed exam; a missed exam **must be made up within 1 week of the date it is given in class** if possible.

Labs: due at the *start* of class; points will be deducted for late assignments unless prior arrangements are made; no late labs will be accepted after the last day of class (interim deadlines for late work may also be set)

Quizzes: may only be made up for an excused absence –must be **made up within 1 week** of the date given in class

QUIZZES

Nearly every class period will include a timed 'notebook quiz' designed to encourage you to take good notes and to help you review and retain lecture material. You may use your own typed or handwritten lecture notes for the quiz, but not the PowerPoint lectures themselves (or any other materials).

LABS

In-class and take-home labs are used to provide students with opportunities to gain additional knowledge and experience in applying the information presented in lecture and to engage students in thinking about how the course material applies to the 'real world'. Essay questions will be used to help develop students' critical

thinking skills, particularly in relation to human-environment issues (e.g., water resources, climate change). You will turn in most of your labs to me via email at the following address: msu.geo@gmail.com

E-MAIL

I may need to contact you during the semester via e-mail. Moreover, MSU is increasingly sending out mass emails with important information regarding important deadlines, student resources, etc. Please make sure your university email account is working properly and *be sure to check it regularly*.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty is using someone else's work as your own. Failure to cite your sources (journals, web pages, etc.) is essentially stealing someone else's ideas. The Department of Geography, Government, and History takes such infringements seriously and students will be penalized to the fullest extent of university policy. The Department uses EVE plagiarism detection software.

STUDENTS with DISABILITIES

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all qualified students enrolled in this course are entitled to reasonable accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any special needs *before* the end of the second week of classes.

SURVIVAL TIPS

I will challenge you in this class because I really want you to gain something useful from it. You will need to put forth the effort and take this course seriously while, I hope, having some fun! At the same time, I will work hard to ensure that the greatest number of students learn and understand the information. I will always be available to assist you as a group and as individuals, and I welcome your questions and thoughts!

You may also improve your performance in this class by following a few easy steps:

- **Come to class regularly and take complete notes.** There simply is no substitute for your presence in class, and you should not assume that you can remember things without writing them down (no matter how simple such things may seem). Feel free to record lectures if note-taking is difficult.
- **Review your notes regularly.** Five or ten minutes spent glancing over your notes each or every other day will make a world of difference when it comes to studying for exams. Use your textbook, each other and me to help fill in any gaps.
- **Read the textbook.** Much (but not all) of the class material can be found in the textbook, and reading about it from a different perspective often helps improve understanding.
- **Be an active participant in class.** If you have a question, raise your hand and ask it. I strongly encourage students to ask a question when something isn't clear – remember, it is very unlikely that you are the only one who doesn't understand! Don't EVER feel that your questions are "dumb".
- **Come see me!** If you prefer to ask your questions outside of class, please come by my office. I enjoy teaching and am very happy to help you with class material anytime my door is open. Also, feel free to email me or call my office – you won't be "bothering" me!
- **Complete all assignments on time.** Remember - labs, essays and homework assignments are worth 50% of your course grade. Make sure you turn in each and every assignment – missing a few points here and there will eventually add up! And, there is NO EXTRA CREDIT.
- **Find and/or form study groups.** I don't recommend relying on such groups for all of your studies, but they are quite effective for filling in gaps in notes and enhancing understanding of complex material. I am more than happy to meet with study groups at a convenient campus location.

IN AN EMERGENCY

Emergency response information will be discussed in class. Students should familiarize themselves with the nearest exit routes in the event evacuation becomes necessary. You should notify me at the beginning of the semester if you have special needs or will require assistance during an emergency evacuation. Students should familiarize themselves with emergency response protocols at: www.moreheadstate.edu/emergency.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week	Date	Topic(s)	Textbook
1	1/12 1/14 1/16	Introduction to Physical Geography; Seasons Latitude and longitude; Maps Remote sensing of the environment (RS)	Chapter 1 Chaps. 1 & 2 Chapter 2
2	1/19 1/21	NO CLASS Geographic Information Systems (GIS); Global Positioning System (GPS)	Chapter 2
3	1/26 1/28 1/30	RS + GIS + GPS Introduction to the atmosphere Depletion of the ozone layer; Air pollution	Chapter 3
4	2/2 2/5	Energy, Heat and Temperature; Solar energy Solar energy (cont.); Atmospheric heating	Chapter 4
5	2/9 2/11 2/13	EXAM #1 Atmospheric pressure and winds Atmospheric pressure and winds (cont.)	Chapter 5
6	2/16 2/18	El Nino Atmospheric moisture	Chapter 5 Chapter 6
7	2/23 2/25 2/27	Atmospheric moisture (cont.) Air masses and fronts Atmospheric disturbances	Chapter 7 Chapter 7
8	3/2 3/4	Atmospheric disturbances (cont.) EXAM #2	
9	3/9 3/11 3/13	Oceans Global change Global change (cont.)	Chaps. 4 & 8
10	3/16 3/18	NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK	
11	3/23 3/25	Climate Climate (cont.)	Chapter 8
12	3/30 4/1 4/3	Hydrologic cycle; Freshwater - underground Freshwater – at the surface Water resource issues I	Chapter 9 Chapter 9
13	4/6 4/8	Water resource issues II EXAM #3	
14	4/13 4/15 4/17	Forests; Invasive species Soils Soils (cont.)	Chapter 11 Chapter 12
15	4/20 4/22	Streams and stream systems Landforms; Plate tectonics	Chapter 16 Chaps. 13 & 14
16	4/27 4/29 5/1	Plate tectonics (cont.) Volcanoes Earthquakes & tsunamis	Chapter 14 Chapter 14
17	5/8	Exam #4 10:15am - 12:15pm	

Important note: This syllabus is subject to modification. All changes will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard. You are responsible for being aware of any adjustments. Please contact me if you have any questions about adjustments to course timing or content.